How to help someone experiencing homelessness.

Homelessness can happen to anyone: families, workers, veterans, seniors and young people. Respect and a real connection matter as much as a meal.

If someone is hurt or in danger, call 911. For shelter, food and housing help, **dial 211** or look up the county on thebrproject.org.

What it can look like

- Sleeping outside, in a car or in a tent
- Staying in a motel or moving between friends' couches
- Carrying belongings or documents everywhere
- Families with children and people who have jobs
- Veterans, seniors and young adults leaving foster care
- Often not visible at all

What to do

1. **See the person.** Say hello and use their name if they share it. Dignity matters more than a handout.
2. **Ask, do not assume.** "Is there anything you need today?" Respect a no.
3. **Offer what is practical.** Water, food, socks, hygiene items, a phone charge, a bus pass or a ride.
4. **Connect them.** Share 211 and the county page on thebrproject.org. Offer to make the call together or go with them. Help with ID, birth certificate and Social Security card, since missing documents block housing.
5. **Stay involved.** Give time, money or supplies to local shelters and housing groups, and ask what they need first. In extreme heat or cold, check on people and call 211 for warming or cooling centers.

Helpful words

SAY "How are you doing today?"

SAY "Can I help you find a place to stay tonight?"

SAY "Would you like me to call 211 with you?"

SAY "What would help most right now?"

Please avoid

AVOID Assuming addiction, laziness or choice.

AVOID Taking photos without permission.

AVOID Offering advice no one asked for.

AVOID Promising what you cannot deliver.

AVOID Waking someone who is sleeping unless you think they are in danger.

Numbers to share

Emergency	**911**	Shelter, food, rent and bills	**dial 211**
Crisis support	**call or text 988**	Homeless veterans	**1-877-424-3838**
Domestic violence hotline	**1-800-799-7233**	Free legal help (Alabama)	**1-866-456-4995**

Take care of yourself too. It is okay if you cannot solve everything. One kind, honest connection can be the first step toward housing.

Find local help in all 67 Alabama counties

Scan for shelter, food, rent and power help, recovery, veterans, legal aid and Spanish-language help, plus guides on how to help.

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Information last reviewed November 2026. This sheet is general guidance, not medical, legal or mental health advice. In an emergency, call 911. Numbers change, so confirm before you share. Free to print and share. the br project, Birmingham, Alabama.