



Framework & Description of CSH's Tools for Communities to Develop a Coordinated Strategy to Address Unsheltered Homelessness FALL, 2018

The Challenge

A community wide response to persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness, has many moving parts, including:

1. Operating in the context of a community wide strategy to address all types of homelessness.
2. Coordinating operations between multiple agencies.
3. Balancing a Housing Focused system with the need for emergency response to weather and other community emergencies that can have a unique impact on persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness.
4. Collecting actionable information for line staff, supervisors and community leaders through the Continuum of Care's Homeless Management Information System or HMIS.

A high performing system, will have some essential features, such as

- ✓ 24/7/365 outreach capacity that quickly connects staff and participants to a community's Coordinated Entry system.
- ✓ Data and Analytics capabilities that are part of a community's Homelessness Management Information System or HMIS.
- ✓ A hotline or call center process where community members who are concerned about this issue can call for assistance for an unsheltered person. Commonly this feature may be aligned with a community's 211 or 311 process.
- ✓ Policies and coordination activities for staff from multiple agencies to reduce redundancies and ensure effective operations.
- ✓ Policies and financing structures that support multiple engagements with vulnerable persons and prioritization for limited housing resources.
- ✓ A process of accountability and feedback to the broader community. CSH's suite of tools will help communities develop that process

The Framework

The framework we have put together delineates the types of activities and the component of support offered by the tool. The three types of activities include:

1. *System Wide Templates* to support the system needed to address the needs of unsheltered

persons. These are system wide activities, such as data and analytics, accountability, or communication with the broader stakeholder community.

2. *Draft policies and procedures* to support *Outreach to Unsheltered Persons* who remain unsheltered, either due to lack of capacity on the systems part, or lack of availability of resources. While the conversation can often focus on a small group of people who do not immediately accept resources that conversation is seldom helpful and often takes needed emphasis away from what activities can make better address these issues in a community. Draft Policies and Procedures are broken out into those relevant WITHIN agencies doing outreach that should have uniformity for within agency activities and those relevant BETWEEN agencies doing outreach to ensure cross agency coordination.
3. Provider Tools that assist direct service agencies and their staff to ensure an accountable, quality, data driven housing focused outreach system.

Furthermore, each of these activities has the following essential components of support:

1. **Data and Analytics** tools that ensure accountability of public systems, and strategic use of resources.
2. **Policies and Procedures Within Agencies** that are needed when to align activities within multiple agencies that support effective engagement with the population.
3. **Policies and Procedures to Ensure Coordination Between Agencies** are tools activities and policies between agencies, given that most communities will have more than one provider engaged in outreach, tenancy support services, case management and housing programs.
4. **Communications** tools that engage the broader stakeholder community.

Description of Tools, Draft Policies etc.

The following listing of Tools and Template will offer communities a running start to developing a system of outreach to unsheltered persons that will be grounded in best practices and respect for the people who are being assisted.

I. Outreach to Unsheltered Persons

a. Data and Analytics

- i. Contact Sheet including data collection tools and definition and guidance to support the contact sheet- The Contact sheet is basic data collection tool. The assumption is that outreach workers will use mobile devices to enter data while they are in the field.
- ii. Hotline call Contact Sheet and Response call log- a data collection tool regarding community members concerns regarding people experiencing homelessness and how the system responded to those concerns.
- iii. Data Collection, Management, & Entry Process- Workflow documents for data entry, data collection and data management.
- iv. Mobile Device Business Requirements and Rules- Assuming a community is using mobile devices to collect data, how are they obtained and maintained.

b. Tools and Policies for Within Agencies

- i. Role of the outreach worker- Described basic outreach practices and the outreach workers role in the larger homeless services system.
- ii. Engaging Non-Responsive Consumers Procedure- Outreach may commonly intersect with people who are not responsive due to medical issues, intoxication, or severe mental illness. This policy guides those activities, so they can be performed effectively and safely for both the person who is unsheltered and the outreach worker.
- iii. Outreach to severely intoxicated persons- This policy outlines both effective strategies and resources for assisting unsheltered persons who are also intoxicated. Given the danger and lack of judgement that can result from intoxication, those issues are covered as well.
- iv. Outreach Emergency Policy- This policy outlines use of outreach services in emergency situations.
- v. Outreach Supervisory Expectations- Outreach supervisors have a challenging role in holding staff accountable when your workforce is designed to have a very flexible role. This policy outlines strategies to ensure accountability as well as effectiveness of that workforce.
- vi. Job descriptions for outreach workers, outreach case managers- Sample job descriptions for each role.

c. Coordination between Agencies

- i. Special Request of Outreach Teams Policy- Outreach teams are commonly called into special activities, such as breaking down encampments, or ensuring that unique community events have outreach capacity. This policy outlines how to organize these requests in an effective manner.
- ii. Outreach to Priority locations, encampments and intersection with law enforcement entities- This policy outlines outreach activities how to carry out the community requests for a specialized response.
- iii. Outreach worker List- Sample listing for staff from multiple agencies that must form a coordinated work force.
- iv. Outreach team schedules: regular and emergency- sample schedules so that staff from multiple agencies can form a coordinated workforce
- v. Zones- policies and processes to ensure that outreach staff are offering outreach coverage to as wide a portion of your community as outreach capacity will allow. Often outreach to unsheltered persons requires multiple engagements and organizing teams in zones allows workers to deepen their engagement with vulnerable persons.
- vi. Vehicle listing and details on outreach vehicles- sample vehicle listing. Commonly outreach staff will have protection from parking violations and this will require a regular listing of outreach vehicles to be shared with law enforcement or the entity in your community that enforces parking regulations.
- vii. Protocol for Outreach to Priority Locations and Encampments- This protocol highlights how to deploy staff from multiple agencies to address a priority location and an encampment over a period of time longer than a single shift.
- viii. Public Interaction Policies- The public commonly has many questions and often a strong desire to assist persons living on the streets of their communities. These

guidelines assist outreach workers to make that interacting as productive as possible for all involved.

- ix. Response Call Procedures- Teams are called into respond when calls about vulnerable persons are received by the central call center process. This policy outlines how teams are required to respond and support placement as well as valuable geographic information regarding homelessness in a community.
- x. Weather emergency procedures- Persons who are unsheltered, by definition are more impacted by extreme weather, such as hurricanes, snowstorms or floods. These procedures support activities to ensure the safety of the people experiencing unsheltered homelessness as well as the outreach staff who are trying to assist them.

d. Communications

- i. Flyers for community members- Community members commonly want to help their neighbors experiencing homelessness. Having a handout that lists valuable information about assisting and outlines the public accountability of a community's outreach system can build political will for these activities, as well as assist vulnerable people.

II. Service and Supports

a. Data and Analytics

- i. Tracking those on your street- Priority list processes- Communities have limited resources to assist unsheltered persons and most communities are now creating a 'by name' list of those living on their streets. This data driven process, can ensure that limited resources are assisting the priority people for a community.
- ii. Analysis of Priority List- A priority list needs regular updating and analysis based on new data and new resources. This process offers guidance on developing that process.
- iii. Missing Person Form- Missing persons can commonly end up being unsheltered. This draft process outlines how an outreach systems can effectively intersect with the missing person's process in a given community.
- iv. Crosswalk of outreach data collected and HMIS required data elements- Commonly collected outreach data has significant overlap but not a 1:1 match with HUD required data elements. This chart tracks that overlaps against HUD data elements and the contact sheet above.

b. Tools and Policies for Within Agencies

- i. Outreach worker decision tree- This decision tree can support training and new outreach staff as they develop skills to learn how to respond to a wide variety of 'on the job' undertakings.
- ii. Services by Outreach worker- Outreach workers offer a wide variety of services, and this description outlines a number of them, defines them for valid data collection and tracking accountability of outreach staff.
- iii. Priority List Policy & Procedures- Outreach staff should respond differently upon engaging someone who is a priority for the community to house or assist. This process assists multiple teams to communicate effectively on engaging persons on a priority list.
- iv. Protocol for Hospital Discharge Outreach- Hospitals commonly discharge persons into

homelessness. How outreach teams track and respond to those requests is an important question for a community to answer and this protocol outlines a sample community response.

- v. Safe Transport Policy- Outreach teams are commonly called upon to transport persons who are unknown to the teams and may have a variety of challenges that impact safe transport. The policy outlines how to balance supporting teams, with accomplishing the mission.
- vi. Substance Abuse Treatment Procedures- Outreach teams commonly intersect with persons who could benefit from substance abuse treatment. How the outreach system intersects with the substance abuse treatment systems is an important question for community leaders to answer and this policy outlines one such possibility.
- vii. Involuntary Psychiatric Commitment- Outreach teams commonly interact with persons with a severe mental illness (SMI) who could be an immediate danger to themselves or other community members. This policy outlines one local process and a systemic response to the over representation of persons with SMI among unsheltered populations.
- viii. Vulnerable Individuals Placement Procedures- Outreach commonly engages vulnerable persons who may not be able to be placed in immediately available options. This policy considers those possibilities and how outreach workers can respond compassionately and effectively.
- ix. Tracking when no placement is available- Communities are increasingly using gaps analysis tools to determine what capacity is needed to effectively address unsheltered homelessness in their community. Tracking how commonly persons cannot be placed due to capacity issues can be an essential data collection tool in that process.
- x. Policies on Naloxone/ Narcan- Outreach teams are likely to encounter overdose victims and common procedures and access to Naloxone, the overdose prevention drug, can literally save a life. These policies outline a process to support those activities.
- xi. Outreach Placement Policy- Outreach's goals with all unsheltered persons should be focused on housing. These policies guide and track how successful teams are in that process.
- xii. Outreach Support for Consumer Use of Benefits- Outreach commonly engaged persons who are eligible for public benefits but are not enrolled. This process outlines resources that could be made available to address that gap.
- xiii. Outreach Referral Process for Services- Outreach teams commonly refer persons to a variety of social services, treatment and benefits options. This process outlines how this process should occur and how this process is effectively tracked.

c. Coordination between Agencies

- i. Partners in Outreach/ MOU template between agencies/ Letters of Agreement Regarding Operating Procedures- Commonly, more than one provider agency is involved in assisting persons who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness. This draft MOU between agencies ensure accountability as well as effectiveness is embedded into your system.
- ii. Outreach Resources Booklet- Each community should have a standing list of the

- resources (literally food, clothing and shelter) that persons living on the streets can easily access. This example can help a community get started developing their own.
- iii. Naloxone Refill Form- If outreach teams are trained and carrying Naloxone, a process will need to be developed to replenish when supplies are low.
 - iv. Shower Locations- Communities commonly have a variety of resources that are available at varying times. Outreach workers should have a standard ability to access this information and offer to the people they are engaging.
 - v. Significant Incident Report
 - vi. Access to Walk in Services- Some agencies that offer outreach also offer walk in services for case management, evaluations or other needed services. This information coordination process, allows outreach workers to know what is available when a person is ready for this assistance.

d. Communications- N/A

III. System wide Tools

a. Data and Analytics

- i. Monthly Outreach Reports- Monthly reporting to a community on outreach activities, outcomes and impact.
- ii. Weekly Summary- Weekly reporting to a community on outreach activities, outcomes and impact
- iii. Annual Summary- Annual reporting to a community on outreach activities, outcomes and impact
- iv. Trends reporting- As populations change over time, trends will need to be analyzed for the impact of community wide strategies, resources and need.
- v. Performance Measures for Outreach teams- Outreach teams' accountability measures.

b. Tools and Policies for Within Agencies- N/A

c. Coordination between Agencies

- i. Training Schedule and Process- A community wide response can benefit from a community wide training plan for outreach staff. These materials offer one example.

d. Communications

- i. Mission and Vision Statements- Outreach is commonly a mission driven activity and a well-developed mission and vision statement can build needed community wide support.
- ii. Media Policy- Commonly, particularly in bad weather, media will want to ride along or understand how outreach is assisting persons who are unsheltered. This draft media policy can assist a community in responding in the most coordinated and effective manner possible.