

# City of St. Louis

## CoC

### Coordinated Street Outreach (Working Copy)

#### DEFINING COORDINATED OUTREACH

Coordinated street outreach engages people living in unsheltered locations, such as in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, encampments, and on the streets and reaches those who might not otherwise seek assistance or come to the attention of the homelessness service system and ensures that people's basic needs are met while supporting them along pathways toward housing stability. Typically, street outreach funding comes with varying mandates, requirements, and performance measures and usually is not funded at levels that would allow for implementation of the full range of activities and approaches recommended as *Coordinated Outreach*.

#### LOCATION & COVERAGE

- o To have the full geographic region of the City of St. Louis mapped.
- o Ensures all *Locations* are or can be reached and that the full regional area has *Coverage* of Street Outreach services.
- o To know locations are consistently scheduled for outreach engagement.

#### CORE ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE OUTREACH

- Street outreach is conducted on behalf of the community rather than one agency, requiring collaboration among multiple stakeholders. Knowledge of and engagement with all partners implementing street outreach efforts leads to more strategic use of resources and more comprehensive coverage and identification of all people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.
- Street outreach is coordinated among various providers and across different entities such as Federal, State, local government, and non-profits. These entities may utilize multiple funding sources to conduct street outreach.
- Street outreach efforts are also coordinated with the broader network of programs, services, or staff who are likely to encounter individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness, but whose regular focus is broader than homelessness. This might include law enforcement and other first responders, hospitals, health and behavioral healthcare providers, child welfare agencies, homeless education liaisons, workforce systems, faith-based organizations, and other community-based providers.
- Street outreach efforts are connected to coordinated entry processes. People sleeping in unsheltered locations are assessed and prioritized for assistance in the same manner as any other person assessed through the coordinated entry process.

- All street outreach contacts and housing placements are documented in HMIS. Outreach workers have access to data systems to be able to input data, look up previous contacts with the person experiencing homelessness, and access information on available resources (including access to Get Help® to refer clients to open shelter beds).
- Where street outreach providers or coordinated-entry processes have established data-sharing agreements and protocols, outreach providers can access data that helps them more effectively focus on supporting housing outcomes. Data on frequent use of shelter, emergency health services, and jails, when reviewed alongside HMIS data, can lead to more comprehensive identification of high need individuals.

## HOUSING FOCUSED EFFORTS

- The goal of street outreach is to make connections to stable housing with tailored services and supports of their choice, such as health and behavioral health care, transportation, access to benefits, and more.
- Street outreach does not require individuals to enter emergency shelter or transitional housing as an ‘interim step’ or prerequisite to accessing stable housing.
- Street outreach makes immediate connections to emergency shelter or temporary housing to provide safe options, as needed and when resources are available.
- To the extent possible, street outreach utilizes Housing First approaches that do not impose preconditions to make referrals to permanent housing, shelter, or other temporary housing, such as sobriety, minimum income requirements, absence of a criminal record, completion of treatment, participation in services, or other unnecessary conditions. Some housing options in the homelessness system may not be available due to specific eligibility criteria.

## CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE

- Street outreach efforts are respectful and responsive to the beliefs and practices, sexual orientations, disability statuses, age, gender identities, cultural preferences, and linguistic needs of all individuals.
- Street outreach efforts analyze local data regarding racial inequities and disparities among people experiencing homelessness and tailor their efforts to ensure that equity is being achieved within their outreach activities and outcomes. This might include diversifying staff and leadership, assuring appropriate geographic coverage, training all staff in issues of equity and cultural competency, and regularly analyzing performance and outcomes with a focus on racial equity.
- Street outreach workers utilize problem-solving techniques to identify strengths and existing support networks, explore possible safe housing options outside the homelessness service system, such as reunification with family, and connect the individual to community supports and services.

## NAVIGATE, SUPPORT & CONNECT

- o To address the needs of those living unsheltered by helping them *Navigate* the circumstances they find themselves in.
- o To *Support* the unhoused, ensuring needs are met and relationships are built
- o To *Connect* people by linking to services, shelter and permanent housing.
- o To engage in permanent housing planning.
- o To partner in connections. Engage, attend appointments, provide warm hand-offs and introductions, plan with service provider teams and to address client needs.
- o To respond to requests for services from the greater community and stakeholders.

## CASE CONFERENCE WITH PEERS

- o To *Case Conference with Peers* means to hold regular meetings with peer outreach teams to discuss the planning, engagement, and location of persons with high needs, vulnerabilities and barriers.
- o To network and have open communication with peer street outreach groups/workers.
- o To assign specific teams to take the lead in case management activities for individuals and families with high vulnerabilities, barriers, needs and those with housing referrals.
- o To ensure timely coverage of full geographic region.
- o To plan outreach activities when encampments become concerning to the overall community.
- o Allows for proactive outreach and minimizes the need for reactive emergencies.
- o To coordinate the connection of housing providers to unhoused persons referred for housing and/or services.
- o To communicate and share response requests, encampment trends, data, etc. and to plan community communication efforts.

## DATA COLLECTION TO ENSURE REDUCTION

- All information captured during interactions with individuals experiencing homelessness in the encampments should be documented in HMIS, including the Current Living Situation Assessment.