




1. **Learn** about the many causes of homelessness – job loss, medical emergency, runaway children, victim of crime or disaster, geographic displacement, reentering community from incarceration, mental illness, including from military service. Treat an individual experiencing homelessness with courtesy, respect, and kindness as you would your friends, your family, or your coworkers. Homelessness could happen to any of us.
2. **Volunteer** time. Greet or answer phones, serve food, donate professional services, share hobbies, teach life skills, help with paperwork, tutor and play with children, and talk with adults.
3. **Give** money, food, clothing, toys, or school supplies to nonprofits that serve the poor. You might involve your family, friends, church, company, school, and neighborhood businesses in a volunteer, collection drive, or fund-raising event. Ask what is most needed. Maybe challenge someone else to a friendly competition. Some companies will match any funds you raise.
4. **Inform** youth, coworkers, church, and civic groups by teaching, writing, and promoting the needs and the opportunities to meet the needs of the poor and individuals experiencing homelessness. Share newsletters, wish lists, brochures, and other information through print and social media.
5. **Employ** individuals who are, or are at risk of being homeless. Let shelters know if you have temporary or permanent jobs that can be done by homeless workers. Also note if you can accommodate someone with the extra disadvantage of a felony or drug background. If you are willing to train, that's great, but a wide variety of skills are available and often what is needed is an opportunity.
6. **Prepare** for encounters with street homeless by carrying emergency food and/or a resource list or a 2-1-1 card in your car to give instead of cash. Many lists (shelters, food distribution, and mental health services) are available on the CCLM website under Resources. A plastic coffee can or bag with non-perishable food in original sealed containers - granola bars, peanut butter, and pop-top canned items allows a kind response to the hungry. (Be aware if this is legal in your jurisdiction.) Helpful items for inclement weather - bus passes, fast food gift cards, socks, gloves, hygiene kits, and rain ponchos. Stay safe and observant.
7. Be a good **steward** of your resources. Each of us can have plenty, but holding onto, or consuming more than we can use, is just waste. In a healthy system excess *flows* to need. Conserve water and energy since environmental problems disproportionately affect the poor. Recycle or give your recyclable bottles and cans to a homeless neighbor. If closets are bursting, keep what you use and donate the rest. You and your community will benefit.
8. **Befriend** people of diverse ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups with varied life experiences. Our society needs more meaningful dialogue deeper in desire for understanding. It forever changes your perspective to have a friend or colleague who is homeless (or wealthy, or Muslim, or Iranian, or formerly incarcerated, or...). Friendship is the basis of understanding and hope for social justice.
9. **Advocate** for a just legal and economic system to protect the rights of the poor, prevent the criminalization of poverty, provide affordable housing and create living wage jobs. Contact local, state, and national public officials and work with advocacy groups. What's your interest? City planning? Habitat for Humanity? Vocational education? Minimum wage, Voting, or Right-to-rest laws? Far better models are needed when a full-time minimum wage job does not support a one bedroom apartment in any state in the US and people pay fines or are arrested for sleeping in public-supported parks.
10. **Connect** a need you see to a resource. Homeless folks have unique communication, job, transportation, trauma, feet, dental (and therefore diet and nutrition) issues. *You* may be the one to see and make the connection between a need and an available resource.

### 10 Things

-  Learn
-  Volunteer
-  Give
-  Inform
-  Employ
-  Prepare
-  Steward
-  Befriend
-  Advocate
-  Connect