

BigBurgh.com: Pittsburgh's new homeless services app

Finding critical services for those experiencing homelessness has just become easier, thanks to BigBurgh.com.

Operated by the Homeless Children's Education Fund (HCEF), BigBurgh.com is a mobile -optimized website that provides listings of services that, according to their site, are "free, good and welcoming to those without an address." Designed for speed and ease of access, the site contains contact information, maps, and hours of operation for more than 70 Pittsburgh-area agencies and service sites offering shelter, hygiene items, food and transportation for those in need, including the Allegheny Link. One of the greatest benefits of the website, however, is the high level of customization : In addition to using location services to find the closest service provider, users can quickly filter results by gender, age, and family or veteran status.

Beyond providing listings of every day needs, BigBurgh.com offers two options for those seeking immediate assistance: The "Safe Places & Hotlines" button will link users to domestic violence shelters, safe havens for children, syringe exchanges, LGBT safe places and hotlines covering topics such as rape, mental health, sex trafficking, and veteran services. Believed to be one of the first such options in the nation, the "Live Street Help" button allows for an immediate connection to nearby mobile outreach workers who can offer more in-depth information about services or, if necessary, drive to meet the individual. If no outreach workers are available at the time of the request, users may leave email messages.

The goal of BigBurgh.com is to empower all individuals to feel as though they can play an active role in helping those who are experiencing homelessness. By creating a frequently updated clearinghouse of homeless services, BigBurgh.com hopes to bridge the gap between providers and those in need. For more information, visit www.bigburgh.com.