How to Help: Volunteer, Show Up, Count, Share

Updated October 28, 2026. Every phone number was checked against an official page.

Most people in Santa Monica want to help and do not know where to start. This page is the start. Everything Empower Santa Monica asks of you is time, not money. Nobody here is paid, we take no donations and there is nothing to buy. If you would rather give time to an organization that runs beds, meals or clinics, the directory below lists them with their public ratings.

Volunteer with Empower Santa Monica (no money changes hands)

Everything we do is in the open: the plan, the sources, the numbers, and who we have written to. Pick one thing from this list and do it today.

Do this	Time	Where
Speak or write in at the Nov 10 City Council meeting. Scripts are written for you.	2 minutes	Show up Nov 10
Print the flyers and leave them at a cafe, a library board or a school pickup.	10 minutes	Plan flyer, Nov 10 flyer, share kit
Take the two-minute neighbor survey. It shapes what we take to Council.	2 minutes	Survey
Share a story: what you have seen, or what worked.	5 minutes	Share your story
Be the block captain for your block: one neighbor who passes things along.	1 hour a month	Block captains
Take a walk or a shift with neighbors.	1 to 2 hours	Walks and shifts
Count a park: log how many people you saw at a park and when. Totals only, never descriptions of people, so the City's numbers can be checked against ours.	3 minutes	Park counts
Send the site to two neighbors.	1 minute	empowersantamonica.com

What is in it for the City? Nothing to pay

The plan asks the City to use laws and money it already has, and to publish what it gets for them. It does not ask for a contract with us, a grant to us, or a seat for us. Residents do the showing up, the counting and the sharing. The City does its job in public. That is the whole arrangement.

Other organizations doing the work in Santa Monica

Third-party information. Please read this first. Each line comes from the organization's own website and, where linked, from Charity Navigator or ProPublica's Nonprofit Explorer, checked on 2026-10-28. Empower Santa Monica has no relationship with any of these organizations, takes no money from them and does not vet them. Check the ratings and the pages yourself before giving time or money. Nothing here is an endorsement. Something wrong here? Tell us and we will fix it.

Organization					What they do	Type Volunte
St. Joseph Center	Homelessness and housing programs on the Westside, from outreach and meals to case management and housing placement.	Nonprofit	Volunteer	Charity Navigator (4 of 4 stars)		
Harvest Home	Residential program for pregnant women experiencing homelessness, with housing, classes and support for mother and baby.	Nonprofit	Volunteer	Charity Navigator (4 of 4 stars)		
Upward Bound House	Shelter and housing for families with	Nonprofit	Volunteer	Charity Navigator		

Organization	What they do	Type	Volunte
	children experiencing homelessness, with a Kids Club and life-skills support.		(4 of 4 stars)
Westside Food Bank	Supplies food to pantries and meal programs across the Westside; volunteers sort food in the Santa Monica warehouse.	Nonprofit	Volunteer	Charity Navigator (4 of 4 stars)
Meals on Wheels West	Delivers meals and a few minutes of conversation to homebound neighbors in Santa Monica and nearby.	Nonprofit	Volunteer	Charity Navigator (4 of 4 stars)
Step Up (Step Up on Second)	Supportive housing and mental health services for adults with serious mental illness, including the	Nonprofit	Volunteer	Charity Navigator (3 of 4 stars)

Organization				What they do	Type	Volunte
	Step Up on Second building in Santa Monica.					
CLAREIMATRIX	Addiction and behavioral health treatment, with detox and residential beds at its Santa Monica campus.	Nonprofit	Volunteer	Charity Navigator (2 of 4 stars)		
Safe Place for Youth	Housing, basic needs, education, jobs and therapy for young people experiencing homelessness, with a drop-in center in Venice.	Nonprofit	Volunteer	Charity Navigator (4 of 4 stars)		
Venice Family Clinic	Community health provider offering medical care to people in need from the Santa Monica	Nonprofit	Volunteer	Charity Navigator (4 of 4 stars)		

Organization				What they do	Type	Volunte
	Mountains to the South Bay. Clinical and administrative volunteers start with an information session.					
Chrysalis	Free job readiness, placement and transitional work for people facing barriers to employment, including homelessness. Office on Lincoln Blvd in Santa Monica.	Nonprofit	Volunteer	Charity Navigator (4 of 4 stars)		
The Salvation Army (Bell Shelter)	Runs the Bell Shelter in Bell, CA, where Santa Monica funds 35 beds for people met on the street. Volunteer sign-up for the Southern California	Nonprofit	None listed	Charity Navigator (Listed (Western Territory); no rating shown)		

Organization				What they do	Type	Volunte
	division is by phone or corps, not a web form.					
NAMI Westside Los Angeles	Free peer and family support groups, classes, resource navigation and advocacy for mental illness on the Westside. Family navigation line (424) 293-0645; Spanish (424) 293-0646.	Nonprofit	Volunteer	Charity Navigator (4 of 4 stars)		
Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services	Mental health, substance use and suicide prevention services; answers the 988 crisis line in Los Angeles County.	Nonprofit	Volunteer	Charity Navigator (4 of 4 stars)		
Westside Coalition	Alliance of 81 organizations,	Nonprofit alliance	Volunteer	No Charity		

Organization	What they do	Type	Volunte
agencies, faith communities and residents that coordinates services and advocates on housing, hunger and health. Meets monthly, in person at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church or on Zoom.	Navigator profile found		
Jewish Family Service LA	Social services across Los Angeles, including food pantry access, meal sites for older adults and home-delivered meals.	Nonprofit	Volunteer	Charity Navigator (4 of 4 stars)
Safe Parking LA	Supervised overnight parking lots for people living in their vehicles, with case management	Nonprofit	Volunteer	Charity Navigator (Listed; no rating shown)

Organization	What they do	Type	Volunte
and housing referrals.			
The Giving Spirit	Volunteers assemble and hand out survival kits directly to people living on the streets of Los Angeles.	Nonprofit	Volunteer	Charity Navigator (3 of 4 stars)
Heal the Bay	Beach and watershed cleanups and water-quality work in Santa Monica Bay; monthly public cleanups anyone can join.	Nonprofit	Volunteer	Charity Navigator (4 of 4 stars)
WISE and Healthy Aging	Services for older adults in Santa Monica, including the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program, classes and meals.	Nonprofit	Volunteer	Charity Navigator (4 of 4 stars)

Organization				What they do	Type	Volunte
The Santa Monica Coalition	All-volunteer community group campaigning to restore safety in Santa Monica; runs a family reunification line.	Nonprofit (all-volunteer)	Volunteer	No Charity Navigator profile found		
Exodus Recovery	Mental health and substance use treatment provider; operates SaMo Bridge, the City's 24/7 diversion hub at Main St and Pico (police referral only).	Company	None listed	Not a charity		
Downtown Santa Monica, Inc. (Ambassadors)	Uniformed Ambassadors give directions, escort people to their cars and connect people in need with social services downtown.	Business improvement district	Volunteer	Not a charity		

Organization	What they do	Type	Volunte
(310) 877-7731; emergencies 911.			
Project Homecoming (City of Santa Monica)	The City's family reunification program, run with the Police Department; more than 3,200 people reunited with family since 2006. Call (310) 458-8953.	Government program	None listed	Not a charity

Ratings are Charity Navigator's, not ours, and change over time. Organizations listed as "Not a charity" are companies, business districts or government programs that do homelessness work in the city; they are here so you know who is who, not as a recommendation.

Where does your time do the most good?

Direct service. If you want to hand someone a meal or a bed tonight, the organizations above need hands, and they already have the beds, kitchens and clinics. A Saturday in the Westside Food Bank warehouse or a shift at a family shelter is real help, today.

Policy. If you want the rules to change, show up. Two minutes at City Council does more than a hundred comments online, because Council counts the room. The Nov 10 page tells you exactly how, with the deadlines and the words.

Information. If you have ten minutes and a printer, hand things out. If you walk a park every day, count it. If you have two neighbors, send them the site. The City's numbers come out once a year. Ours can come out every week, and they can be checked.

How do I report a problem instead?

If someone needs help right now, or there is a camp, a crisis or a danger, this page is not the place. Use Who to call: 911 for danger, 988 for a mental health or substance use crisis, SMPD non-emergency (310) 458-8491, Santa Monica 311 for a camp or an outreach request.

Sources

1. St. Joseph Center
2. Harvest Home
3. Upward Bound House
4. Westside Food Bank
5. Meals on Wheels West
6. Step Up (Step Up on Second)
7. CLAREIMATRIX
8. Safe Place for Youth
9. Venice Family Clinic
10. Chrysalis
11. The Salvation Army (Bell Shelter)
12. NAMI Westside Los Angeles
13. Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services
14. Westside Coalition
15. Jewish Family Service LA
16. Safe Parking LA
17. The Giving Spirit
18. Heal the Bay
19. WISE and Healthy Aging
20. The Santa Monica Coalition
21. Exodus Recovery
22. Downtown Santa Monica, Inc. (Ambassadors)
23. Project Homecoming (City of Santa Monica)
24. Charity Navigator
25. ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer

Empower Santa Monica is a volunteer resident movement, not the City of Santa Monica. Nobody is paid, we take no donations and we back no candidate. This page is general information, not legal or medical advice.