Calling Your City Council Member About Sweeps

Why your call matters

You don't need to be an expert. If you're a constituent (meaning, you live in the Council Member's district) and you care about this issue, your voice matters!

Council Member offices track calls from residents. Even a small number of calls on an issue can get noticed, and every call helps demonstrate public support for housing-focused solutions.

Step 1: Find Your Council Member

1. Go to https://council.nyc.gov/districts/
2. Enter your address, including your Borough.
3. Click on your Council Member's name to find their district office phone number.

Step 2: Prepare for your call

Before calling, take a minute to think about:

- Why do you oppose sweeps?
- Why does this issue matter to you?
- Which 1–2 points do you most want the Council Member to hear?

You don't need to say everything, and it doesn't need to be perfect–the main goal is just to make your opinion heard. A short call is completely fine.

Best time to call: Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm. That's when you're most likely to reach someone in the Council Member's office.

If no one answers (or if you're not able to call during that time), leave a voicemail.

Step 3: Make the call

Option 1: Use Our Basic Script

> *Hi, my name is [YOUR NAME], and I live in [YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD].*
>
> *I'm calling because I want Council Member [COUNCIL MEMBER'S NAME] to know that I oppose homeless encampment sweeps.*

My unhoused neighbors don't make me feel unsafe, and sweeps don't solve homelessness—they just move people from one place to another. They disrupt relationships with outreach workers and make it harder for people to access services and housing.

I want the city to focus on real solutions: low-barrier Safe Havens and affordable and supportive housing. This is a housing issue, not a public safety issue.

I know some residents support sweeps, but I'm a constituent too, and I want my voice counted. Sweeps don't reflect my values, and I hope the Council Member will oppose them and support housing-focused solutions instead.

Can you share my message with the Council Member?

[Pause for response]

Thank you. Does the Council Member have a position on encampment sweeps, and is there a way I can follow up or stay involved?

Option 2: Build Your Own Script

Start simple: *"Hi, my name is [Name] and I live in [neighborhood]. I'm calling to share my opinion on the city's approach to homeless encampments, and I'd like the council member to hear my perspective."*

Short and sweet points to hit on:

- My unhoused neighbors don't make me feel unsafe.
- Sweeps don't solve homelessness — they just move it.
- Sweeps undercut other efforts that require building trust, not taking belongings.
- I want the city to be working on housing solutions, not displacement.
- This is a housing policy failure, not a public safety issue.

Examples of what this might sound like – skim these samples and make them your own!

I live in [neighborhood] and I want the council member to know that I don't feel threatened by my homeless neighbors. Sweeps don't reflect my values or the values of my community.

Encampment sweeps displace people without connecting them to housing. Research consistently shows that criminalization of homelessness makes it harder, not easier, to get people into stable shelter.

Health and safety are served by connecting people to services, not by taking their belongings and moving them along.

The Department of Homeless Services should be resourced to do sustained, relationship-based outreach — not quick, compliance-driven cleanups that destroy people's belongings and break whatever fragile trust has been built.

I'm asking the councilmember to push the Department of Homeless Services and the Mayor's office to prioritize low-barrier shelter options, safe haven beds, and permanent supportive housing instead of sweeps that are really just moving suffering out of sight.

Sweeps aren't a good use of city money because they don't work.

People are on the street because we don't have enough affordable housing. That's the crisis we should be addressing.

I know some people complain about encampments but I'm a resident too, and I'm telling you the opposite. Not every constituent wants sweeps — and I want my voice counted.

Before you hang up:
Ask:
- Will you share this with the council member?
- Is there a way I can follow up in writing or attend a relevant hearing?
- Does the council member have a stated position on encampment sweeps?

Step 4: Report Back

After your call:

- **Fill out this super quick form** (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfSp38XrXPVmeeBfcXRN-LDhEKKsZKiBlVj93WkBllpFOOQHw/viewform?usp=header) **to help us keep track of outreach and any response you received.**
- If possible, **follow up with an email** to the district office reiterating your call. Written contact reinforces your phone outreach.

Keep Going

- **Encourage your friends:** Share these tips and ask others to call as well.
- **You can call repeatedly:** As the issue comes up in the news or in the budget cycle, call again. Consistency signals long term interest and attention.