

WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE UNHOUSED OR CLOSE TO IT IN THE BOISE AREA

Last Updated: January 23, 2023

This document was created by Low Income Support Inc. to help assist anyone who is on the brink of being unhoused or is currently unhoused in the Boise area. This document is not the answer to everything but does provide directions based on input from multiple non-profit organizations and many low-income individuals who have faced this difficult path. Any organization referenced in this document is included in Attachment A with hours, addresses, phone numbers and notes. Support amounts and eligibility requirements are always changing, and this document is updated continually to provide the most accurate answers. The areas of support are not listed by priority, but we believe the first six items are critical to your success in finding necessary assistance. If you have suggestions or changes, feel free to email info@boiselist.org with your input. This document can also be downloaded by visiting Lowincomesupport.org and selecting the resources tab.

General Support Categories:

- **Seek free Case Management (CM) support to assist you.**
 - o *Why is Case Management helpful?* Getting input from a trusted source is critical for navigating this area. Many resources are free, which will allow you to keep your funds available for the areas where they are needed most – like housing. Many people have been in this situation and if you utilize the CM's expertise, you don't waste additional time and money.
 - o *Where can I access Case Management?* There are many organizations which provide free CM support. If one organization can't provide the needed support, go to the next one. Don't give up! Here are some of the organizations available in the Boise area:
 - Catch, Our Path Home, Interfaith Sanctuary, Terry Reilly Medical, Jesse Tree, Corpus Christi House, River of Life (ROL), City Lights, St. Vincent DePaul, Salvation Army, Full Circle Health
- **Get on the housing list.** If you are looking for housing, contact Our Path Home for an intake interview to get on their housing list. Boise uses Our Path Home as the single re-entry point for housing and this organization coordinates all the low-cost housing available in the Boise area. The waiting list is months (sometimes years), but it's important to get on this list. Your personal situation (health, age, family members, income, etc.) may affect where you are placed on this list.
- **Get a cell phone if you don't have one.** You will need to have a cell phone number to provide to most support organizations for them to call you back. You may qualify for a free cell phone via the Federal Cell Phone program (sometimes called an "Obama phone"). If you make less than \$19,700 annually or are enrolled in Medicaid, SNAP, or SSI you can qualify for this program. If you don't qualify, you can purchase a cheap phone from Walmart for around \$40 and buy a monthly service for \$25/month. If you have a case manager, most can assist you on getting the free government cell phone. You will need an address to ship the cell phone. The Boise daytime shelter, Corpus Christi, provides mail service for the unhoused. If you're staying at one of the nighttime shelters, make sure you can receive mail at their facility. Attachment A lists the websites you can apply to for the free government phone.

- **Get a valid ID.** You will need to have a valid ID to get employed and gain access to some of the low income services. Corpus Christi will provide the funds (Money check to DMV) and outline the process to get you an Idaho ID. Obtaining other forms of ID, such as a Driver's License or Birth Certificate can also be supported by Corpus and other main support organizations.
- **Review online resources available in the Boise Area.** Review the online resources to stay knowledgeable on what's available. The following websites summarize many of the support organizations in the Boise area. Each organization typically has their own web site, but these sites summarize them and provide a quick reference.
 - o Findhelpidaho.org
 - o BoiseLIST.org
- **Review your close support – family & friends.** If you have a plan and have done your work to find support, you will be more likely to get the needed assistance from family, friends, and support organizations. Compartmentalize your requests for help. Don't overwhelm the same individual with all your requests.
- **Keep records.** Keep a secure log of contacts (name, email, phone number) and the information you receive. Make sure to ask for phone numbers to allow for follow-up questions and further support. You can log this information in your phone for quick reference or keep a small notebook with working pen/pencil.
- **Get an address for your mail.** Some support resources are provided via mail. You will need to have your mail delivered to a place you have reliable access to. If a friend or family member will allow you to use their address, change all crucial organizations (banks, government agencies, medical clinics, etc.) to this address. Make sure the address will be accessible for an extended period. The shelters also provide postal services. Corpus allows anyone to use their address and provides a daily time slot for mail pickup.
- **Apply for a food stamp card using the SNAP program.** This can be done by going to the Department of Health & Welfare office or going online to apply. Monthly income must be less than \$1,580 for an individual to qualify and you must be a legal citizen or immigrant. The card is usually sent within a week. Typical support is around \$110 and the SNAP card is replenished at the first of the month.
- **Contact Jesse Tree for rental & house payment assistance.** Jesse Tree will provide the name of any organization which will work with you to try and keep your housing. They will also provide any organization which provides utility support. Don't leave without having the next steps planned out for you.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- **What do I do with my belongings?** There are no free storage services in the Boise area. The day shelters have no official storage space and if you leave items for the day, someone needs to watch them. If you must leave an item at a shelter, make sure the staff is aware and get their approval. The nighttime shelters do provide a small storage space for most guests if you spend the night at the shelter. Get a backpack to store your belongings and only keep the essentials. Have a separate bag set aside for laundry. If you have ID paperwork, make sure these are stored securely so they can't be damaged (zip lock bag). Never give your original copies to anyone – make copies at the library or the shelter if you need to hand these documents out. Make sure your wallet is secure if you keep your ID in it. If the wallet/purse can be attached to you via chain that's good. It's probably not a good idea to move your belongings into a storage container. Most times you will need the funds for more important items and you may lose your possessions in storage. When you do get back on your feet, you can buy new items. The YMCA also provides a small locker for \$20/month.
- **Where can I store my vehicle?** There is no free place to leave your vehicle for an extended period in the Boise area unless it's stored at a private residence with the owner's permission. If your vehicle is parked on city streets, it must be moved off the current block every three days once it has been marked. If you can find a homeowner willing to have your vehicle parked on their property, make sure you know all the rules the homeowner is enforcing. You may prefer to live out of your car rather than stay at a local shelter. Ask around at the shelters (ask staff first) for the best places to park your car at night. If you can find a few places where you can park, this will give you a back-up option if you get hassled about the current spot you may be staying. Defer any unnecessary maintenance, but make sure the car is drivable for jobs, interviews and to prevent towing. Find someone you can trust to help maintain the vehicle –start by asking staff at the local shelters.
- **What do I do with my money?** If possible, put your money in a local bank so you can access it via an ATM. Avoid carrying large amounts of cash on you and **NEVER** give your bank password out to anyone. Make your password a catch phrase that only you know. The phrase should be at least 16 characters long with a number, capitalized letter, and a unique character. An example of a good password is Mysonisthebest2002! If you have credit cards, try not to use them if possible. They should only be used as a last resort and only for emergencies.
- **Where can I shower and do laundry?** The day and nighttime shelters provide showers and free laundry services. Corpus has showers available from 8:30am to 3:00pm for adults every day except Sunday. You can also stop by Corpus to get on the shower list. Corpus also has a laundry list, but it may be full for the day and you may need to book it for a future day. No matter how long the list they will get you in. The Boise YMCA also has a free low-income membership plan during the winter. Call one of the local non-profits to get details or stop by the YMCA. If you have a friend who has housing, consider asking them to use their shower or laundry, but be considerate. If you can afford to get a low cost gym membership you can use their shower facilities.
- **What do I do if I've been incarcerated?** The St. Vincent DePaul Reentry Services is the first place to visit to understand your support options. They will give you a starting point and next steps to

get housing. Visit the other organizations listed under Prison & Probation Re-Entry categories on the BoiseLIST.org and NeedhelpIdaho.org websites to gain additional resources specific to your needs.

- **What about medical, dental and vision needs?** If you are not covered by private insurance and meet the financial thresholds, you may be eligible for Medicaid. You can do this by going to the Department of Health & Welfare or see a Case Manager at Terry Reilly or Full Circle Health medical clinics. Look at the online resources for organizations providing vision and dental support.
- **What if I have a pet?** River of Life, City Lights do not allow pets unless the pet is a registered service animal. Interfaith Sanctuary may allow pets if they are easily managed during the night, but this needs to be discussed with the staff beforehand. Corpus allows dogs on leashes in the patio area and only service animals inside the facility. Dog food is available at Corpus for free. The Street Dog Coalition conducts a free pet clinic every 3 months in the Catch parking lot. The services provided are free exams, vaccinations, and food. The exact date is published on their website and the nearby shelters post it at their facilities.
- **What if I'm seeking asylum?** The Agency for New Americans (ANA) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) are the primary organizations supporting refugees. To find a legal support group, check BoiseLIST.org and Needhelpidaho.org for the latest support organizations. As this can be a difficult process to navigate, it will be beneficial to work with a case manager.
- **Who helps with utilities?** Jesse Tree is the first place to go if you need help with utilities. El Ada is also a good resource. These organizations will connect you with any other organization which provides utility assistance. The National ACP (Affordable Connectivity Program) offers large discounts to low-income individuals and families on Internet service options.
- **I need a tablet or laptop computer.** This is something your CM may be able to help you with. Many organizations receive tablets & computers for donations. Let any non-profit staff know what you're looking for and why you need it. If the tablet/laptop is needed for job or school, you will have an easier time getting one. Some of the free government cell phones sites now offer a tablet for \$11 along with the free cell phone. Contact the phone sites listed in Attachment A to check if they offer a free tablet.
- **How do I spend my time?** You're probably going to have a lot of extra time. There is only so much you can do to find a job and perform your daily life tasks. Corpus provides an indoor and outdoor area where you can sit and socialize. They also have a computer room with free-to-use computers and a Wi-Fi hot spot. The libraries also provide free computers and Wi-Fi. Starbucks, McDonalds, and similar places allow you to nurse a coffee for hours if you're not disruptive. Try to develop a routine including exercise. Many of the non-profits are always seeking volunteers. Reach out to them for ways you can give back and help them and others. This will also go a long way in getting references to get back into the job market if you're looking for employment.
- **Where can I find food?** Boise has a tremendous number of non-profits providing food and meals. The BoiseLIST.org website provides the info and hours of many of the organizations (and there are many more) which provide meals for the low income. Food pantry information is also

provided on this website. For immediate meals, go to Corpus or one of the night shelters and tell them you're hungry. You will get support.

- **How can I find a job?** If you're looking for a job, visit the typical online sites such as Craig's List, indeed, etc. If you're looking for a long-term job, update your résumé and have printed and digital copies available when needed. A CM will help in finding you a job and provide the steps needed to obtain work. There are occasional temporary jobs that pop up at the shelters. Sometimes these are posted and sometimes the need shows up randomly. Let the shelter staff know you're looking for work and what you're looking for. Sometimes contractors are looking for day labor jobs at Home Depot or Lowes. You must be early (like 6AM) to get these jobs.
- **How can I find a Recovery Program?** There are many recovery programs available. All the nighttime shelters have free in-house recovery programs. If seeking a dedicated recovery program at a different facility, start by looking at the ones listed on BoiseLIST.org and NeedhelpIdaho.org. Many of these are low cost and are Medicaid approved. Terry Reilly and Full Circle Health can also provide guidance in finding a program to support you in your recovery.

Attachment A

Organizations Supporting the Low Income in Boise. This list just contains the main organizations for the Boise area. There are many more which can be found on the BoiseLIST.org and Findhelpidaho.org websites with all the critical information provided.

Nighttime Shelters in the Boise area

River of Life (ROL). Men's only shelter with check in at 4PM. Provides breakfast, lunch & dinner.

- See boiserm.org for information on all the services provided.
- 575 S. 13th Street. Office Phone (208) 389-9640

City Lights. Women's only shelter with check in at 4PM. Provides breakfast, lunch & dinner.

- See boiserm.org for information on all the services provided.
- 1404 W. Jefferson Street. Office Phone (208) 368-9901

Interfaith Sanctuary (IFS). Adult (Men's & Women) shelter with check in at 4:30 PM. Provides breakfast.

- See interfaithsanctuary.org for information on the services provided.
- 575 S. 13th Street. (Located just behind Corpus Christi House) Office Phone (208) 343-2630

Women's and Children's Alliance. Women & Women with Children shelter.

- See wcaboise.org for information on the services provided.
- 720 W. Washington St. Office phone (208) 343-7025.

Hays House For Youth. Children's (8-18) shelter.

- See youthranch.org for information on the services provided.
- 7221 Poplar Street. Office phone (208) 322-6687

Daytime Shelters in the Boise Area

Corpus Christi House (CCH). Daytime shelter only opening at 8:30 and closing at 4:30

- See corpuschristiboise.org for information on all services provided.
- 525 S. Americana Blvd. Office Phone (208) 426-0039

Organizations providing housing support in the Boise Area.

Our Path Home: Entry point for anyone seeking housing. Open from 9:00 to 4:30. Call first to setup an appointment with a CM.

- 503 S. Americana Blvd. Phone (208) 495-4240

Organizations providing general support in the Boise Area.

Jesse Tree: Rent and Utility Support

- 1121 Miller St. Phone (208) 383-9486

St. Vincent DePaul: General Support

- 3209 Overland. Help Line (208) 331-2208

Terry Reilly Medical Clinic

- 300 S 23rd Street. Phone (208) 344-3512

Full Circle Health Medical Clinic

- 777 N Raymond St. Phone (208) 514-2500

Websites for Getting a Free Government Phone.

If you already have a phone that is unlocked and want to use it for these programs, visit their site to verify the phone is compatible with the provider. Many of the lower cost phones will only work with the initial provider.

<https://www.safelinkwireless.com/en/#!/newHome> : Safelink ships everywhere.

<https://www.assurancewireless.com/> : Assurance will not send a phone to 83702/83712.

<https://www.genmobile.com/pages/acp> : Phones come with a phone case and are through T-Mobile.

<https://qlinkwireless.com/> : Q-link sends out a free sim card **not** a phone. They are super easy to get, but the phones are NOT free. I use this if someone has a phone they want to keep. Check the site to verify the phone they are using is compatible with Q-Link.