



## Homeless & ReEntry Helpers, Inc.

918 E. Michigan St., Indianapolis, IN 46202 USA  
(317) 547-0500 **Voice** | (317) 547-0700 **Fax**  
Hawkins@HRHinfo.com | www.IndyHelpers.com

### Notes for Proposed Guidelines Helpers Helping Others Task Force Homeless Helpers Program

8 March 2010 (Revised 24Oct10 at 2245)

**Below are my notes that we can use as a starting point in working on a set of “Guidelines” that will enable us HELPERS to better serve the homeless.**

My name is Don Hawkins and I am the Executive Director of Homeless & ReEntry Helpers, Inc. HRH was formed to be an information and referral service bureau to the Homeless and ReEntry industry. Our web site currently lists over 1,450 organizations, and our newsletter is emailed weekly to over 3,750 subscribers. HRH does not offer any direct services to the Homeless or to the ExOffender. Our web site was designed to be used by pastors, parole & probation officers, case workers, family members and friends of those needing help. It is intended to direct those needing help to our existing services providers whose clients include the homeless and those in and out of our jails and prison system. HRH's ultimate goal is to provide a Conference & Training Center for the Homeless & ReEntry Industry. We would like to think of it as a “service bureau” type organization for existing service providers.

We need your help filling in the blanks in this proposal and we are looking for suggestions on a better way of doing what needs to be done, and/or using better wording in describing the same.

**Please Note:** None of the proposed rules that we have written below are etched in stone. If you think you have a better way of working with the problem, or a better way of writing it, please bring it to the table so we can collectively talk about it. It is important that we all, or most of us, are on the same page when it comes to helping the homeless.

**A) Society’s line of offense against homelessness** – In my opinion, there are 6 sides to this story

1. The homeless themselves (they have to acknowledge they need, want, and will accept help)
2. Street Ministries – Churches, Faith Based - HELPERS
3. Street Outreach – Neighborhood, Community, Business - HELPERS
4. Service Providers, usually professional, non-government, non-profits - HELPERS
5. Local Government (City/Town) Services
6. State and Federally funded projects – monies are usually distributed to local cities and towns, as well as some service providers for homeless projects.

**B) City, State and Federal officials/agencies, along with local Service Providers that HHOTF needs to work with to achieve its goals (organizations and titles may not be complete):**

1. City of Indianapolis
  - a. **Olgen Williams**, Deputy Mayor
  - b. **Frank Straub**, Director of Public Safety
  - c. **Douglas Hairston**, Director of the Mayor's Front Porch (faith based) Alliance
  - d. **Maxine Bryant**, Directory of ReEntry
  - e. **Robert Hipple**, Sgt. IMPD
  - f. **Kevin Tichenor, Jr.**, Faith Based Coordinator for the M/C Prosecutor's Office
2. Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and Prevention (CHIP)
  - a. **Tim Joyce**, Executive Director
  - b. **Michael Hurst**, Program Director
  - c. **Michael Butler**, Associate Program Director
  - d. **xxx**, Community Relations
3. Homeless Initiative Program (HIP)
  - a. **Sharon Stark**, Director
  - b. **Kenneth Griffin**, Executive Director
  - c. **Donnie Robinette**, Outreach Coordinator
  - d. **Stacey Nugent**, Community Team Leader
  - e. **Jodi Guinan**, Outreach Coordinator
4. Wheeler Mission Ministries
  - a. **Rick Alvis**, President & CEO
  - b. **Steve Kerr**, Chief Development Officer
  - c. **Cal Nelson**, Chief Program Officer
  - d. **Matt Roller**, Director of Shelter Services
  - e. **Bethany Alvis**, Community Affairs
5. Horizon House
  - a. **John Joannette**, Executive Director
  - b. **Leslie Kelly**, Director of Program Services
  - c. **Melissa Burgess**, Client Services Coordinator
  - d. **Danny Camacho**, Outreach
6. Church Federation of Indianapolis
  - a. **Angelique Walker-Smith**, Executive Director of Indy Faith
7. State of Indiana
  - a. **Isaac Randolph**, Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives
8. Federal Government
  - a. **Dianne Brown**, Veteran's Administration, Homeless & ReEntry Coordinator

**C) Who needs to be informed, trained and/or educated on HHOTF's guidelines?**

1. Street Outreach Volunteers/HELPERS
2. Street Ministries Volunteers/HELPERS
3. Other Community Based HELPERS
4. Police Officers that deal with the homeless
5. Service Providers that have a staff that deal with the homeless - HELPERS
6. The leaders of any of the homeless/street groups/camps (if possible)
- 7.

## D) How do we begin?

1. I have asked the following persons to serve in the following capacity until further notice.
  - a. **Don Hawkins**, Executive Director
  - b. **Ralph Parrott**, Director of Operations
  - c. **Gene Miller**, Director of Development
  - d. **Joyce McCoy**, Director of Administration
2. We need to form an **“Executive (Steering) Committee”** (Don will be the Chairperson) that will meet on a regular basis before each monthly “HELPERS” meeting. This committee will be made up of the above four Directors and a select group of existing street outreach and street ministry organization heads. The selection of the additional committee members will be selected after we are better organized and we have gotten a chance to know each other better, and learn what we have to offer each other.
3. We need to form a **“Helping the Homeless Committee”** (Gene will be the Chairperson) to document where they can be found. This committee will also us direct and better coordinate Our HELPERS and the locations they serve.
4. We need to form a **“Organize Our HELPERS Committee”** (Joyce will be the Chairperson) to document who our HELPERS are, and what they want to do, and how often
5. We need to form a **“Service Providers Selection Committee”** (Ralph will be the Chairperson) to decide what services need to be incorporated into our training standards that will eventually be used as the guidelines for all of the HELPERS to better serve the homeless
6. We need to determine what service providers have extra food, clothing, and personal hygiene items that can be distributed by other HELPERS
7. We need to continue meeting on a regular basis until the above items have been completed; then at least once per month thereafter.
8. Start a “Bulletin Board” email system that will allow us to keep up with and communicate with each other on how we can share our time and resources with each other
9. Start a weekly Email Newsletter on what we are, who we are, and what we are doing to make things better for the homeless that will be distributed to our members.
- 10.

## E) We need to:

1. Identify where all the homeless are currently living, and how many are at each location. In order to better serve them and their location, we need to try and identify: race, sex, age, those with children, veterans, those on drugs or alcohol, those with mental health problems, etc.
  - a. Draw up a map using existing Counties, Townships, Districts, etc.
  - b. Divide the city into homeless territories so that we can direct and/or redirect our HELPERS to help all of the homeless in those areas
    - a) Currently, there are some areas that have too many HELPERS, and some areas that do not have enough HELPERS
  - c.
2. Identify where the street ministries are currently serving the homeless
  - a. What day(s) and time
  - b. What they serve
  - c. What they do
  - d. Would they be willing to share their experiences and talents
  - e. Would they be willing to move or take over another location
  - f. Would they be willing to join an information network for the homeless
  - g. Would they be willing to starting working together as a group toward one goal
  - h.

3. Identify the service providers that are currently helping the homeless
  - a. Identify what services they currently offer
  - b. Where do they offer them from: their offices, the streets, or both
  - c. When do they offer them: the times & days of the week
  - d.
  
4. Address any conflicts or issues that need to be resolved such as: awareness, education, opportunities to partner, and helping people to get organized, etc.
  - a. Avoid having their actions result in bad or unintended consequences
  - b.
  
5. Identify the service providers that should be helping the homeless but are not
  - a. Identify what services are needed by the homeless but not yet available
  - b.

**F) Service providers that use a case worker system should be able to help the homeless obtain most if not all of the below items.** I am a big believer that anyone needing help should use more than one service provider for his or her needs. I have found that most service providers are better at some things than others. No one service provider can do it all even though they sometimes say they can. You may have to shop around for other service providers to achieve your goals.

**1. Information on where to get goods and services:**

- a. HRH's web site – thru friends, case workers, parole or probation officers, pastors, etc.
- b. CHIP's – Handbook of Help for the Homeless
- c. Connect2Help's 2-1-1 – 24/7 call center
- d. MCCOY's EASY Book for Kids
- e. CICOA's Hand Book for Seniors
- f.

**2. Jobs:**

- a. Additional Training
- b. Resume Preparation
- c. Search – learn how to
- d. Placement
- e. Full Time
- f. Part Time
- g.

**3. Housing:**

- a. Transitional housing
- b. Homes for rent
- c. Apartments for rent
- d. Shelters
- e. Supportive housing
- f.

**4. Transportation:**

- a. Bus passes
- b. Used Autos
- c. Gas money
- d. Share ride programs
- e.

**5. Treatment for:**

- a. Addictions
- b. Substance Abuse (drugs & alcohol)
- c. Mental Health
- d. Anger management
- e. HIV/AIDS
- f. Medical problems
- g.

**6. Basis needs stuff, like:**

- a. Food
- b. Clothes
- c. Hygiene items
- d. Cell phone (for job hunting)
- e. Email account (for job hunting)
- f.

**G) Proposed Guidelines for Our HELPERS working with the homeless:**

**1. Suggested – That you “Can or Should Do”:**

1. Give them your time and tell them Jesus loves them and so do you
  - a. If you are Christian
2. Always show patience, kindness, and especially respect. Remember they may have lost their home but they did not lose their dignity
3. Always try to talk them into going to a safer location, such as shelters, friends, family, etc.
4. Advise them on the hazards on living on the street; bodily harm, health, weather, harassment, etc.
5. Always have plenty of good, heavy duty trash bags (don't buy the cheap ones, they burst) with you at all times. Ask if there is any one person “in charge” or a person that keeps that location “picked up” and make sure they have extra trash bags. We know they use trash bags to store their stuff in but we would rather have them store their stuff in trash bags than have it blown or scattered all over that area.
6. If you are part of a “group feeding”, make sure you always take your trash with you, and always leave the areas cleaner than when you first started
7. Always try to do a group feeding at a central location, church, community center, community park, downtown parks, etc.
8. Always encourage them to keep their areas neat, clean, and picked up at all times, if possible, considering their circumstances. They need to know that if the area they are living in is full of trash that is blowing up and down the streets, that is when the neighbors and the business owners start calling the police and the Mayor's office.
9. Always carry your personal ID with you at all times
10. Always leave your money and your purse or wallet (if you carry one) in your car
11. Always carry your cell phone for emergencies
12. Always take some type of hand sanitizer with you at all times, or at least leave some in the car that you can use when you get back to the car. As a safety and sanitation precaution, you should use it as often as you can.
- 13.

## 2. Suggested on things you “Can Not or Should Not Do”:

1. Never, never, never “go out” by yourself
  - a. Try to keep into groups of two, three or more, if possible
  - b. Never let yourself be separated from your group for any reason
2. Female HELPERS – Never take anyone, anywhere, by yourself
3. Male HELPERS – Never take a female homeless person anywhere in your car alone
4. Never do door-to-door group feedings (set up tables where they live). Please try not to do a group feeding at a location where several homeless are living. Neighborhood associations do not like it and it is bound to cause problems that will eventually get the homeless kicked out of that area or neighborhood. You may start out feeding just the people at that location, but in time, others will start visiting that location. That’s when things start getting out of hand and neighbors and business owners will start complaining.
5. Never take your children with you to where the homeless live. Several of the homeless are registered or non-registered sex offenders and some are prone to violence. Remember some of them, but not all of them, are constantly using drugs or alcohol. **DON’T TAKE CHANCES.** Please leave your children at home.
6. Never wear or display expensive jewelry
7. Never flash the amount of cash you have with you
8. Do not smoke or take medications around the homeless. They will ask you for one of whatever you are smoking or taking.
- 9.

**Please note:** There is such a thing as getting too personal or too comfortable with a homeless person to the point that you may let your guard down. An example is when you think you are just going to visit someone for a specific purpose, and they are not there for some reason. You may be confronted by another homeless person in that same area that does not know you as a friend to the homeless. That person may not be as friendly toward you as the person you are looking for. To them, you are now intruding into “their territory”, or invading what they consider “their space”. Unpredictability can be a disaster when dealing with the homeless, so never go out alone and always be prepared.

### 3. **DO GIVE the homeless:**

1. Information on where they can get goods and services they may need
  - a. CHIP's Handbook of Help
  - b. Information on Connect2Help and 2-1-1 as well as 9-1-1 for emergencies
  - c. HRH's Brochure or HRH's Flyer / Poster
  - d. Other information on where they can get shelter, food, and clothing
  - e. Bibles and religious materials
  - f. Other service providers' brochures that you deem necessary for that particular individual
2. Food (hot meals from a central location only)
3. Food (from a fast food place)
4. Food (sandwiches, packaged or canned with pop-tops – most don't have can openers)
5. Food (unopened nutritious snacks)
6. Food (junk – chips, cookies, etc. can do, but not preferred)
7. Water or juices in plastic bottles or cans – No glass containers, please
8. Clothing (pants & shirts)
9. Underwear (socks, shorts & T-shirts)
10. Insulated underwear in the winter
11. Sleepwear or pajama type clothing
12. Coats, Jackets & hooded sweatshirts
13. Backpacks or duffel bags
14. Shoes, boots & belts
15. Self-heating gloves, pads, etc.
16. Bedding items - blankets & sleeping bags
17. Cigarettes and Tobacco (not recommended)
  - a. If you give in and do give them tobacco and/or cigarettes, do not give them very much at one time. Sometimes they sell or trade them for illegal drugs or alcohol and sometimes that makes them a target for thieves that need and want cigarettes
18. Trash bags w/ties – Please do not buy the cheap, thin trash bags. They burst easily and sometimes cause more problems than they are worth. Please get the good ones with the ties build in.
19. Flashlight & batteries
20. Newspapers, Books & magazines
21. Coupons for food and clothing. – Examples: Goodwill coupons for clothes, and fast food coupons for food
- 22.

#### 4. DO NOT GIVE the homeless:

1. Your personal contact information such as your home address or your home phone number – Cell phone numbers and your business phone numbers are usually ok
2. Door to door service – when giving to several people at one time, try to get them to go to a central location that is safe for all sides.
3. Money/Cash (unless you take them to dispense with it yourself such as a fast food place, Goodwill, etc.
  - a. Especially do not give money to “Panhandlers” because most of them are not homeless. CHIP has an excellent program if you want to just give your money or regular credit card donations to the homeless
4. Drugs or Medicine – Do not give them prescription drugs of any kind – legal or otherwise – Some drugs may seem to be legal to you but they may not be legal for them to have, and could cause them problems you cannot foresee
  - a. If you give them pills like aspirin, Tylenol, Excedrin, etc., do not give them too many at one time – they may try to sell or trade them
  - b. If they are sick, they need to go to a clinic or Horizon House and be seen by a professional to decide what they need – Please do not try to diagnosis any of their health problems
5. Beer or alcohol products of any kind
6. Food that needs to be cooked, or is not cooked, and/or needs to be refrigerated
7. Firewood, fire logs or anything they can start a fire with
8. Kerosene, gasoline or other flammable products
9. Candles
10. Butane or Bunsen burners
11. Grills, charcoal or charcoal lighters
12. Mattresses, other than the blow-up type that they can take with them when they have to move
13. Pets
14. Anything that can be used as a weapon such as knives, guns, straight razors, etc.
- 15.

If a HELPER has any of the above “Do not give” items that he/she wishes to donate, please ask around to see what service provider can use these articles for other, safer purposes – Or, you can bring those items to HRH’s warehouse at 918 E. Michigan St. and we will make sure those items are distributed to service providers that can properly distribute them.

**H) Service Providers in our community that work directly with or offer direct services to the homeless: This section is not complete**

1. Shelters:
  - a. Wheeler Mission - men
  - b. Good New Ministries - men
  - c. Holy Family Shelter - families
  - d. Dayspring Center - families
  - e. Salvation Army Social Service Center – men
  - f. Salvation Army - women
  - g. Wheeler Ministries Center for Families and Children – families
  - h. Coburn Place – women from domestic violence
  - i. Julian Center – women from domestic violence
  - j.
2. Organizations that use Case Workers that work directly with the homeless
  - a. Horizon House – day room
  - b. Homeless Initiative Program (HIP) - outreach
  - c. IMPD (2 Sargent's)
  - d.
3. Street Outreach (faith or community based)
  - a. Outreach, Inc.
  - b. The PourHouse
  - c. Indy Dream Center
  - d. HOOP
  - e.
4. Meals, served daily:
  - a. Xxx
  - b. Xxx
  - c.
5. Clothes & Personal Hygiene Items
  - a. Xxx
  - b. Xxx
  - c.

**I) Sponsors and/or Facilitators for the Task Force – This section is not complete**

1. Homeless & ReEntry Helpers, Inc.
2. Faith Hope & Love
3. Church Federation
4. IUPUI Center for Health Policy – not asked yet
- 5.