

HAMPTON VA

FOR THE RECORD

Hampton and region reducing homelessness

Hampton participates in the Greater Virginia Peninsula Homelessness Consortium, which gathers governments and non-profits in the region to work together to reduce homelessness.

For the record, they've made major gains between 2011 and 2017. Based on annual counts, there has been:

- A 35% decrease in the number of homeless people
- A 70% decrease in the number of homeless veterans
- 84% of the homeless had shelter, at least temporarily, during the coldest months

Hampton and the consortium have identified key segments of the homeless population and are working on targeted solutions to help: Veterans, people with mental illness or substance abuse problems, domestic violence victims, unaccompanied youth, and families.

Hampton's Human Services has a team of people who visit homeless people, do assessments and work with them to obtain services.

Read more at www.hampton.gov/ForTheRecord

Watch an interview with Human Services at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xq5anr5zfNw>

Learn about HELP (Hampton Roads Ecumenical Lodgings and Provisions) and A Night's Welcome: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzW7PVRG2sw&t=140s>

FAQ

Q: What can a citizen do to assist?

A: Call the Housing Crisis Hotline number - 757-587-4202 - to report people who appear to be homeless or to seek services yourself. Hampton Human Services has comfort kits, which include daily necessities and information on how to get help. Kits can be picked up by calling 757-727-1806.

Volunteer or donate to local agencies that assist the homeless. Donations can be made to HELP, the Peninsula Salvation Army and Transitions Family Violence Services (see contact information below). All are located in Hampton and assist with the homeless populations. Please contact Mary Holup with Hampton Human Services

(Mary.Holup@dss.virginia.gov) if you want to volunteer or assist with items needed for the homeless.

Q: Do people refuse services because of drug or alcohol problems?

A: Actually, Human Services can house people first to get them off the streets, then work with them on addiction issues. We work closely with the Hampton-Newport News Community Services Board and other agencies to address substance abuse issues. Yes, people do refuse help, but we continue to visit until trust is established. This can take months, or even years.

Q: Where can a citizen get information about the homeless and available resources?

A: Please visit <http://www.gvphc.org> for the Greater Virginia Peninsula Homelessness Consortium. All partnering agencies are listed and additional homeless resources can be located.

Q: What efforts are made during extreme weather?

A: Winter shelters are open from November to late March. This gets the homeless off the streets and prevents death or injury related to the cold. During the summer in extreme heat, mobile watering stations and shelters are opened. Winter and extreme heat shelters are normally organized with the faith-based community in conjunction with HELP and Hampton Human Services. You can learn which religious groups host the shelter and ways to volunteer or assist at <http://helpushelpu.org/>

Q: Are there special efforts to help veterans?

A: Yes. A special effort was declared that created increased coordination between local, state and federal resources. As of November 2016, Virginia had the lowest rate of veteran homelessness in the country, about 7 per 1,000.

Q: What about those in domestic violence situations?

A: While the region has seen a decrease in homelessness among veterans, those with serious mental illness and those with substance abuse issues, the number of homeless people due to domestic violence has remained relatively stable. In Hampton, Transitions Family Violence Services provides emergency, short-term and transitional shelter facilities, as well as assistance toward self-sufficiency.

Q: Are panhandlers homeless?

A: It has been the experience of outreach workers that most panhandlers are not homeless, though the signs may state they are. Giving money to panhandlers makes what they do profitable and can increase the number of people that panhandle. Instead, consider giving them comfort kits or food. Giving your cash donations to agencies that work with the homeless or hungry will ensure your contributions are used for the purpose you intend. These are some agencies you could consider that are located in Hampton and work with homeless people:

- HELP, at <http://helpushelpu.org/> or 757-727-2577
- Peninsula Salvation Army, at <http://virginiasalvationarmy.org/hamptonva/> or 757-838-4875

- Transitions Family Violence Services, at <http://www.transitionsfvs.com/wp/> (757) 723-7774

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