



# Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness

<https://pchomeless.org/> - [info@pchomeless.org](mailto:info@pchomeless.org)

## What can we do to better serve people living in vehicle homes in King County?

Group Discussion Summary • Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness • 7.15.22

### Ideas for improved vehicle response

- Ultimately, there needs to be more funding.
- Ensure safety and security of vehicle dwellers.
- Need safe parking sites with hygiene and kitchen facilities.
- Develop KOA type places in the county. Extend areas beyond Tacoma and the south side. Campsites/resort like with hookups etc. Yurt/teepee like homes
- Helping churches to utilize their parking lots for cars, RVs, and tents.
- What if we had volunteers we could call on to help repair vehicles, RVs, and/or teach folks to do basic work on vehicles themselves? Possible partners: educational groups that have automotive education (e.g. Bates), Auto workers unions or associations, faith-based groups, volunteers from PC Transit or other similar agencies, etc. TRM had a small shop many years ago, the Need a Break program for car repair; not sure what the fate of that was. Are there funds like workforce funds that could support a program like this? (This idea of organizing volunteers who can help with repair work arose in three different discussion groups).
- We could also help with cosmetic repairs that make RVs less likely to receive negative attention. Maybe arts funding to brighten up RVs?
- Could use a list of how to prepare for moving into a vehicle (see resources below).
- Reminder that people in RVs need a lot of the same things people in tents do, including cold water.
- Support for septic cleanup and water refill.
- Get rid of graffiti because people use it to communicate where the drugs are and how to get them.
- To better serve folks living in vehicles, take care of yourself and your staff first. Burn-out affects the quality of our response.
- Think about how we can reduce the losses people face when their RV or car is impounded.
- Provide an easy to access "How to live in your car" document (see resources below).
- Ask households who have been living in their car "what do you know now that you didn't. know when you first started living in your vehicle?"
- Provide information about how to get kids in school, emergency help, food access.
- Providing notebook/pen & a waterproof pouch to store important items - ID, SS cards, birth certificates, etc. (things you need on you if your car gets taken).
- We spoke about people who leave their vehicle to shower or get basic needs & return to their location to find their home has been impounded.
- Train outreach workers regarding some best practices on connecting with vehicle-living communities. For example, doing outreach at the best time of day, connecting with the community leader(s).



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- Researching successful models of managed safe parking lots for RVs. Look at Santa Barbara Safe Parking procedures manual (see resources below.) Does anyone have this? It's expensive to order.
- Is there a legal angle to prevent towing of lived-in vehicles that Tacoma Probono can assist with?

## Additional comments that arose

- Funding up front so non-profits don't have to carry the cost of outreach while they wait to be reimbursed.
- Have people with lived experience help inform contracts so the contract gets closer to meeting the need.
- Single persons without kids or a medical issue are on the low end of receiving services. Need to serve more than just people with a medical diagnosis or people with children.
- Expropriate vacant lots and buildings, apply vacancy taxes.
- Contracts to mitigate property owners' risk of allowing sanctioned encampments.
- Need publicly funded elections - as electeds do as their donors decree.

## Resources and links

*Steve Goodman's "Lincoln Park Pirates." A tale of towing...*

"Way-hey, tow them away ... We plunder the streets of your town" <https://youtu.be/dE5HtTxxJRM>

*Preparing to be Homeless: Information on facing immanent homelessness.*

<http://empowerus.info/preparing-to-be-homeless>

*21 Tips On How to Prepare for Being Homeless in America*

[https://www.boredpanda.com/homeless-survival-advice/?utm\\_source=google&utm\\_medium=organic&utm\\_campaign=organic](https://www.boredpanda.com/homeless-survival-advice/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=organic)

*Homeless – Living in a Vehicle Survival Guide*

<http://empowerus.info/homeless-with-vehicle>

*Santa Barbara Safe Parking Manual*

"The Safe Parking Program Manual is a guide created for other communities seeking to begin their own program to assist the vehicular homeless. The manual outlines best practices, challenges, tips, and pearls of wisdom." Link is to website where you can order manual for \$150. <https://sbnbcc.org/safe-parking/>