

*I know there's a problem, but ...*



## WHAT CAN I DO?

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### Share Your Experience

- **Tell your friends, neighbors, colleagues at work or school, and others about what you've learned through the Social Justice Reflection.** Encourage them to participate in one.
- **Use the awareness you've gained to correct hostile statements about homeless and low-income individuals.** Talk about the people you've met or learned about and about the diverse causes of homelessness and poverty.
- **Use the media to help get the word out.** Write letters to the editor about cases you know of when newspapers and magazines run stories about homelessness or services for low-income people. Participate in online news forums. Call in to radio talk shows.

### Shape Public Policy

- **Vote for candidates for public office who will advance programs to address the needs of homeless and low-income people.** This is the single most important thing you can do to shape public policy. So make sure you are registered to vote at your current address. Secure an absentee ballot if you need it.
- **Let candidates know what issues you care about.** Participate in campaign events and ask questions.
- **Support the campaigns of candidates who share your views.** Consider distributing their literature, raising funds for their campaigns and/or volunteering in their campaign offices.
- **Let public policymakers know what you want them to do—and not do.** Join the SOME Advocacy Network and act on SOME's Advocacy Alerts. Meet with your elected representatives to talk about the issues. Bring friends or other "partners" along.
- **Participate in town hall meetings and in other forums where policymakers will be present.** Speak out about your concerns and ask how they will be addressed.
- **Organize a letter-writing campaign.** Encourage friends and others you know to all write letters to decision-makers on a key issue or set of issues. Share SOME Advocacy resources that they can use for messages.

## Strengthen Community

- **Commit to some form of regular volunteer service.** Recruit others to join you.
- **Help build your service organization.** Use your skills and connections to help the organization get what it needs. Work with the organization to schedule site visits for public policymakers, reporters, and other opinion leaders.
- **Join an advocacy organization that focuses on issues affecting homeless and/or low-income individuals.** Subscribe to its e-mail alert list and respond to calls for action. Participate in events the organization sponsors. Volunteer to serve on a committee or on the board.
- **Reach out to homeless and low-income individuals.** Try to get to know disadvantaged individuals through your volunteer work. Help them become involved in policy decisions that affect them—for example, by speaking about their experiences in a public forum. Talk to the SOME Social Justice Associate about meeting with C.A.R.E. (Citizens About Real Empowerment).
- **Donate to organizations of your choice.** They depend on financial contributions from concerned citizens like you.

## Learn More About the Issues

- **Keep up with developments affecting homeless and low-income people.** Review your daily newspaper for relevant articles. Read a major Sunday supplement, like the *New York Times* "Week in Review" or the *Washington Post* "Outlook" section. Subscribe to Google e-mail news alerts.
- **Read discussions of the issues and solutions on advocacy organization websites.** Check out the resources and links in the Advocacy & Social Justice section of the SOME website.

## Continue Your Personal Growth

- **Make a habit of treating everyone you encounter as an individual human being deserving of dignity and respect.**
- **Cultivate compassion in yourself and others.** Reflect on the hardships of individuals less fortunate than you. Recall kindnesses you've received. Model compassionate behavior.
- **Search your thoughts and actions for continuing vestiges of prejudice, stereotypes, and selfish ideologies.** Work to replace them with the truths you know.

*If you have ideas or questions, please e-mail [advocacy@some.org](mailto:advocacy@some.org). We're eager to work with you to help the poor and homeless in our nation's capital.*