

Frequently Asked Questions about Homelessness

Homelessness is a very complex problem, and Astoria is one of many cities in the country struggling to find successful ways of addressing the problem. Many of the homeless people on the streets struggle with issues related to addiction, mental illness, and histories of trauma. The Astoria Police Department takes a holistic approach to homelessness issues. It expects all officers to build relationships with this segment of the community and help guide them to available resources. They work closely with Clatsop Behavioral Health and Clatsop Community Action and have a high success rate with homeless individuals who want help getting off the street. They also work closely with other City departments. The Parks and Recreation Department has employees dedicated to cleaning up garbage and maintaining public spaces throughout the city. Public Works assists with larger camp clean-ups and maintains infrastructure such as fencing and signage.

How can you report homeless issues?

Livability@astoria.gov—This email was explicitly created for citizens to report homelessness or other quality-of-life issues using non-emergency communications. All park maintenance employees, police supervisors, Chief Kelly, and Director Dart-McLean receive this email.

503-325-4411—This is the Astoria Police Department's non-emergency number, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It can be used to report criminal activity in which the suspect has left the area or lower-level incidents, such as intoxicated persons who are not disorderly or trespassers.

911 - 911 is for emergencies: A threat to life, serious injury, fire, or to stop a crime in progress. 911 is to be used when you or someone else needs immediate assistance.

What should I do if I see someone illegally camping in the City?

The City appreciates public reporting. Please email the livability team at Livability@astoria.gov or report it to the Astoria Police Department non-emergency line at **503-325-4411**.

By providing an accurate location and description of the camp, you will assist the responding officers in locating and contacting the camp occupants. Once the camp is located and the occupants have been approached, the next steps depend on many factors. The responding officers will work closely with the many resources available to determine the best course of action regarding the removal of the camp. Parks and Recreation will also respond to remove garbage or any abandoned property.

NOTE: Please be patient when reporting the camps. Our departments work with limited resources and must sometimes triage calls, which can lead to delayed responses. Rest assured, your calls are important to us, and we will get to them as soon as possible.

A homeless person has set up a tent near my business; what can I do?

You can proactively keep trespassers off your property by joining property watch and posting signs. If someone is camping within ten feet of your door, setting up camp somewhere that does not allow six feet of clearance on the sidewalk, or camping outside the permitted hours, you have the right to ask the individual to leave or contact the Astoria Police non-emergency number at **503-325-4411** or Livability@astoria.gov.

Why can't the City move people off the streets?

It is not illegal to be homeless, and the City cannot force someone to move due to constitutional protections and court rulings. However, APD has the authority to issue citations or arrest people engaged in criminal behavior. For example, possession of an open container of alcohol or drinking in public, smoking narcotics in public, public urination or defecation, trespassing, and disorderly conduct are considered prohibited or illegal. If you observe these or other illegal behaviors, please call the Astoria Police non-emergency line at **503-325-4411** or **911**.

NOTE: Violations of the City's Camping Ordinance are currently a summonsable offense, which means that our officers' only option is to issue a citation; they cannot be arrested.

What should I do if I see garbage left in public spaces or notice a public trash can overflowing?

Email Livability@astoria.gov, and one of our dedicated parks employees will address it as soon as possible.

What resources are available to the homeless in our City?

Clatsop Behavioral Health (CBH)

115 W. Bond Street, Astoria

503-325-5722

- Mobile response team
- Transitional housing
- Intake and treatment services

Clatsop Community Action (CCA)

364 9th Street, Astoria

503-325-1400

- Mobile peer support team to connect individuals to services
- Low barrier shelter
- Transitional housing
- Veterans housing assistance

LiFEBoat Services/ Filling Empty Bellies

1040 Commercial Street, Astoria

503-741-3572

- Low barrier shelter
- Meals, Mon-Fri, 9 a.m.- 4 p.m.
- Advocacy and peer support
- Restrooms, showers, and laundry facilities

Helping Hands Re-entry Outreach Centers

Astoria (call for directions)

503-739-4347

- Low barrier shelter
- Transitional housing