

Community Safety Program

What is community safety and why do we need it?

Our communities and neighbors are our closest, most powerful source of safety and connection. When we come together to share our skills and resources, solve problems, and take care of each other, we create safer, more welcoming communities. Creating a safe community for all means that we have to address the many *social determinants of vulnerability*.

Social determinants of vulnerability are conditions like a lack of resources or physical safety, poor health, or an unwelcoming environment. We each have our own vulnerabilities and each person experiences them differently. These conditions cause stress for the people who experience them and can stand in the way of them living a healthy, empowered, fulfilled life.



PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH

Physical and mental health can touch every part of a person's life. When someone has a disability or is going through a crisis, it takes more energy and resources to make it through the day. Our team has [trainings and resources](#) to help community members deal with health and safety needs. We empower Portlanders and make our city more accessible for all when we address these needs.

EDUCATION & COMMUNITY

We work with neighborhoods and businesses on "placemaking" projects and events. These are community-led activities that community members feel are important for safety and community building. Activities like block parties draw in more positive attention and build connected, safe, and livable communities. By having communities lead these events, we build welcoming spaces and activities that work for them and strengthening their connection to local government.

PERSONAL SAFETY

Our [free trainings](#), such as the Personal Safety Workshops and Neighbors Together trainings, add to Portlanders' own sense of safety. When we have safety knowledge and skills, we are more empowered to protect ourselves and help others during potentially unsafe situations. The Community Safety team teaches community members how to find and reduce safety vulnerabilities like improving lighting in dark areas around your home or business.

Who is Community Safety and what services are available to Portlanders?

Our communities and neighbors are our closest, most powerful source of safety and connection. When we come together to share our skills and resources, solve problems, and take care of each other, we create safer, more welcoming communities. More and more, Portlanders want to do something to reduce their vulnerability, keep their communities healthy and safe, and reduce violence where they can. But how?

Civic Life's Community Safety program offers free services to help Portlanders find ways to build a city that is safe and welcoming for all. We continue to grow and provide services that are community-driven, inclusive, and trauma informed. **Our services are free and are available in multiple languages.**

Professional Training: We are professional trainers who develop community safety trainings to educate you, your neighbors, businesses, and the larger Portland community. Each training is provided from a trauma informed approach and includes bias awareness training. You can request a training [online](#).

Reducing Harm Through Design: We are certified Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) experts who provide walkthroughs to help reduce vulnerability to harm and increase positive activity in public and private spaces. Environmental design can prevent many kinds of harm. Trimming large plants increases visibility and safety for people with lower eye levels, like wheelchair users and children. You can request a CPTED walkthrough [online](#).

Creating Inclusive Community Spaces: We are place-makers who work with our communities to plan events and create safe spaces. We support community-led "placemaking" projects — activities that community members feel are important for safety and community building. We help community members fix safety problems and find resources. Our special events and programs also help us serve those people who need it the most.

For more information, contact the Community Safety team at CommunitySafety@PortlandOregon.gov or 503-823-4064, or visit portland.gov/civic/communitysafety

When the executive director of [Friends of the Green Loop](#), Keith Jones, reached out Civic Life's Community Safety team about assessing the Ankeny West Food Carts property, they were thrilled.

The [Community Safety](#) team has been providing safety assessments for property owners for decades. These assessments—called Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)—include a wide-range of recommendations including tree placement, lighting, and pedestrian and bicycle safety.

The Community Safety team conducted a free CPTED at the Ankeny West Food Carts property, located at a small park between Burnside, Ankeny, 8th and Park streets. They visited the location once in the day and once at night to assess community safety issues. They found lights that needed to be updated and repaired and trees that needed to be trimmed for visibility. The team also suggested putting a fence between the carts and Burnside St., so customers and children don't accidentally wander into traffic.

CPTED is also about designing spaces to support social connections. "We encouraged the food cart owners to get to know each other and exchange phone numbers. This creates community and encourages people to alert one another if there are issues," said Community Safety Coordinator Sarah Berkemeier. "The park will be used for eating, live music and art shows, local vendors and some permanent art installations."

"Keith Jones and Friends of the Green Loop have created something special in this space," said Community Safety Coordinator Jenni Pullen. "It has historically been an area with negative activity. Now, it is a multi-cultural experience with family-run food carts representing food from around the world. A CPTED assessment supports the safety of the vendors and all who move through the space, whether to stop and enjoy, or just pass through."

Promote the Common Good: The Office of Community & Civic Life is building stronger communities by supporting and empowering Portlanders. We think, act, and partner with our communities to better understand and take care of their diverse needs. We invite you to join us in this continuous, much needed work to make our communities safer and more welcoming for all. Find out more: www.portland.gov/civic