

Homeless Information and Referrals

Homelessness in the Sacramento Valley, including the City of Lincoln, has been increasing over the past several years, with visible signs of its impact within the community. The City is committed to working with our regional and local partners to offer compassionate and sustainable help to those in need, while preserving the quality of life in Lincoln.

The City of Lincoln has implemented a collaborative approach, working in partnership with other jurisdictions, businesses, and faith-based and non-profit organizations. Efforts focus on not only providing assistance to those actually living on the streets, but also the prevention of homeless for those in the community who struggle to make ends meet. The purpose of this page is to provide answers to commonly asked questions, and provide contacts for community resources working in partnership with the City of Lincoln.

Isn't it illegal to be homeless?

No, homelessness is not illegal. People who are homeless are welcome to use public services and facilities, such as the library and city parks. However, certain conduct and activities are illegal regardless of who is engaged in the activity, such as using or selling drugs, assaulting or injuring another person, obstructing public rights-of-way, making threats, or damaging public or private property. The City of Lincoln provides public services, including police and fire/medical response, to all residents without regard to a person's status.

How have laws recently changed?

A federal court decision by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled on September 4, 2018 that local governments may not enforce local ordinances prohibiting camping on public property. The Court ruled the cruel and unusual punishments clause of the eighth amendment precludes enforcement relative to activities that are "universal and unavoidable consequences of being human," such as sitting, lying down, or sleeping, if the local government does not have enough indoor shelter space to accommodate each and every homeless person in the jurisdiction. Without sufficient shelter space, local governments are now prohibited from citing or arresting anyone sleeping on public property.

What is the City doing in response to the new law?

The new 9th Circuit decision significantly limits the ability of the City of Lincoln, and all cities, to enforce anti-camping ordinances. The City simply does not have enough shelter bed space within its jurisdiction to house its homeless population. However, notwithstanding the Court's decision, the Lincoln Police Department and Code Enforcement Division continue to exercise full enforcement authority for illegal activities not constrained by the decision (e.g., illegal dumping, damaging or defacing property, etc.). The City also organizes a quarterly meeting for a committee called "Operation Make a Difference," bringing together community partners to work on proactive solutions, and coordinate services.

How does homelessness affect Lincoln?

Police calls for service regarding issues surrounding homelessness have risen significantly. Encampments often pose public health and safety risks, and can threaten Lincoln's valuable ecological resources in its ravines, creeks and open spaces. The City also is burdened with increased costs of service due to the need to frequently remove trash, debris and other hazardous materials from public areas, and respond to the risk of fire from outdoor cooking activities.

You can help!

Please report homeless camps, and trash or debris that appears to have come from a camp, to the Lincoln Police Department on its non-emergency line at (916) 645-4040.

To report a crime in progress or suspicious activity, call 9-1-1.

Volunteer with or donate to one of the City's resource partners listed below.

Community Resources and Partners:

The Salt Mine
590 Lincoln Boulevard
Lincoln CA 95648
(916) 645-3778

The Gathering Inn
201 Berkeley Avenue
Roseville, CA 95678
(916) 791-9355

Lighthouse Counseling & Family Resource Center
427 A Street, Suite 400
Lincoln, CA 95648
(916) 645-3300
Email: info@LighthouseFRC.org
Website: www.LighthouseFRC.org
Business hours: Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 4:30pm, closed 12:00pm to 1:00pm

Lincoln Police Department
Sgt. David Ibarra
(916) 645-4040

Lincoln Code Enforcement
Officer Mary Bushnell
(916) 434-2470