



Funding Sources for Outreach to Persons Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness

Funding Sources

Outreach and engagement services are one of the most valuable activities for a community attempting to address unsheltered homelessness, but can be challenging to fund for a variety of reasons, including:

- Persons may or may not agree to services, while engagement continues. Without an agreement to services, identification and a signature, most funding streams cannot support this activity.
- Caseload size- For case managers, clear directives regarding caseloads are required. For a true outreach worker, anyone experiencing unsheltered homelessness is your part of your caseload and should receive at least an offer of assistance.
- Coordination and integration between multiple systems (homeless assistance, health care, behavioral health, criminal justice and child welfare) is only at a basic stage. True integration of activities is a later stage development in most cross sector initiatives.

Another challenge in developing and implementing a coordinated outreach and engagement strategy is that these activities can be funded by relatively few flexible but uncoordinated federal, state or local funding streams. There is no specific funding streams for outreach activities for persons experiencing homelessness. Other, more flexible, funding streams (foundation funding) can also be used to support outreach and engagement activities. Commonly local community groups such as schools or religious institutions may also engage in outreach activities that ideally are coordinated with more professionalized services. The following list includes primary funding streams that communities have historically used.

1. **Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)** - The emergency solutions grant, from the Department of Housing and Urban Development is part of a community's Continuum of Care and commonly supports emergency shelter as well as outreach activities. <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/esg/>
2. **Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RYHA)**- RYHA is focused on activities that support young people who are running away from home and therefore commonly experiencing homelessness. Historically agencies that receive this funding are connected to the Child Welfare system in a community. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/programs/runaway-homeless-youth>
3. **Program for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH)** - The PATH program, is part of a state of community's public mental health systems and supports activities for persons who are experiencing homelessness and

have a serious mental illness. The program has some flexibility that does require immediate documentation of serious mental illness.

<https://www.samhsa.gov/homelessness-programs-resources/grant-programs-services/path>

4. **Health Care for the Homeless (HCH)**- HCH programs offer clinic based health care services, but also commonly support outreach activities to people experiencing homelessness. HCH funding recognizes the need for 'enabling services' without which clinical services will not occur.

<https://bphc.hrsa.gov/datareporting/nationaldata/2008/SpecialPopulations/Homeless/index.html>

Communities should review the use of these and other funding sources in two distinct ways:

- From a community wide perspective, community leadership should research who receives each of these sources and work to align, coordinate and ultimately integrate their activities.
- From a provider perspective, if your agency receives any of these funding streams, are you using them to support outreach and engagement? If not, are any changes possible?

As a community works to build a Community Wide outreach system, knowledge of and engagement with all person and groups who are doing this work, can lead to more strategic use of resources and more success in helping people leave a life on the streets.