

Goal: Development of relationships, sharing of information concerning services, and ultimately helping people move off the streets as quickly as possible.

Philosophy: Street outreach involves moving outside the walls of the agency to engage people experiencing homelessness who may be disconnected and alienated not only from mainstream services and supports, but from the services targeting homeless persons as well. This is incredibly important work designed to help establish supportive relationships, give people advice and support, and hopefully enhance the possibility that they will access necessary services and supports that will help them move off the streets.

Program: Use of interagency teams to provide outreach on a routine and regular basis to develop strong relationships with visibly homeless and the invisible homeless (couch surfing, living without shelter in hard to reach and remote places) with a specific emphasis on homeless youth. Teams carry and distribute supplies of basic need and hotline/contact information. Emphasis is on development of relationships and an understanding of the individual's circumstances and needs of each individual including the cultural barriers that may prevent people from accessing mainstream services (illegal immigrants).

- Outreach is not limited to the visibly homeless. An effort should be made to connect with 'couch surfers', and to get into institutional settings where people may be housed, but are still 'at risk'.
- Outreach is often tied to more aggressive efforts to reduce 'rough sleeping',
- Rather than a more passive form of engagement, outreach tends to involve 'intake' and case management support.
- Assertive Outreach: Assertive outreach teams go to the places where individuals keep themselves hidden, such as parks, cars, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations, parking lots, and public storage lockers.
- To find youth, outreach teams draw on informal community contacts such as baristas, public librarians, and sanitation workers.
- Build Trust: Regularity, predictability, and follow-through are critical to program success.
- Trauma-Informed Care: Workers are trained to provide trauma-informed care with an emphasis on meeting individuals where they are.
- Youth Drop-In Centers Drop-in centers are a first point of contact and provide an informal atmosphere to attract and engage youth who are homeless, thus an effective alternative to the adult shelter system for older unaccompanied youth. Key features and promising practices of drop-in centers include:
 - Low- or No-Barrier: Foster a welcoming, safe, nonjudgmental environment, with limited rules or requirements, conveniently located near public transportation whenever possible.

Program resource needs:

- Basic need items that can be easily handed out i.e. socks, hygiene items, blankets/jackets
- Contact and information cards that can be distributed
- HMIS access and data entry for inputting of any data gathered
- MOU's between agencies for staffing and team development
- Training and education for team members
- Development of a schedule of locations (camps, day centers) for routine and regular visits