

Thinking of doing your own Project Backpack?

You're about to make a tangible difference to the lives of Vancouver's unhoused youth.

Here's what to do next:

If you're a school or club, decide on the number of participants/classes you think will join in: 5 people, or 100? Will this be an entire senior school initiative? Or only certain grades? (This will give you an idea of how many backpacks you may need, and therefore a goal to strive towards.)

- Coordinate the campaign by selecting individuals who will lead it: class advisors, community-service leaders, Social Justice students, a teacher, etc. It's best if there are a few leaders. Then have one of them email us to chat.
- Decide when, during the school year, you want to hold this campaign. Winter? Spring? All schools are busy with events & commitments; decide what's best for you.
- Decide if you would like speakers (Project Backpack spokesperson &/or youth social worker) to talk to your student body about the campaign, unhoused youth & how your backpack donations make a difference.
- **Project Backpack** will come to you, drop off the backpacks & some promotional posters (made by street youth.)
- Divide the backpacks up between classes, groups, even divide them by gender - if that helps.
- Then take a few weeks to stuff the backpacks with items the street youth will use to survive (see Suggested Items).
- When you've reached your goal – to the best of your ability – call us and we'll come and pick up the packs. Or, if interested, we can arrange for you to drop off the packs @ Directions Youth Centre and have a tour.

Some Helpful Tips

Start small. It's better to do fewer backpacks well, leave a good impression with everyone, and not get overwhelmed. The campaign's about education & empathy - not rules or numbers. There's no right or wrong way to participate in Project Backpack. All donations, large or small, are deeply appreciated by the street youth.

Suggested Items - What to put in a backpack

Generally, we say put yourself in the shoes of an unhoused youth & think of things you may appreciate. Historically, the list of items below are what the street youth & their social workers say are needed most. But this is only a guideline. Use your discretion.

Gloves, Toques & Scarves, Underwear (unisex), Socks, Towels (not too big) Gift Cards
(Grocery/Pharmacy Stores, Tim's, McDonald's, Subway, etc.)

Long Distance Phone Cards, Comfort Foods: granola bars, hot-chocolate, nuts, etc. Deodorant, Shaving Cream, Razors, Soap, Tooth Brushes & Paste (small size), Shampoo & Conditioner Brushes & Combs, Hair Accessories, Feminine Hygiene (please, no pads) Art Supplies: Markers, Pencil Crayons, Sketch Books, Note Pads, Batteries, Novels