

SAFE PARKING PROGRAM

Overview

The Bend City Council adopted the Safe Parking Programs into the municipal code on April 7, 2021. These programs enable property owners or lessees within Bend to allow limited overnight parking for people experiencing homelessness. They provide additional shelter options for individuals and families without access to permanent, safe shelter, and who are not able to obtain other low-income housing. These programs are intended to be used on a seasonal, emergency or transitional basis.

Safe Parking Model

Fortunately, Safe Parking is not a new idea. We have many models to draw upon if your business, religious, non-profit or public entity wants to be part of the solution to safely and stably house our unsheltered community members.

TESTIMONIALS

“We are finally able to sleep through the night after camping in areas that were not as safe over the last two years.” - Safe Parking Program guest

“I’m writing this letter to say the biggest “thank you” I’ve ever said to anybody. Without these wonderful people I doubt I would’ve made it through this past year. They are there for you if ever you’re in need of food, bedding, gas for your vehicle and even a safe place to park. Thanksgiving 2021 I had so much to be thankful for. I’m now living in my own apt. It’s beautiful, it’s warm, it’s safe and it’s mine. So for all of your tireless work, your hearts, caring and understanding, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I love ya’ll forever.” - Safe Parking Program guest

PROGRAM DETAILS

- An individual, couple, or family is identified through the coordinated entry process.
- An intake is completed, and appropriate/available temporary and transitional housing solutions are discussed.
- If appropriate, the Safe Parking case manager is notified with a name and number.
- Potential guests are educated about the program, including rules and expectations.
- Safe Parking guests are met at the participating site’s parking lot to perform an in-person intake and are provided a parking pass.
- The Code of Conduct expectations are presented and signed. Guests must adhere to the Code of Conduct to continue to access Safe Parking.
- Supportive services are arranged for the duration of the stay.
- The City of Bend is supportive of this program and will have a basic application for the site to complete prior to approval (for the sites with 4+ vehicles).

SERVICES PROVIDED

The City can help connect Safe Parking Program sites with non-profits who provide participants with on-site services, like car repair, document assistance, employment support, housing search assistance and referrals, enrollment in public benefits (SSI, OHP, SNAP), access to sanitation and hygiene resources on-site, and access to primary care services to meet wellness goals.



Two Categories of Safe Parking

OVERNIGHT CAMPING

Overnight Camping allows up to three vehicles used by people who lack access to permanent or safe shelter and who cannot obtain other low-income housing for overnight camping. The following criteria apply to this option:

- Vehicles must be in a parking lot, or on a paved or gravel surface;
- Property owner must provide access to sanitation, including bathroom, hand washing, and trash disposal facilities (these expenses may be absorbed by the contracted non-profit offering case management);
- No formal City authorization required;
- Properties must be leased or owned by a business, religious, non-profit or public entity;
- Does not override covenants (CC&Rs) prohibiting overnight parking; Property owners/lessees are responsible for looking into their own property restrictions; and
- No fee may be charged for overnight stays.

TRANSITIONAL OVERNIGHT PARKING

With authorization from the City, up to six vehicles and/or temporary huts/tents may be used for overnight accommodation of people who lack permanent or safe shelter and who cannot obtain other low-income housing. Public entities may allow more than six vehicles or huts/tents, with approval from the City. The property owner or lessee must submit an application to the City and be approved before opening any overnight accommodations. The following criteria apply to this option:

- Vehicles must be in a parking lot, or on a paved or gravel surface;
- Property owner must provide access to sanitation, including bathroom, hand washing, and trash disposal facilities (these expenses may be absorbed by the contracted non-profit offering case management);
- This program requires case management or supervision which will be coordinated by the property owner or lessee but costs for this may be covered by REACH Out Central Oregon;
- Does not override covenants (CC&Rs) prohibiting overnight parking; Owners/lessees are responsible for looking into their own property restrictions; and
- Approval by the City is not a land use decision. Approval is not transferrable to new property owner/lessee. Annual reapplication is required.

How Can You Help?

The City of Bend is recruiting businesses, religious/faith-based organizations, non-profits, and/or public entities who lease or own properties or parking lots to host small clusters of vehicles for overnight stays. Please consider opening your parking lot for three or more households to park their cars or RVs as they work on their long-term goals for housing stability.

BENEFITS OF BEING A PROGRAM PARTNER

- Help provide a safe, stable housing option for our unhoused neighbors.
- Increase awareness regarding the crisis of housing and homelessness and become part of the solution.
- Build and strengthen community relations.

Successes

There are currently two approved Safe Parking locations in Bend and successes include:

- 100% of participants report feeling safer and more supported once enrolled in the Safe Parking Program;
- Over 30 guests have participated in the Safe Parking Program, receiving individualized support to meet personal needs and goals;
- Average stay is six months;



- Average age of a participant is 55 years old;
- Over 20 families have found long-term housing;
- No complaints from neighbors adjacent to the sites;
- Approximately 60% of participants are receiving regular income through employment or social security benefits.

How to Be a Safe Parking Program Partner

If the idea of providing safe, stable housing to some of our most vulnerable neighbors is something you'd like to explore, please contact:

- REACH Out Central Oregon at reachoutcentraloregon@gmail.com, or
- Shelly Smith with the City of Bend at shsmith@bendoregon.gov.

To learn more about these programs or to apply, please visit the City of Bend's Safe Parking Program webpage at www.bendoregon.gov/safe-parking-program.



Accommodation Information for People with Disabilities

To obtain this information in an alternate format such as Braille, large print, electronic formats, etc. please contact Shelly Smith at shsmith@bendoregon.gov or (541) 388-5535.

