



COMMUNITY HOST & FACILITATOR GUIDE

Saturday, November 14, 2026

One night. Many locations. One community.

A citywide invitation to learn, listen, reflect, and recognize the dignity of our neighbors experiencing homelessness.

For churches, youth groups, schools, service clubs, neighborhood groups, families, and individuals

This is an independent Chico awareness initiative ... **not a fundraising campaign.** Optional food, basic-needs supplies, or gifts go directly to existing local programs.

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Recommended Resources ... Not Required

These materials reflect a "shelter first" and lowest-barrier approach. They are recommended, not required; groups choosing not to use them are still encouraged to participate. Awareness doesn't take sides ... all voices and perspectives are encouraged. However, Campout for Compassion will not provide or recommend "treatment first" materials.



CAMPOUT 2026 ... A NOTE ON SHARED PURPOSE

Why We're Here ... A Conversation, Not an Argument

Our approach to homelessness may appear left-leaning ... but this isn't about left or right.

In the end, we all want the same things ... cleaner, safer parks and waterways, a return to a sense of normalcy in our community, fewer people living on the streets, and our neighbors having a safe place to call home. These goals do not have to be in conflict.

Our recommended educational resources reflect a "shelter first" and lowest-barrier approach. These resources are recommended, not required. If you disagree with what we provide, you are welcome to bring countering research, information, and perspectives to the conversation.

All voices are encouraged. While this project will not provide or recommend "treatment first" educational materials, people who support those approaches are still welcome to participate and speak.

We are not here to tell you what to think. We are not here to tell you how it should be done. We are here to start having conversations ... to examine uncomfortable facts from our worst nightmares ... and to see that problems we have come to think are impossible to solve may actually be possible.

We do not need to agree on everything to find common ground. Our purpose is dialogue ... nothing more.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES ... NOT REQUIRED

01 • PURPOSE

Start here: What is Campout for Compassion?

Chico Campout for Compassion invites community groups to host their **own safe, supervised gathering** on the same night. Participants learn about homelessness, hear from people who have experienced it, discuss local barriers, and reflect on what it means to have a reliable home.

The event is designed to bring people together across religious, political, and neighborhood differences. A host can run a two-hour evening program or an approved overnight campout.

What this event is

- An awareness and listening event with age-appropriate learning activities.
- Many independent host locations; each host is responsible for its own permissions and safety.
- An opportunity for people with lived experience to share what *they choose* to share.
- An optional direct-to-provider food or basic-needs drive.

What this event is not

- Not an attempt to reproduce the experience of homelessness.
- Not a central fundraiser, new nonprofit, political rally, or overnight endurance challenge.
- Not a requirement to sleep outdoors; participation can be indoor or daytime.
- Not a competition for who can tolerate the most discomfort.

Our central message: We can choose to sleep outside for a night and return to our own beds the next day. Many neighbors do not have that choice.

One night cannot teach us what homelessness feels like. Listening to people who have lived it can help us understand more.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES ... NOT REQUIRED

02 • HOST GUIDE

Host options and responsibilities

Each group can participate according to its capacity. A complete overnight campout is **not** required.

OPTION A • Evening gathering

Two to three hours of speakers, discussion, age-based activities, and reflection.

Suitable for school groups, families with young children, or venues that cannot host overnight.

OPTION B • Overnight event

An evening program followed by supervised sleeping at a permitted location, plus a morning reflection.

All overnight arrangements remain the host organization's responsibility.

OPTION C • Family participation

Family discussion, an age-appropriate activity, and optional outdoor sleeping at a permitted private home.

Children participate with their parent or guardian.

OPTION D • Community service partner

Help with first-person speakers, useful factual information, supply lists, or follow-up opportunities.

An organization can support education without hosting a campout.

Each host commits to

- One named event coordinator and clear adult supervision.
- Use language that treats people experiencing homelessness as people, not labels.
- Provide reasonable accommodations and allow anyone to leave or participate indoors.
- Get property approval and any required permits before advertising an overnight venue.
- Collect no money on behalf of this citywide campaign.

Local autonomy: Hosts may adapt the program to their faith tradition or organization, as long as the event remains respectful, safe, and faithful to its awareness purpose.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES ... NOT REQUIRED

03 • NON-NEGOTIABLE SAFEGUARDS

Keeping everyone safe and respected

This page is a **starting checklist**, not a substitute for the host's legal, insurance, fire-safety, accessibility, or child-protection obligations.

Physical safety

- Confirm written property permission, applicable fire and event requirements, and insurance with the venue.
- Use a site with toilets, drinking water, lighting, accessible routes, emergency vehicle access, and a safe exit.
- Check weather close to the event. Move inside or cancel outdoor sleeping if temperatures, rain, wind, or air quality are unsafe.
- No open flames, forced exposure, unsafe sleeping locations, simulated evictions, or withholding food, water, medication, or rest.
- Designate emergency contacts and a quiet indoor space.

Youth and privacy

- Follow the host organization's youth-protection rules, required screening, adult-to-youth supervision, and parent/guardian permission.
- Young children should attend with a responsible guardian; overnight arrangements for minors require specific safeguarding plans.
- Never identify a participant as unhoused or invite public disclosure of a family's housing status.
- Photography or recording requires permission, especially for minors and guest speakers.

Emotional safety and dignity

- No "pretend you are homeless" role-playing or exercises designed to frighten or shame participants.
- Allow participants to pass on any question or activity. Avoid graphic trauma stories with younger children.
- Invite and compensate lived-experience speakers where possible; honor their boundaries and right to decline questions.

Always: If weather or site conditions make outdoor sleeping unsafe, hold an indoor program instead. Safety is not the lesson; understanding is.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES ... NOT REQUIRED

04 • SAMPLE SCHEDULE

A simple program any group can host

Use this as a flexible agenda. A school or youth club can stop after the evening reflection.

6:00 pm	Welcome & purpose. Explain why the event exists and its limits.
6:15 pm	Shared values. What makes a community safe, welcoming, and supportive?
6:30 pm	Guest voice. First-person account or consented recording, with time for respectful questions.
7:00 pm	Age-specific learning activity. Choose from the companion sheets.
7:45 pm	Discussion. What did we assume? What did we learn? What remains hard?
8:15 pm	Optional service. Sort preapproved supplies or connect participants to direct local support.
8:30 pm	Closing reflection. Daytime/evening participants may depart.
Later	Host-approved overnight. Only if permitted, supervised, and safe.
Morning	15-minute debrief. What was temporary for us? What is ongoing for others?

Facilitator opening: “Tonight is not a test of hardship, and it cannot recreate being homeless. We’re here to listen, learn, and understand some of the barriers our neighbors face ... and how we can respond with respect.”

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES ... NOT REQUIRED

05 • ACTIVITY MENU

Learning by age ... choose your track

These are original activities prepared for Chico Campout for Compassion, informed by established education programs. Full directions and printable worksheets appear in the separate activity sheets.

Ages 6-10 | “What makes a home?”

20–25 minutes. Draw or list what helps someone feel safe and cared for: warmth, privacy, a place to sleep, clean clothes, friends, and the ability to keep belongings. Talk about ways neighbors show kindness without judging anyone.

Ages 11-13 | “Everyday needs map”

30–35 minutes. Compare a typical day with the difficulty of reliably accessing ordinary needs: toilets, charging a phone, transportation, school supplies, a place to store things, and sleep. Build a community-support map.

Ages 14-17 | “A decision with no easy answer”

35–45 minutes. Examine fictional, non-graphic situations involving rent, work schedules, shelter rules, belongings, and school. Identify barriers and practical changes rather than blaming characters for constrained choices.

Adults / mixed ages | “Three perspectives, one neighborhood”

40–50 minutes. Discuss a resident concerned about public spaces, a neighbor without housing, and a service worker. Separate observations from assumptions and list goals they might share. Then consider what local actions are practical.

Any age | “Listen and reflect”

A guest with lived experience, a verified first-person video, or a reading chosen with permission. Follow with a short discussion using the reflection prompts.

For every age group: never pressure anyone to disclose their own housing circumstances. A participant in the room may be experiencing homelessness now.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES ... NOT REQUIRED

06 • GUEST SPEAKERS

How to host a first-person conversation

People experiencing or formerly experiencing homelessness should help shape the event. Their knowledge is not a decoration for an activity.

Before the event

- Explain the audience's ages, setting, intended purpose, format, time limit, and any questions proposed.
- Let guests decide what topics are off limits; ask whether they prefer an interview, conversation, or prepared remarks.
- Offer an honorarium, travel reimbursement, or another arrangement the speaker considers fair where possible.
- Agree in advance about photos, livestreaming, audio recording, press, and later reuse; consent can be withheld.
- Ask whether the host can provide a quiet waiting area, an accessible entrance, and a support person if desired.

Good questions to ask

- "What do you wish people understood better about being without stable housing?"
- "What ordinary task became unexpectedly difficult?"
- "What kinds of help made a real difference?"
- "What is one thing people should stop assuming?"
- "What would you like Chico to do differently?"

Do not ask

- For details of trauma, addiction, arrests, abuse, diagnoses, or family separation unless the speaker independently chooses that topic.
- "What did you do wrong?" or questions implying homelessness is an individual moral failure.
- A speaker to represent everyone who has experienced homelessness.

Source for deeper preparation: The National Health Care for the Homeless Council's [Social Storytelling Toolkit](#) emphasizes trauma-informed stories and informed consent.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES ... NOT REQUIRED

07 • DISCUSSION GUIDANCE

Dialogue that finds common ground

The goal is not to make everyone adopt the same position. It is to hear legitimate concerns, correct harmful generalizations, and identify what neighbors could do together.

Try these questions

- “What makes you feel safe and welcome in Chico?”
- “What changes would help both housed and unhoused neighbors?”
- “What is the difference between moving an encampment and helping someone obtain housing?”
- “What barriers make it hard to accept a shelter offer or hold a job?”
- “What might we be overlooking because we only see one part of the problem?”

Useful conversation agreements

- Speak about people as individuals. No name-calling, jokes at someone’s expense, or sweeping labels.
- Use “I” statements and questions. Distinguish what you saw from what you inferred.
- Safety, housing, treatment, neighborhood conditions, costs, and dignity may all matter; participants may disagree on the solutions.
- Nobody is required to debate their own lived experience.

If a discussion gets heated: “We might disagree about the solution. What outcome are we both hoping for ... and what could help us tell whether it’s working?”

Grounding in the Invisible People toolkit

The 2025 messaging toolkit explains that people may respond to the same housing solution for different reasons, including community wellbeing, safety, and responsible use of resources. This guide adapts that insight for listening and education ... not for teaching demographic stereotypes or running a persuasion workshop.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES ... NOT REQUIRED

08 • DIRECT SUPPORT

Optional basic-needs drive ... no central fund

The awareness program itself does **not** collect money or administer a shared fund. Participation is free, and giving is entirely optional.

Simple direct-donation model

- Each host asks one existing Chico-area service organization what supplies are useful *right now*.
- The receiving organization approves a short list and a delivery location/time.
- Participants bring only approved items; sort safely and respectfully.
- The host delivers items directly to that organization and confirms receipt.
- Those who want to donate money do so **directly** to the nonprofit, not to Campout for Compassion.

Possible items ... only if requested

New socks, basic hygiene items, unopened shelf-stable food, seasonal clothing, menstrual supplies, or other items named by the partner. **Do not assume** that every program wants the same supplies or accepts used items.

Good partners to approach

Local shelters, outreach teams, housing organizations, youth service providers, food pantries, and other existing programs. Contact them before putting their name or logo on materials.

Keep the emphasis right: A bag of supplies may be helpful, but it is not a replacement for stable housing. This event is about understanding homelessness and valuing our neighbors.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES ... NOT REQUIRED

09 • ACTION STEPS

A four-week host planning checklist

October 18-24 | Commit

- Name one coordinator; choose evening-only or overnight.
- Seek venue approval and check local requirements.
- Choose your age groups and select activity sheets.
- Invite a lived-experience partner early, with consent and fair arrangements.

October 25-31 | Prepare

- Recruit adult helpers and follow youth-safety policies.
- Confirm accessible toilets, weather options, first aid, emergencies, and reasonable accommodations.
- Select materials; ask local partners about optional supplies.

November 1-7 | Confirm

- Confirm venue, permission, speaker, and participant instructions.
- Make sure families have consent and supervision information.
- Set a weather decision point and accessible indoor alternative.

November 8-14 | Host

- Monitor weather and issue final logistics; do not wait until the last minute to change the format.
- Brief volunteers and facilitators.
- Host the learning program; finish with reflection, not a hardship contest.

November 15-21 | Follow through

- Thank guests and helpers; deliver any approved donated goods.
- Share anonymized participation totals and learning feedback, not private stories.
- Discuss what future actions or conversations the group wishes to pursue.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES ... NOT REQUIRED

10 • OUTREACH TEMPLATE

Copy-and-send invitation to a group

Subject: Invitation ... Chico Campout for Compassion, November 14

Hello,

I'm inviting community groups, churches, schools, youth organizations, families, and neighbors to participate in **Chico Campout for Compassion 2026** on Saturday, November 14.

The idea is simple ... one night, many locations, one community. Each participating organization can host its own safe, supervised gathering to learn about the realities of homelessness, listen to people with lived experience, and reflect on how we treat our neighbors.

Groups can participate through an evening program or an approved overnight campout. We'll provide age-appropriate educational activities and a simple host guide.

This is not a fundraising campaign. An optional basic-needs drive can support existing local programs directly.

Would your group be interested in participating or helping develop the event?

Thank you,
Scotty Franzyshe
scotty@sfranzyshe.org

Suggested announcement (short)

"Join Chico Campout for Compassion on Saturday, November 14 ... a communitywide night of learning and solidarity with neighbors experiencing homelessness. Groups host their own safe, supervised gatherings. No central fundraiser ... just awareness, listening, and compassion."

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES ... NOT REQUIRED

11 • FILL IN / KEEP A COPY

Host registration and event plan

Group / family name

Lead contact and preferred contact details

Location (private home or approved public facility)

Participation type: ☐ Evening only ☐ Overnight ☐ Family ☐ Service partnerAge groups: ☐ 6–10 ☐ 11–13 ☐ 14–17 ☐ Adults / mixed**Expected participants and named safety lead**

Youth safeguarding lead (if applicable)

Property permission: ☐ Confirmed ☐ In progress Permit / insurance review: ☐ CompletedAccessible restroom and water: ☐ Yes Weather / indoor alternative: ☐ Confirmed**Guest speaker arrangements / permissions**

Optional direct-donation recipient and approved supplies

Selected learning activities and videos

Additional accessibility or contingency notes

Working date: November 14, 2026. This worksheet is for planning and does not certify a venue or replace permission, safeguarding, or permit requirements.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES ... NOT REQUIRED

12 • RESOURCE NOTES

Where these ideas come from

These are references for organizers, not assignments for community participants. The Chico materials are an original adaptation, not an Invisible People or Covenant House product.

Invisible People ... Effective Homelessness Advocacy Messaging Toolkit (2025)

Used as a messaging reference: respectful language, listening across differences, community values, public safety, support, and housing. Particularly useful sections: pp. 4, 6–7, 10, 14–15, 25–28, 30–34. [Read the toolkit.](#)

Covenant House ... Sleep Out

Model for a shared evening, first-person learning, and morning reflection. Covenant House explicitly says its Sleep Out does **not** replicate homelessness. Its official events include fundraising, while this Chico event does not. [Sleep Out FAQs.](#)

Learning to Give ... homelessness lessons by grade

Educator activities on respectful language, daily needs, preconceptions, and service for grades K–12. The handouts here are newly written for Chico; they are not reproductions of that curriculum. [Explore lessons.](#)

SchoolHouse Connection ... awareness resources

Resources about hidden family and student homelessness, educational supports, and plain-language awareness materials. [Browse resources.](#)

National Health Care for the Homeless Council ... storytelling

Practical guidance on trauma-informed storytelling, consent, and releases. [Storytelling resources.](#)

Editorial note: General claims from education and messaging resources are not automatically Chico-specific statistics. If a host uses local numbers, confirm their date, population, and source first.

Optional video discussion library

Use this optional resource when choosing a clip for a gathering. These summaries are prompts for facilitators, not claims to represent a full video transcript. Every title below links to its publisher page. See the separate Video Discussion Guide for audience suggestions and additional discussion questions.

Language and belonging

Can You Tell Who is HOMELESS? — OrgCode

Why show it: A conversation starter about the assumptions we make from clothing, appearance, and first impressions.

[Watch on OrgCode](#) (the title and link are clickable in the PDF)

Why PERSON-FIRST Language is Important. — OrgCode

Why show it: Introduces the idea of describing someone as a person rather than reducing them to a housing status.

[Watch on OrgCode](#) (the title and link are clickable in the PDF)

The Missing Piece in Ending Homelessness: Shared Values — OrgCode

Why show it: Opens discussion about shared community values among people who disagree about homelessness policy.

[Watch on OrgCode](#) (the title and link are clickable in the PDF)

Families, youth and housing affordability

Why So Many Teens Are Becoming Homeless — OrgCode

Why show it: Explores why young people may lose stable housing and what support they need to stay safe.

[Watch on OrgCode](#) (the title and link are clickable in the PDF)

The Reality of Family Homelessness — OrgCode

Why show it: Introduces the forms of family homelessness that can be less visible than sleeping outdoors.

[Watch on OrgCode](#) (the title and link are clickable in the PDF)

Arleen: A Mother's Fight for Stability in America's Hidden Homeless Crisis — Invisible People

Why show it: A first-person account of a mother facing housing instability and uncertainty while caring for her family.

[Watch on Invisible People](#) (the title and link are clickable in the PDF)

Cheri - Homeless Senior Living in Hotel — Invisible People

Why show it: A senior's first-person account that opens conversation about income, shelter, and the cost of housing.

[Watch on Invisible People](#) (the title and link are clickable in the PDF)

Why So Many Seniors Are Becoming Homeless — OrgCode

Why show it: Opens discussion about the pressures older adults face when rent and resources do not match.

[Watch on OrgCode](#) (the title and link are clickable in the PDF)

Shelter options and meaningful choice

Why Homeless Services Fail Without Choice — OrgCode

Why show it: Explores why services can fail when they do not account for people's actual circumstances and choices.

[Watch on OrgCode](#) (the title and link are clickable in the PDF)

Melissa: Why Homeless Couples Choose the Streets Over Shelter in Seattle — Invisible People

Why show it: A first-person perspective on the complicated decision to use shelter when couples cannot remain together.

[Watch on Invisible People](#) (the title and link are clickable in the PDF)

Housing: Human Right or Reward? — OrgCode

Why show it: Raises the question of whether safe housing should depend on meeting conditions or be a foundation for stability.

[Watch on OrgCode](#) (the title and link are clickable in the PDF)

Neighborhoods and public responses

Homeless ENCAMPMENT Response 101 — OrgCode

Why show it: Introduces approaches and outcome measures for community responses to outdoor encampments.

[Watch on OrgCode](#) (the title and link are clickable in the PDF)

Skid Row Homeless Sweeps Make Homelessness Worse — Invisible People

Why show it: A firsthand reporting perspective on displacement, sweeps, and what happens after a camp is cleared.

[Watch on Invisible People](#) (the title and link are clickable in the PDF)

Don't Want Homelessness Services in Your Backyard? Front yard it is. — OrgCode

Why show it: Examines neighborhood objections and how community concerns may be discussed constructively.

[Watch on OrgCode](#) (the title and link are clickable in the PDF)

Kim: From Freezing in a Tent to the Safety of a Home — Invisible People

Why show it: A story of moving from a tent toward stable housing, useful for discussing what meaningful progress looks like.

[Watch on Invisible People](#) (the title and link are clickable in the PDF)