

## The Survival Kit

### Interview Questions: -

Hi, I am a graduate student at Oregon State University. I wanted to talk to you about a project that I am currently working on and get your opinions and feedback on the same. So, we are planning on designing an application to assist individuals in finding nearby resources for food, clothing and temporary shelters. Do you mind answering a few questions and me recording your answers.

Hello. I am happy to help.

1. How are you?
  - I'm doing alright. Finding food and shelter one day at a time. How are you?
2. How long have you been facing problems to manage food and shelter?
  - I have been homeless for the past 2 years. But I have been homeless before that too. I get some small jobs sometimes and try to stay dry. But corona made it tough for us. Sometimes I beg for money or for resources. I search through dumpsters for discarded items to sell and make some money for food. I participate in food distribution programs offered by charity and church organizations.
3. Can you tell me about your day-to-day life?
  - I have built a small tent outside town that I borrowed from one of the shelters to stay but I keep migrating from place to place depending on the weather. I try to find some shelter or donation centers where I can borrow a tent or plastic tarps to stay warm and dry. On a good day people on the streets give me some food or money I use that to buy a meal. I sometimes get lucky by reaching the shelter on time or before everyone that when I get all the resources I ask for. I get food clothes and space to stay for a day. But that doesn't happen often. I try to get food at one spot clothes from my church community and place to stay outside of town by setting my tent there. That is how I mostly try to survive by fulfilling all my needs.
4. How do you find shelters where you can get food and a place to stay?
  - It depends on the location. Sometimes I get information through my church community. I rely on word of mouth. I ask my other homeless friends for help if they find something.
5. How long does it take you to search such a place where you would find food, shelter, or clothing?
  - Sometimes a day sometimes a week. It depends on the availability of resources.
6. What do you think is the major problem towards finding shelters that provide food and clothing as well as a place to stay?
  - Information about the resources. Sometimes there are camps and relief funds provided at some part of the town. But that information comes to us lately. And by the time I reach there they are either out of the resources or full capacity. Some shelters and camps ask for identification cards, which a lot of us don't have. Transportation is also tough. In some

town transportation is free like in Corvallis. But in other cities transportation is expensive for us.

7. Would you prefer to use a kiosk in place of a cell phone in order to search for a shelter online?
  - I would prefer a kiosk than a cellphone. I don't have phone with me. Some homeless people have it, but they don't have internet access. They just use it call people around to know about shelters and resources. In such cases kiosks will be helpful since we need not worry about having a cellphone with internet.
8. How do you come to know about any food drives happening nearby?
  - I usually get information from some of my friends. There are flyers and information in Corvallis transit center. There are some hotline numbers which when called provide some information about food drives and resources. My church community also helps me find place to stay sometimes.
9. What all resources do you think are necessary to survive without permanent housing choices?
  - The first will be food. I always search for food first. Then next would-be clothing. With the wet Corvallis weather its tough to stay dry all the time. So, I search for clothes in drop-in centers and in dumpsters. I also try to get some medicines for myself for free, but the whole healthcare system works differently so its tough to get medicine for free without doctor consultation.
10. If there was an application to help find resources such as food, shelter, and clothing, what would be the most useful features you would like to see in it?
  - I would expect the application to have a resource dictionary which would show all the available free resources such as shelter food and healthcare services. I also want navigation or maps to those locations. Because half of the time I get to know that there are resources available I couldn't find the location of it. I could navigate myself to the location. It hard to reach there on time. So, it would be great if the application has maps. Since we share resources and information among the homeless community it would be great if we have an option of communicating with our friends.

**Observation: -**

We interviewed an individual who politely refused to give us his name. The individual was polite and humble while answering the questions. We made sure they felt comfortable while answering since some of the questions might trigger their emotions. During the interview the individual was a little anxious.

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Hi. I don't like to be taped please. I don't mind you asking questions though. You can write it down if you want.

1. Yes sure. Thanks for letting me know. How are you, today?
  - Doing ok.
2. How long have you been facing problems to manage food and shelter?
  - I have been homeless for the past 4 years and it has been difficult since then to find food and shelter. I have begged for money. I also collect milk cans and return those in the recycle center for some cents. I try to buy some food with my food stamps.
3. Can you tell me about your day-to-day life?
  - I have a small car which does not function that well but I use that like a small home where I store all my clothes and food when I find some. I arranged a small sleeping bag at the back of my car where I sleep. It used to function earlier. Later, I did not have any money to pay for repairs when it needs some maintenance. Before that I used to live on the streets and rely on church community where they provide free shelter for some days.
4. How do you find shelters where you can get food and a place to stay?
  - Since I have a car, I don't worry a lot about place to stay. But before that I used rely on information from the Corvallis Drop-in place where they provide us with information regarding shelter and food. They have all the information regarding food camps and shelter for the homeless.
5. How long does it take you to search such a place where you would find food, shelter, or clothing?
  - Typically, a week or two. Even if we find information it's difficult to transport. Since we have the Corvallis Daytime drop-in center now we are able to find information faster than before. I come here if need any food or clothes. For shelter we need to wait since there are not a lot of shelter in Corvallis because of the city rules and regulations to set camps and shelters. So, organizations don't often set camps or provide shelter in this town.
6. What do you think is the major problem towards finding shelters that provide food and clothing as well as a place to stay?
  - Lack of affordable housing is the first cause of homelessness in my opinion. Housing is so expensive in Corvallis that I can never rent a place here. Lack of available services, there is limited access to shelters and other services for us.

7. Would you prefer to use a kiosk in place of a cell phone in order to search for a shelter online?
  - I would prefer both. I have a phone, but I don't have a connection. But I know how to connect my phone to free Wi-Fi provided at the Corvallis transit center. But that's not the case for everyone, so setting up kiosks at different locations at downtown would be helpful.
8. How do you come to know about any food drives happening nearby?
  - Information from friends and from the drop-in center. Also, there will be flyers pasted around downtown which has information regarding that.
9. What all resources do you think are necessary to survive without permanent housing choices?
  - Clean water, Food and clothes will be helpful. Even if I don't have a place to stay, I still find some place to sleep. But without food it's hard to survive.
10. If there was an application to help find resources such as food, shelter, and clothing, what would be the most useful features you would like to see in it?
  - Map and navigation for resources. Up-to-date information of camps and resources. The app should provide information on local organizations that provide services and support for homeless individuals and allow users to contact them directly.

**Observation: -**

The person we interviewed was initially a bit uncomfortable with us interviewing him. But, once he understood our motive behind it, he willingly answered our questions. He was very anxious the whole time during the interview. Despite this, he was comfortable in answering our questions. We concluded by thanking the individual for his time and willingness to share their story.

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Hi. I don't mind to be taped. I can answer from my experience since I have seen people around.

1. How long have you been working here?
  - I'm interning through Portland State University and I have been here since beginning of the school year, roughly about from October.
2. Do you think the targeted audience find shelter where they can find food?
  - No. Absolutely not.
3. How long does it take for them to search such a place where you would find food, shelter, or clothing?
  - That depends. It majorly is dependent on the accessibility of resources, along with a sense of safety that do not go hand in hand. There's law against setting up camps in Corvallis region. Finding a place takes a while. As far as housing goes, it might take them years to find one.
4. Is there any shelter place in Corvallis?
  - Yes, there are men and women shelter and there are some resources provided by some organizations where people can get into hotels for couple of nights a week. These places are temporary and difficult to get. These shelters also act like a hygiene place where people can come and take a shower or so.
5. What do you think, would they prefer to use a kiosk in place of a cell phone in order to search for a shelter online?
  - Not a lot of people have access to internet and smart devices. So, setting up of kiosks in the community would be a better option for them.
6. What all resources do you think they need for daily needs in rough conditions?
  - When you think about hierarchy for needs, all three are equally needed. Getting clean water is difficult. Considering Oregon's rough winter, it is very difficult to survive without proper shelters.
7. How do they come to know about any resources?
  - Through places like this. I think it is mostly via word of mouth. They talk to a person and come to know about any place that is serving some food. At this shelter, we even give

them a sheet of paper containing information of all available resources and places along with its contact details and address.

8. What are some questions that you hear from people in search of food and shelter?
  - I get asked many questions on daily basis such as do you have a tent? Or Do you know any shelter nearby? Or Where can I get a meal?
9. If there was an application to help find resources such as food, shelter, and clothing, what do you think would be the most useful features in it?
  - Directions, to addresses where they want to go. Hours of operation. Option to comment for any event taking place regarding timing or location changes to help others in the community.

**Observation: -**

After a brief discussion with him (the intern), he agreed to show us around but warned us to not engage with any of the people there because he wasn't sure how these people could react if asked questions or even approached. As they usually don't like to interact with anyone.

Then he showed us around the whole building. He told us that they usually help people by providing them with food, clothes, and details of other places where they can find other resources.

In the facility, there were basically two stations. One was where people can get food and the other one was for clothing items. People were coming in and getting something to eat on a regular basis and there were a few who were just waiting for their turn to go inside.

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### Interview Questions: -

OSU International Student - M1

The interviewee was an international graduate student at OSU. We were at the food pantry at the Basic Needs Center on Wednesday around 9:00 AM. There were about 20 people in the waiting area and more were coming. As we entered, M1 took a token from the dispenser, kept at the entrance. Then we waited for their token number to be called out. I asked them a few questions while we were waiting for their turn.

1. How often do you visit the Basic Needs Center (BNC)?

- M1 said they visit every week on Wednesday's. That's when their Food Pantry is open for the public. They also visit sometimes on Friday's when they give out Beaver Bags for OSU students only.

2. How did you come to know about the BNC?

- M1 heard about it through their friend and they said the BNC also has a website where we can get all their information. M1 also said that they follow their Instagram page where they share regular updates, about their working hours, events and what they will be giving in the Beaver Bags.

3. What do you usually get from the Food Pantry?

- M1 said they mainly come for the fresh produce, which includes tomatoes, potatoes, onions and bananas and some other fruits & vegetables. They also try to get fresh milk and cheese but said it has been hard to get those for the past few months, unless you come very early when they open around 8:30 AM.

While talking about not being able to get milk M1 looked around at the crowd, indicating that a lot of people come to the pantry regularly.

They later added that unless you come early, most of the good and new stuff are gone. Then they would only have fresh produce, canned vegetables, rice, oil, pulses available, which they don't require weekly.

4. What other services of the BNC do you utilize?

- M1 said the Food Pantry is the one they use the most, other than that the BNC would post resources about food/snacks or stationery that's available on-campus for free. M1 also said that they provide laundry services but it is very hard to get a slot here. M1 also

recollected that they used to give out notifications whenever there is free food available anywhere on campus through an app called Remind but they don't use it anymore.

M1 looked through their phone to see if they still have the app and they then looked at their ticket and sighed it would still take some while for their turn.

5. How long do you have to wait for your turn to get inside?

- M1 said it usually takes them somewhere between an hour to an hour and a half by the time they come from their home, get to the pantry and return back. Sometimes they come around noon when the crowd is less and they just want the fresh produce or shelf stable items. But they feel it's worth the wait as they can save some money on groceries.

6. What other ways do you try to save money?

- M1 said their regular expense is on groceries, which the BNC helps with and they would attend events on campus whenever possible. They also live in a shared apartment which cuts their cost of living. Since the buses are free they use it as much as they can or else walk to campus. M1 also said that recently they have stopped the public buses on the weekends which make it difficult for them to commute. They also utilize the OSUsed Store, Facebook marketplace for furniture, stationery, electronics etc. M1 said that they would usually have very good items for sale at very cheap prices.

They also added that they got a few winter jackets from an event in the Kerr Admin Building which is going on for the whole term.

7. How do you usually get to know about these free resources?

- Usually through word of mouth, Instagram pages they follow and a Facebook group called Buy Nothing Corvallis, where they giveaway free stuff.

8. Do you know of any existing applications which provided a one-stop place for all resources pertaining to food, clothes and shelter?

- They didn't know of any such app other than the social media pages they mentioned.

As I mentioned about housing, they said that they had a hard time finding an affordable place to stay when they came and in-between moving to different apartments. Their only source was Facebook groups and google search.



**Observation: -**

Finally, their number was called out and they went and wrote their details on a signup sheet and proceeded inside the pantry to get the items they needed. They looked around and just took what they needed. They seemed to already know where they would find which item. They were disappointed when they couldn't find fresh milk and cheese in the refrigerator and came out to get the fresh produce bag. They took out the items they didn't need and thanked the BNC members and left to arrange the items in their bag.

As we headed out, I asked them about where they were headed and thanked them for their time and interview. They said they were going to the bus stop and had to wait for the next bus. They were happy to answer these questions and said I can reach out to them if needed.