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EST. 2023

# UNHOUSED

Toolkit for City of Sheboygan Businesses  
Downtown, Uptown, and Riverfront



City of Sheboygan, Wisconsin

DRAFT 12.2.2023

# Business Resource Guide: THE BASICS

## FOR BUSINESS OWNERS

- Provide de-escalation training to staff.
- Install good lighting around your building.
- Ensure business boundaries are known and clear.
- Keep the area around your business clean and maintained, encouraging others to treat it with respect.
- Create a policy and practice to tell people where they can be as opposed to where they cannot be.

## DO

- Treat guests without homes the same way you would treat those with homes.
- Respect all customers regardless of their circumstances.
- If a person purchases something, do nothing out of the ordinary. This sets a precedent for coworkers and patrons.
- Maintain a consistent policy for customers not looking to purchase anything.
- If someone is disruptive and/or endangering the safety of you or patrons call (920)459-3333 (non-emergency) or 911 (emergency).

## DO NOT

- Do not assume people know your expectations.
- Do not offer food or money, unless you are equipped and willing to handle repeat requests.
- Do not permit people to camp on your property.
- Do not permit anyone to store shopping carts or personal belongings on your property.

## QUICK CONNECT: WHO TO CALL

- ♥ 920-458-3723 Salvation Army
- ♥ 920-287-7298 Pay It Forward, Inc.
- ♥ 920-803-6991 Lakeshore CAP
- ♥ 920-459-3333 SPD Non-Emergency
- ♥ 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline
- ♥ 911 Life Threatening or Safety Concerns

## WHAT TO DO IF:

### **Someone is sleeping/loitering at your front door.**

- Odds are, this won't be a one-off interaction, so it's good to establish a friendly relationship. Introduce yourself. Ask for the person's name.
- Politely ask the person to leave using sincere empathetic language that deflects the request from yourself to a third party (e.g. the property owner asks them to leave, even if that person is you). This reduces the power-dynamic and will help in future interactions.
- Let them know where they can be, as opposed to only where they cannot be.
- If a person is not cooperative, tell them you are going to call the police *but would rather not*. Avoid confrontation and keep a safe distance if you feel threatened in any way. Call Salvation Army, Pay It Forward, Inc., or Lakeshore CAP first, then the non-emergency police, and if they become disruptive or dangerous call 911.

### **Someone is exhibiting disruptive mental health symptoms has walked into the business.**

- If a person purchases something, treat them like any other customer. This sets a great example for your employees and patrons. If they do not make a purchase, let them know this area is for customers, and politely ask them to leave, only if you would do the same for a non-paying patron who is not homeless.
- If a person is symptomatic and disruptive, ask them to leave clearly and politely. Your safety, and the safety of your patrons, is your priority. If they remain in the facility call the non-emergency police line 920-459-3333. Based on the situation you may want to call 911.



## What to do when you want to help a person.

- Get to know the people living on the streets in your area and treat them like any neighbor.
- Encourage/help them to call public services like 211, Salvation Army 920-458-3723, Pay It Forward 920-287-7298, or Lakeshore CAP 920-803-6991.
- Share the Unhoused Resource Map.
- In the winter, share information for the Sheboygan County Warming Center. Latest information: [scwarmingcenter.com](http://scwarmingcenter.com).

## Keep in mind.

- Many organizations directly help unhoused people and work to increase affordable housing. One thing you can do as a business is find an organization that you want to support and ask them what they need.
- Salvation Army, Pay it Forward, and Lakeshore CAP service providers know how to help our unhoused neighbors. It's what they are best at. The more you support them, the more they can help people get off the streets and into stable housing.
- Avoid perpetuating stereotypes, stigma, and myths. Unhoused people are not defined by their housing status. It's often temporary, and it's likely they've sought housing and/or shelter and there was none available.
- Advocate within your circle of influence to help make things better for our neighbors who are homeless. This will help our business community too.



Brought to you by several small local businesses known as Mr. Wendal's Collaboration in partnership with Lakeshore CAP and the Salvation Army.



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