

What can you do?

Dehumanizing, brutalizing, then profiting off people is central to capitalism, racism, and settler-colonial power. Homelessness and genocidal displacement resides at the heart of this process. The path to a better world is made by those most profoundly impacted.

Self-organized community survival is already a daily fact of life for most homeless folks. All the ups and downs of relying on others in the same boat. On the smallest scale, individuals and small groups of housed people can provide concrete support to the mutual-aid folks are already doing. Understand that all our liberation is tied together.

If you're housed: overcome your apprehensions, talk to your neighbors at the nearby the camp or squat. Find out, *from their perspective*, what assistance they need. A neighbor showing up to offer friendly help will be a welcome change from most interactions campers have.

Get together with friends or neighbors. Setting up a weekly meal or supply distro can provide a secure space for anyone who needs it. Organize with coworkers and community members to provide free resources or spaces, day and night.

Join or build networks working to stop the sweeps, end incarceration, and dismantle the colonizing system that *is* the crisis!



Find Inspiration, Take Action

Search Social Media for 'Mutual Aid' or 'Food Not Bombs!' + [Your City's Name] or check out these groups fighting to **Stop The Sweeps!**

Seattle: @Stop_Sweeps_SEA @stopthesweepsseattle

Austin: @Stop_Sweeps_ATX Kalamazoo: @StopTheSweepsKZ

Eugene: @stopthesweeps_eugene Corvallis: @StopTheSweepsCV

Portland: @StopSweepsPDX @StopTheSweepsPDX

ItsGoingDown.org - @IGD_News @its.going.down

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Stop the Sweeps!

Stop the War against our Homeless Neighbors!



Millions of people sleep-rough in tents, doorways, or vehicles across North America. Police threats of violent arrest and seizure of their few belongings can annihilate any semblance of stability on any given day. Sweeps are a never-ending game of whack-a-mole. Homeless folks move to another spot, cops come again to inflict more violence and trauma.

Floods of capital force more from their homes and onto the streets. Displacement falls along historic lines of racist, colonial segregation. Indigenous, Black and Brown communities are attacked by colonization and gentrification - individuals can't just 'move along.'

Pandemics have long been a trauma for these communities, magnified for anyone who is homeless. The Covid-19 pandemic hit them hardest. That virus' endless mutation and global persistence stems partly from exploitative pharmaceutical patent restrictions. The same pharmaceutical companies helped kickstart a nationwide opioid epidemic. Drugs soften the daily pain. They can even be fun. But they can magnify problems already faced by marginalized communities.

Private charity and government spending lets those with power and money claim they're 'doing something.' Their privatized Homeless Industrial Complex instead profits off a gaping wound. They will never build enough housing, real treatment options, or even shelter beds for the ever-growing need – fuck City Hall's endless stream of lies.

We must build new lines of solidarity and mutual-aid to leave this dystopia behind and build a new world!

A War on Homeless People

A loose network of corporations, agencies, and 'concerned citizens' dehumanize and brutalize homeless folks. Occasional claims to care about their well-being ring hollow as they subject our neighbors to a never-ending cycle of humiliation. This war is also a threat to keep everyone compliant - grateful for the few comforts we might cling to.

Capitalist investment in maintaining the oppressive status-quo incentives all media to focus on individual 'failings.' Poverty Porn is profitable. Systemic issues and reality-shaping decisions by the powerful are deliberately ignored. But many conservative and far-right media and politicians utilize outright fascist tactics to mobilize hatred against homeless folks.

The city of Seattle often features in US-wide fascist narratives because other cities have seen a model in its interconnected state-corporate response. A massive industry of 'nationally renowned' homelessness-nonprofits works hard to meet the desires of state and corporate partners. But their double-edged support rarely meets people's real needs, while cops keep on sweeping.

Vicious assaults on homeless folks are increasingly carried out by organized anti-homeless hate groups. Uniting private individuals with funding by corporate and conservative money, their propaganda focuses on sensationalized images of 'trash.' These groups cultivate ties with better recognized hate groups like the 'Proud Boys.'

Media

Right-wing, radio, and tv, and political personalities have long peddled malicious narratives painting homeless people as utterly inhuman. Christopher Rufo is one major popularizer of this narrative. His right-wing filmmaking career launched highlighting the supposed 'evils' of harm-reduction work in Seattle and Vancouver, BC. Rufo's next ludicrous film ignited US-wide fascist fear-mongering against Critical Race Theory.

A local outlet of Sinclair Broadcast Group spun this into a broader fascist narrative in their propaganda trash *Seattle is Dying*. It depicted a city under simultaneous threat by a dehumanized homeless 'enemy' and a progressive establishment, showering love on business owners. The station then let one correspondent elaborate further with numerous heavily aired and promoted spots filmed at homeless encampments and sweeps. This 'reporter' was only discretely fired by Sinclair after he made a propaganda sizzle-reel for the local Proud Boys featuring a Neo-Nazi song.

Hate Groups

Local Facebook pages and groups have become a central organizing platform for anti-homeless hate. Page titles often focus on the idea of 'safety' or the aesthetic attraction of their locale. Some are run by random local NIMBYs and small-business owners. Admins sometimes have ties associated with right-wing 'dark money' political spending. Some circulate well-funded lies and overt calls for vigilante violence against people on the streets. Others spread sensational imagery in order to dehumanize homeless people while contributing nothing towards a solution. Such groups increasingly exist targeting communities beyond major city limits, focusing on individual suburbs or semi-rural counties. Apps like Nextdoor are also seedbeds for these dangerous sentiments.

Isolated NIMBY arsonists have brutalized many encampments. There are organized groups that harass and even assault campers they try to entrap while arguing for or even carrying out their own sweeps. Their escapades are frequently promoted by right-wing corporate and social media.

Police

For years, the face of Seattle's government outreach was the 'Navigation Team' of police officers and social workers. The latter complained of being props for the cops and city to claim they 'offered services' that didn't meaningfully exist. The Nav Team's purpose was really to facilitate sweeps, increasingly without notice. The Nav Team model was exported to many other cities. Its former head left, exposed insisting a sweep continue while a resident was found dead - he was promptly hired by Vancouver, WA to start a similar program.

Police's personal sentiments are encapsulated by their powerful unions. The Seattle Police Officers Guild personally invited one anti-homeless hate group Safe to a candidate forum, while the Guild's president hosted the head of another on his podcast. Shared bogus narratives demand aggressive policing to 'solve the problem.'

The city claimed to abolish the Nav Team following the George Floyd Uprising. Then it created the HOPE Team to do the exact same thing.

