

Homeless Encampment Response Strategy

Written Standards

Statement of Purpose

The goal of this document is to outline comprehensive outreach strategies, responses to individuals living unsheltered at encampments, and establish standards for encampment site assessments. It provides strategic response protocols as well as implementation plans for a full array of services and permanent housing program referrals aimed at ensuring all individuals experiencing homelessness are provided with support and services tailored to their needs.

Introduction

Every year during the last 10 days of January, communities across the country conduct comprehensive counts of the local homeless populations in order to measure the prevalence of homelessness in each local Continuum of Care. On the night of January 27th, 2021, 5,083 people were counted as experiencing homelessness in Southern Nevada. 55% were unsheltered, 45% were sheltered. Of those that were unsheltered, 52% were on the street, outdoor vehicles, desert encampments, and 3% were at the City of Las Vegas Courtyard. Across Southern Nevada the rates of individuals and families experiencing unsheltered homelessness is rising. Residents across Southern Nevada are navigating through a shortage of affordable housing options, a burgeoning mental health crisis, loss of employment and/or income, and a slow economic recovery. With limited resources and shelters available many will be forced to live in vehicles, public spaces, or on the streets. As levels of unsheltered homelessness rise so are the number and size of encampments located across Southern Nevada.

Addressing the needs of Southern Nevada unsheltered homelessness and encampments can be increasingly difficult. Many people experiencing homelessness are affected by

extreme weather conditions including temperatures that can range from below freezing during winter nights and 115 degree heat waves during the summer months, to sudden monsoons and flash flooding. These harsh conditions force many unsheltered homeless individuals to form encampments in places not meant for human habitation including storm tunnels, vacant lots, in public parks, and any areas that can provide protection from the elements, which can make them increasingly difficult to locate and engage.

Southern Nevada's economic environment can also create challenges for serving people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Las Vegas' economy and tourism is fueled by a high risk environment driven by drugs, alcohol, a hyper-sexualized entertainment industry, and the nearby commercial sex industry. This environment and the economic dependence on entertainment and promotion of a consequence-free experience can contribute to increased trafficking, domestic/dating violence, trauma, and substance use. Not only are unsheltered homeless individuals more apt to experience debilitating trauma and co-occurring disabilities at a greater rate than their sheltered peers, many of these factors can often contribute to ongoing issues and trauma that can make them more hesitant to engage in services and depend on encampments for safety, shelter, and protection.

Encampments in Clark County occur in diverse areas, including rural and urban locations. In Las Vegas encampments are commonly built in tunnels prone to flash flooding, on sidewalks, in vacant lots, along railroad tracks, parks, and in other locations. The diversity of encampment locations, size of the county, and the sizable population of people living in tunnels create unique challenges in responding to encampments. Outreach workers in Southern Nevada meet the clients at places not meant for human habitation to provide comprehensive coordinated services. This may include hygiene kits, food, water, mental health services, resources, cell phones, gift cards, and referrals to programs and services. This approach, while effective on a small scale or when dealing with less severe environments, cannot support the increased service and environmental needs of large-scale encampments.

The area also struggles, as noted in *Exploring Homelessness Among People Living in Encampments and Associated Cost*¹, because, "The Southern Nevada region has no cross-jurisdictional plan for addressing encampments. Each of three political entities—Las

¹ <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/Exploring-Homelessness-Among-People.pdf>

Vegas, Henderson, and Clark County— has its own strategy, and that has led to overlapping, fragmented, or even conflicting approaches to addressing encampments.” The fragmentation can have an impact on outreach services provided to clients residing in particular jurisdictions.

Regardless of where the clients are located in Southern Nevada or who is providing services, they should expect fair and equal treatment and to receive any necessary comprehensive services regardless of the provider.

Guidelines

This guide shares values and principles with the Nevada Interagency Strategic Plan².

- Every person matters and deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Homelessness is unacceptable.
- Homelessness can be prevented.
- Homelessness is expensive; it is better to invest in solutions.
- Homelessness is solvable; we have learned a lot about what works.
- There is strength in collaboration

Nevada uses guiding principles from the Dedicating Opportunities to End Homelessness (DOEH) initiative. They are:

- Coordinating Across Partners
- Community Led Action
- Data-driven Achievable Strategies and Goals
- Making Commitments and Measuring Results
- Leveraging Existing and Untapped Resources
- Removing Barriers
- Targeting Priority Populations

² <https://helphome.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/ICH-Strategic-Plan-April-2018.pdf>

Action Statements

In following with the beliefs outlined in this plan, the Nevada Homeless Encampment Response Team has agreed to focus all outreach and continued support on the following Action Statements:

- All people can be housed given the right service support and housing model.
- Persons in encampments do best with clear low barrier pathways to permanent housing. Permanent housing placements must be followed by supportive services to ensure that individuals are successful in maintaining their housing.
- To the greatest extent practicable, individual choices about where and how to live should be honored.
- Addressing encampments requires collaboration from multiple sectors and systems; no single entity can or should have exclusive responsibility.

Definitions

Literally Homeless - individuals or families living in places not meant for human habitation, emergency shelters, or who are exiting an institution where they've resided for 90 days or less and were literally homeless before entry.

Street Outreach - engaging clients not meant in places for human habitation or residing in emergency shelters, providing services, and linking the clients to various resources.

Encampment - a site where individual(s) are residing in places not meant for human habitation such as vacant lots, tunnels, washes, abandoned buildings, parks, and other similar locations.

Hot spots - locations like parks and libraries where individuals experiencing homelessness spend time, but don't reside.

Living space - a spot where individuals reside in an encampment including, but not limited to, a tent, makeshift structure, mattress, etc.

Resolved - when an encampment ceases to exist after all residents have vacated the area after locating suitable housing or a clean up occurs. Encampments are not considered resolved after receiving a certain number of service refusals because some clients may take a long time to establish trust with outreach workers.

Housing First - providing permanent housing to individuals and families regardless of any personal issues they may be experiencing without requiring them to complete a series of steps.

Harm Reduction - practices that mitigate the effects of harmful behaviors.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) - the electronic system used by outreach teams to track client data, locations, contact information, and to complete housing assessments in.

Outreach Partners

Jurisdictional departments

City of North Las Vegas

City of Las Vegas

City of Henderson

Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Homeless Outreach Team (LVMPD HOT)

Clark County Social Service

Clark County Code Enforcement

City of Las Vegas Code Enforcement

Henderson Code Enforcement

Clark County Public Works

Clark County Parks & Recreation

City of North Las Vegas Police Department

Henderson Police Department

Southern Nevada Health District

Outreach providers

HELP of Southern Nevada's Mobile Crisis Intervention Team (MCIT)

HELP of Southern Nevada's North Las Vegas Homeless Outreach and Mobile Engagement (H.O.M.E.) Team

HELP of Southern Nevada's Henderson Homeless Response Team (HHRT)

City of Las Vegas' Multi-agency Outreach Resource Engagement (MORE) Team

Outreach practices

1. Outreach is a coordination effort, and doesn't exist in a silo.
2. Outreach staff provide housing assessments to individuals unable or unwilling to visit an assessment site.
3. Outreach staff document services and client engagements in HMIS.
4. Evidence based practices are used, including harm reduction, trauma informed care, motivational interviewing, and housing first.

Responding to Encampments

Responses to encampments are standardized by a rating system and given a corresponding response. The Regional Outreach Coordinator is responsible for gathering the results of encampment assessments and planning responses, including activation of necessary community partners and services. Each response is unique and can be scaled to fit the needs of individuals and safety at encampment sites.

Level Three Responses

Encampments that score a 5-15 on the Encampment Site Assessment will receive a Level Three response. Level Three encampments are typically smaller in scale and have fewer safety hazards. Level Three responses are the most basic response, are conducted

regularly, and encampments are visited periodically to inform residents of available services.

Level Two Responses

Encampments that score a 16-21 on the Encampment Site Assessment receive a Level Two response. Outreach workers visit the encampment three times to provide intensive services, attempt to help clients resolve their homelessness, and assist interested clients in accessing shelters.

Level One Responses

Encampments that score a 22-25 on the Encampment Site Assessment receive a Level One response. A case-by-case basis will be used to determine the length of time the encampment is addressed. Outreach workers for Clark County will respond to the site with outreach workers for the respective jurisdiction (City of Las Vegas, City of North Las Vegas, and/or the City of Henderson) to provide outreach support. A level one response may be coupled with a housing surge and closure of the encampment.

At least one day of outreach for a Level One response will include the provision of comprehensive services. Depending on availability, these services will include medical, mental health, substance abuse, and other commonly needed services. Housing surges, when/if they occur, will seek to house as many people from the encampment as possible. In the event of a housing surge, as many master leased units as possible will be located for the event.

Due to the scope and intensity of Level One Responses required by all parties, only one Level One Response will be conducted a month. Sites will be placed on a waitlist, monitored, and a focus will be placed on targeting different jurisdictions. The list will be maintained by the Regional Outreach Coordinator. The Coordinated Outreach meeting will be used to provide updates and propose sites for a Level One Response. In the event an encampment has not scored high enough, an alternate site will be selected with a sizable population of individuals who are unsheltered.

Abatements

Efforts will be made to communicate planned abatements to outreach teams so they are able to provide services before the anticipated clean-up. Outreach teams will respond to the location, inform residents that a clean-up is scheduled for the site, and offer them available services and access to emergency shelter if they desire it.

Cross-Jurisdictional Approaches

In the case that an encampment borders or crosses a jurisdiction, coordinated outreaches to target all areas of the encampment may be organized. The type of response will be based on the score the encampment receives on the Encampment Site Assessment.

Encampment Site Assessment

Large Encampments

- concentration of 10 or more persons in a definable location,
- use of structures for sustained habitation (cardboard boxes, tents, non-permanent structures),
- evidence of sustained presence – trash piles, cooking fires, shopping carts.

Moderate Encampments

- Concentration of 3 – 9 persons in a definable location,
- use of structures for sustained habitation (cardboard boxes, tents, non-permanent structures),
- evidence of sustained presence, although degree/visibility may be less than large encampments.

Small Encampments

- Concentration of 1-3 persons in a definable location,
- use of structures for sustained habitation (cardboard boxes, tents, non-permanent structures),
- evidence of sustained presence, although degree/visibility may be less than large encampments.

Hot Spots

- Individuals in a location who are experiencing homelessness.
- Evidence of bedding down but not sustained presence in the same location for sustained periods of time greater than one week.
- Spots that are common for people experiencing homelessness to spend time in, like parks, but not live in.

Location Characteristics

- Number of Persons
 - 0-5 individuals will receive a score of 1 on the encampment assessment.
 - 5-10 individuals will receive a score of 2 on the encampment assessment.
 - 10-15 individuals will receive a score of 3 on the encampment assessment.
 - 15-20 individuals will receive a score of 4 on the encampment assessment.
 - 20+ individuals will receive a score of 5 on the encampment assessment.
- Jurisdiction
- Neighborhood/community complaints
- Visibility to general public
- Degree of criminal activity in nearby vicinity
- Persistence of the site - how much of a community has developed and how likely is the encampment rebuild to the same proportions after cleanup

Vulnerability of Population (Safety)

- Perceived elderly (65+ years old)
- Perceived infants, children and/or pregnancies (< 17 years old)
- Perceived physical and behavioral health issues
 - physical disabilities impacting activities of daily living
 - intellectual and developmental disabilities
 - mental health and/or brain injuries
 - active or visible alcohol and/or illegal substance use
 - open wounds/sores that require medical care
- Prostitution or human trafficking on site

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- EMS/Police critical incident calls at site
 - Physical violence among members of encampment
 - Drugs purchased/sold on site
 - Punitive or controlling rules in the encampment
 - Neglected animals
 - Culture of tension or animosity among members of encampment
 - Lack of sufficient natural light
 - Public Health Concerns
 - COVID Exposure/ Positive results
 - Evidence or reports of other communicable disease
 - Flu
 - MRSA
 - Hepatitis A or Hepatitis B
 - HIV
 - Reports of STDs

Environmental Health

- Presence of vermin – rats, mice, fleas
- Presence of hazardous materials – car batteries, kerosene
- Biowaste – blood, used condoms, feces, urine, vomit
- Food waste – spoiled food
- Loose sharps – used needles, broken glass, barbed wire
- Standing water
- Loud, amplified, and sustained noise from traffic and sirens

Community Safety

- Camping in public parks
- Camping on sidewalks
- Evidence of open fires
- Sites within 50 feet of bridge/highway ramp/guardrail
- Sites within 50 feet of heavy traffic
- Sites within 50 feet of bodies of water and areas prone to flash floods

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- Sites within a block of homes/apartments
 - Abandoned buildings
 - Near industrial zones
 - Near facilities for children – school, daycare
 - Evidence of uncontrolled pets, and other animals creating safety issues
 - Site access is hazardous, requires climbing fence, wall, or another dangerous barrier

Solid Waste

- Excessive disorganized garbage and trash throughout site
- Bagged garbage
- Bulky items (abandoned or in use) – sofa, chairs, furniture, shopping carts

The minimum score an encampment can receive is a 5. The maximum score is 25.

Responding to Unsheltered Clients

Outreach workers should strive to build rapport with clients by being compassionate, non judgemental, and empathetic. Outreach workers will meet the client where they're at physically and mentally. Whenever possible while engaging with clients, outreach workers should meet the client physically where they're at and crouch down to be on the same level with clients. Outreach workers avoid standing above clients and speaking down at them.

Agencies should strive to hire workers with lived experience and emphasize the importance of cultural competency among staff.

Clients who are fully engaged will be assessed for substance abuse issues, mental health issues, medical issues, homeless history, legal issues, and for any missing identification documents. All clients are to be offered a shelter referral on every encounter, and offered referrals for other difficulties they might report.

Outreach services are not coercive, and outreach workers repeatedly engage with individuals experiencing homelessness. Workers will provide basic needs to clients like food, hygiene items, and clothing.

CHAT Assessments

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- The SATT is completed prior to conducting a housing assessment.
 - CHATs for adults without children (AWOC) are conducted on individuals older than 24 years of age.
 - Couples should be split up for their separate assessments to ensure confidentiality in case there is a safety issue like domestic violence.
 - Family CHATS are conducted on individuals who have minor children with them or who are going to gain custody of their children soon.
 - Youth housing assessments, using the Next Step tool, are conducted with unaccompanied youth.
 - Clients with a CHAT over a year old will be reassessed and their new information sent to the community queue.

When a client is referred to housing through the Community Queue, street outreach workers will work with the housing agency to locate the client, transport them as needed, and assist the client and agency with finalizing the referral.

Domestic Violence/Human Trafficking Protocol

- Profiles for people experiencing domestic violence are de-identified in HMIS. The first name is 0000 and their last name is the Unique Identifier number for the HMIS profile. The client's photo is removed from HMIS.
- Outreach workers will ask clients who report experiencing interpersonal violence if they are safe, and offer to contact police and/or medical services.
- Outreach workers will assist the client in calling the domestic violence hotline to complete an assessment and see if room is available at an appropriate shelter.
- Clients will be transported to a domestic violence shelter if room is available.

Outreach workers will ask the following questions during the engagement process with clients: “does anyone make you do things that you don’t want to do?” and “have you ever been made to feel that you had to give someone else your money?”

If the client answers yes to the questions, the outreach worker will utilize the following protocol:

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- The worker will de-identify the client's HMIS profile for safety.
 - Offer the individual the opportunity to speak with an advocate about available resources.
 - Offer assistance accessing emergency medical services and speaking to law enforcement about their situation.
 - Adults have the choice whether or not to report trafficking to Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department and must give consent. Workers must report trafficking for any individual under the age of 18.
 - Workers will contact their immediate supervisor for assistance in reaching the human trafficking hotline for support if their client wishes.

Client Confidentiality

Outreach workers collect a plethora of sensitive information from clients such as demographic information, social security numbers, personal health information, and other biopsychosocial details. Outreach workers will keep clients' information confidential. Personal, identifying information on paper is to be kept in a secure, locked location when not in use. Client cases will not be discussed in public places where individuals not involved may overhear details or with friends and/or family. Client issues will not be discussed in front of other clients, unless the client has given consent for the outreach worker to do so.

Outreach workers should strive to provide a client with as much privacy as possible during a housing assessment to ensure confidentiality. This may mean doing a housing assessment in the car or a distance away from the encampment with another outreach partner. Clients must give consent for outreach workers to communicate with a third party about their case, unless there is a legal duty to report.

Electronic systems outside of HMIS should have the capability of protecting personal, identifying information and be password protected. If they are not capable of handling sensitive data, then they should not be used to collect client information.

Data Collection

HMIS will be used to maintain data on clients and services. Outreach workers should look each client up in HMIS and check for housing referrals, a signed release, and public alerts. The client's contact information and location should be continuously updated. The coordinated entry process and housing assessments are also conducted in HMIS.

Street outreach workers will clearly explain to clients what information is collected from them and how HMIS is used. Clients will be informed of how the information is protected and how to revoke their release for HMIS should they decide they want their information removed from HMIS.

Clients who refuse HMIS

Clients who refuse HMIS will receive life-sustaining services and in-kind donations. Workers will continue working with the client until they choose to accept services and agree to have their information in HMIS. Outreach teams will track the number of clients who refuse services.

Documentation

Street outreach workers will input all data accurately into HMIS within three business days of contact with a client. Street outreach staff will meet or exceed the documentation requirements for their employers and/or funding source, particularly if the requirements for data are more extensive than requested in HMIS.

The employer for whom outreach staff work for is responsible for maintaining records of consent and agency-specific releases of information.

In the event that a client is deemed unable to provide consent due to their cognitive state, street outreach workers shall contact Adult Protective Services or a professional able to complete a capacity assessment to determine their ability to provide consent for themselves.

Weather Conditions

During times of extreme heat, emergency cooling stations are established in various locations around Clark County. It is the duty of outreach teams to focus on distributing water and information on cooling stations.

During times when inclement weather and rainfall is expected, outreach teams will visit tunnels, washes, and areas vulnerable to flash flooding to alert residents of danger and advise relocating. If available, supplies such as blankets and jackets will be distributed.

Emergency Disaster Response

Many individuals experiencing homelessness face challenges with communication devices such as radio, cell phones, and television that broadcast emergency alerts. This creates difficulties in making sure that unsheltered individuals are aware of an emergency disaster and where to go if one should occur. First responders may not be aware of where encampments are located, how to enter them, or the best methods to engage individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

Based on the situation, evacuation and sheltering points may change on a case-by-case basis. During an emergency disaster information on evacuation points and shelter sites will be provided to unsheltered individuals. Homeless outreach agencies will provide their knowledge and assistance to first responders in locating and entering encampments if an emergency disaster response is activated.

Worker Safety & Equipment

Outreach workers will respond to encampments in teams of at least two. Less than four workers will approach the same client at a time to ensure client comfort. If one outreach worker feels a situation at an encampment is unsafe and wants to leave the area, then all outreach workers will vacate the encampment. Outreach workers will keep a supervisor informed of their locations.

Outreach workers may experience vicarious trauma in the course of their work. Service providers are responsible for ensuring that workers process incidents appropriately and encourage the practice of self care.

Additionally, the following restrictions are observed by the outreach teams about tunnel safety:

- Clark County's HELP of Southern Nevada teams: hard hats must be worn inside the tunnels. Tunnels will not be entered during rain.
- City of Las Vegas MORE Team: tunnels are not entered at all. Clients are engaged from the mouth of the tunnel.
- North Las Vegas H.O.M.E. Team: hard hats must be worn inside the tunnels. Tunnels are only entered with a member of the City of North Las Vegas Police Department.
- Henderson Homeless Response team: hard hats must be worn inside the tunnels. Tunnels will not be entered when a rain event is anticipated. Police officers are available to escort if there are any safety concerns.

Street outreach workers will be provided with a work cell phone, and will not give clients their personal phone number. Street outreach workers will also be provided with identifying work clothing, pertinent safety equipment, and personal protective equipment for their positions. Street outreach workers will follow the dress code of their respective agencies and dress appropriately to manage potential hazards in the field.

Trainings

All street outreach workers will complete Clarity Human Services: General Training and Coordinated Entry Virtual Training. Due to the number of agencies involved in street outreach, workers will attend trainings determined by their respective agencies. It is suggested that outreach workers complete trainings on boundaries & ethics, motivational interviewing, trauma-informed care, identifying human trafficking, and administering naloxone.

At times the cities and county may request outreach workers to complete particular trainings. Agencies will honor these requests and ensure that all street outreach workers attend requested trainings.

Mandated Reporting

Outreach workers will make reports in cases where child abuse or neglect is suspected, when a client is threatening to harm themselves or others, and when cases of self-neglect are suspected. The Clark County Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline will be contacted for cases of child abuse and/or neglect at (702) 399-0081, and Elder/Adult Protective Services will be contacted for adults when cases of abuse, neglect, or self-neglect are suspected.

Emergency Situations

Outreach workers may encounter an unsheltered individual experiencing a crisis, physical or mental distress, or who, in extreme and rare circumstances, may be unconscious.

Outreach workers should follow the following procedures.

1. Immediately assess the scene and vacate it if there is a safety concern. Workers will then contact 911 and report the incident.
2. Workers will contact 911 for a client showing signs of distress if determined to be necessary.
3. Workers will contact 911 in the event a client is unconscious and, if capable, administer procedures advised by 911 like CPR or naloxone until first responders arrive.
4. Outreach workers will remain at the scene, if safe to do so, until further assistance arrives.

Coordinated Outreach Meeting

The Coordinated Outreach Meeting will provide agency level coordination for street outreach efforts. The meeting will establish regular coordination and communication regarding street outreach efforts, including case conferencing, taking action on immediate needs affecting direct service work, providing updates on available housing options, and geographic coverage collaboration across agencies providing street outreach services.

Geographic Coverage

Outreach programs will coordinate to ensure comprehensive coverage of geographic areas and to prevent overlapping services. Geographic restrictions may apply or change for street

outreach teams depending on their funding source. Outreach providers will communicate operation efforts to prevent duplication of services.

The City of Las Vegas MORE team will focus on covering the City of Las Vegas, HELP of Southern Nevada's North Las Vegas H.O.M.E. team will provide outreach services in the City of North Las Vegas, HELP of Southern Nevada's Henderson Homeless Response Team will provide coverage in the City of Henderson, and HELP of Southern Nevada's Homeless Response Teams will provide services in the remainder of Clark County.

Hours of Operation

Street outreach workers will provide services during their contractually obligated hours. When permitted by the contract and provider, street outreach programs will strive to provide services during different times of the day and on weekends if possible.

Street outreach activities will not occur outside of working hours. If street outreach staff encounter clients they know outside of working hours, they are not to acknowledge the client unless the client acknowledges them first. If the worker is with other individuals during the encounter, then no identifying information about the client will be shared.

Provision of Goods

Street outreach staff will focus encounters on providing connections to shelter, housing, and available community resources. During these interactions, street outreach staff may provide clients with hygiene items, food, clothes, and other physical items. These items serve as an outreach tool to build rapport with clients, and are not the primary focus of engagements. Street outreach staff are not mandated to provide material goods to clients.

Street outreach staff will not provide clients with their own personal belongings, money, gifts, or items that are inappropriate for persons living unsheltered. All items provided must be authorized by the worker's respective agency.

Provision of Information

Street outreach staff will maintain awareness of available community resources. Street outreach staff are responsible for providing correct information to clients and assisting in warm hand-offs to outside service providers if possible. Clients are offered referrals, but are not forced to accept them. After a successful referral, street outreach staff should remain in contact with the client or service provider for two weeks to assist with the client's transition.

Street outreach workers will remain professional in their contacts with service providers, and use appropriate discretion when working with community partners.

Workers will not share personal information that is not relevant to their client's case and will be judicious about self disclosure.

Engagement

At the beginning of every engagement, outreach workers will introduce themselves, the organization they work for, and the purpose of the engagement. Outreach workers will ask permission to enter unknown encampments and engage with clients there. Participating in street outreach services is voluntary. Clients must give explicit consent to receive services.

Street outreach staff will attempt to re-engage clients who refuse services in the event they reverse their decision. Clients have the choice to request engagement from different street outreach workers. Workers will provide trauma-informed care during their engagements and be mindful that clients may be more comfortable with certain outreach workers.

Transportation

Street outreach workers will provide transportation to clients when a referral is made to shelter or another organization for needed services. Either access to public transportation will be provided, or clients will be transported in an outreach vehicle. Outreach workers will determine if it is safe to transport a client based on their mental and physical state, and provide access to public transportation in the event they are unable to transport the client. Street outreach workers will not use a personal vehicle to transport clients.

Service Restrictions

In rare circumstances, an unhoused individual may display behaviors that present a credible threat to staff, or may destroy or steal property from outreach staff or their respective agency. In these cases a service restriction may be issued to the individual if all other attempts to resolve the situation fail. Service restrictions can be issued verbally to the individual and should be documented in HMIS.

Engagement on Public & Private Property

Street outreach services shall be provided on public and private property that is open to all members of the public, such as parks, sidewalks, bike paths, etc. Street outreach services may also be provided on properties that are part of the public infrastructure, such as washes, tunnels, along freeways, and other similar areas.

Street outreach services may take place in locations like alleys, parking lots, and areas around businesses. If requested by a private property owner to leave, workers will honor the request. Outreach staff may work alongside law enforcement to provide services on private property as appropriate. Street outreach activities will not take place inside private buildings unless it is with the express permission of the property owners.

Street outreach may be conducted inside buildings with permission and knowledge of the owners like churches and jails, but shall not consume more than 20% of a street outreach team's time each week. The focus of such activities will be providing services to individuals who are living in locations not meant for human habitation when not present inside the building. Street outreach workers will follow their particular funder's mandate about doing outreach inside of buildings and at shelters.

Coordination with Law Enforcement and Public Works

Street outreach staff will not be the entity responsible for communicating enforcement activities to unsheltered persons. Depending on the type of enforcement, street outreach workers may begin vacating the scene, when appropriate, if enforcement activities begin so clients do not associate outreach workers with enforcement.

Whenever possible, street outreach staff shall be available to assist law enforcement when they respond to concerning encampments. When requested by public works departments, street outreach staff may be present for scheduled clean-ups to provide referrals and service connections. Street outreach staff will inform clients of scheduled clean-up dates ahead of time and will visit the sites outside of scheduled clean-ups so their presence isn't associated exclusively with clean-up activities.

In rare circumstances, street outreach staff may witness actions by unsheltered individuals that may generate a need to contact law enforcement, including, but not limited to, violence occurring at encampments, finding individuals under 18 years of age at an encampment, or seeing clients who may be a victim of a crime and need law enforcement. In these cases street outreach staff will contact their direct supervisor and law enforcement promptly. The Clark County Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline and Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth (702-383-1332) will also be contacted if any individuals under the age of eighteen are encountered at an encampment.

Coordination with Health Care Services

When available, street outreach workers will coordinate to link unsheltered individuals with health care services in the field. Outreach workers will accompany health care workers to identified encampment locations. Street outreach staff will be non-judgemental and client centered when discussing any physical, behavioral, or mental health issues with clients. Street outreach staff will not reveal personal health information or case information to health care staff without the individual's consent.

Street outreach staff will work with hospitals to coordinate transportation and medical care for clients who need more urgent health care than can be provided at encampments.

Monitoring

Street outreach programs in Southern Nevada are funded by a variety of different sources and jurisdictions. Street outreach agencies will follow the monitoring process dictated by their individual grants and respective jurisdictions.

Any agency funded through the Southern Nevada Homelessness Continuum of Care (CoC) found to be out of compliance with one or more of the Homeless Encampment Written Response Standards will be placed on a corrective action plan to ensure future adherence to the standards. Failure to remediate may result in loss of future funding.

Any jurisdiction may choose to monitor their funded street outreach team's compliance with the Homeless Encampment Written Response Standards and place the street outreach team on a corrective action program if it is found out of compliance with the Homeless Encampment Written Response Standards.

Grievances

All agencies delivering street outreach services will have a grievance policy and procedures for investigating grievances. When appropriate, agencies will take action on grievances. Once an unsheltered person has provided consent to receive services, they will be informed about the grievance policy.

Role of Funders

Street outreach agencies are guided by their contractual obligations with their funder, and the contracts inform the type of outreach, the activities to be performed, activities that are not permitted, hours of services, areas to be serviced, and performance targets. Funders provide monitoring and oversight to their funding recipients and each agency is responsible for meeting the expectations of their funder.

All street outreach programs funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, or through the City of Las Vegas, Clark County, City of Henderson, or the City of North Las Vegas are expected to meet or exceed the standards of street outreach outlined in this document.

Role of the Cities, County, and CoC

Street outreach agencies are also guided by the needs and demands of their respective jurisdictions and governmental officials. The City, County and CoC may also provide specific

direction to agencies that they fund and those agencies are expected to respond immediately and thoroughly to these requests.

The cities of Henderson, Las Vegas and North Las Vegas, Clark County and the CoC agree to and adopt these standards as part of their requirements and expectations.

Maintaining a Housing Orientation

Street outreach is focused on helping clients experiencing literal homelessness gain stable housing and transition away from living unsheltered. A range of housing options should be offered and discussed and utilized as appropriate. This includes family reunification, institutional care when appropriate, roommates, and other housing situations.

Street outreach staff will be knowledgeable about the housing process inside and outside of Coordinated Entry. When housing options outside of Coordinated Entry are explored, street outreach staff will help the unsheltered individual in accessing housing or shelter and searching for the supports to help the client with the transition.

Street outreach staff will respect the decisions of an unsheltered person who decides not to pursue housing and will not force, trick, or bargain with clients to get them to accept housing. All resources will be driven by client choice.

Service Orientation

Compassion and empathy are necessary for engagements with unsheltered individuals. Street outreach workers will maintain awareness of transference and countertransference, and focus on engaging with clients as a joint partnership instead of developing a wounded healer relationship.

Street outreach workers will remain client-centered and strengths based oriented. Street outreach workers will tailor service plans to the unique needs and wants of each client. Outreach workers will identify client strengths that their clients can take advantage of to develop action plans to resolve their homelessness. Street outreach workers will use trauma-informed care when working with clients due to the high levels of trauma unsheltered clients can experience.

Street outreach workers will communicate with clients clearly, concisely, and use plain language. Street outreach workers will adapt their communication styles based on a client's particular needs, especially if the client is experiencing a cognitive condition that affects their ability to communicate.

Workers will use mental health and substance abuse recovery methods when supporting persons experiencing those conditions. Workers will strive to address stigma associated with substance abuse and mental health needs and connect willing individuals to appropriate resources and treatment. Workers will present a range of treatment options for the client and let the client use their discretion when deciding which services to access.

Street outreach workers will apply harm reduction practices to help clients address risks associated with the use of alcohol and/or drugs and participation in sex work. Outreach workers will be aware of where and how to access harm reduction supplies, even if prohibited from passing out harm reduction supplies by their employer.

Trust and rapport are crucial to establish working relationships with clients, and it often takes multiple engagements before a client begins to accept services. Workers will still maintain awareness of professional boundaries while developing trust, and will not lead clients to misconstrue the nature of the professional relationship.

Cultural competence is a necessity when providing outreach services. Homelessness disproportionately impacts certain minority groups, and workers should minimize their personal biases when working with clients.

Defining Street Outreach

Street outreach in Clark County, the City of Las Vegas, the City of North Las Vegas, and the City of Henderson is defined as a professional homeless services intervention that focuses on supporting individuals in accessing shelter and/or available housing options while recognizing and focusing on the needs of the client. Street outreach is focused on making multiple engagements with clients, building trusting relationships, and developing rapport.

Street outreach links clients to available mainstream resources and uses problem solving and diversion methods to connect clients with safe housing options when possible. Street

outreach aims to find affordable housing for each individual with access to voluntary wrap-around services to address applicable mental health, substance abuse, employment, and other needs clients may present with.

Street outreach is a crucial service to individuals experiencing homelessness that connects them to a system of care and aids them in finding available pathways out of unsheltered homelessness.

Amending Street Outreach Standards

The street outreach standards for Southern Nevada will be formally reviewed during the Coordinated Outreach Working Group every year. Amendments to the standards may be proposed at that time. These Street Outreach Standards for Clark County are formally accepted as part of the Southern Nevada Homelessness Continuum of Care (CoC) Written Standards and therefore are required to be updated and approved if any changes occur by the CoC at least annually.

Outside of annual reviews, a contracted street outreach provider may request an amendment to the street outreach standards. Requests are to be made by supervisors or executive leadership of the street outreach program and sent to the Regional Outreach Coordinator, who will forward the request to the Coordinated Outreach Working Group. Requests for amendments will go to the Coordinated Outreach Working Group for approval and be submitted to the CoC for ratification within thirty days.

The CoC may make amendments to the standards during the year at their discretion. Amendments will be communicated to street outreach teams with an implementation date of thirty or more days after the amendment is made.

Collaboration

Street outreach staff shall assist with Point-In-Time counts.

Street outreach staff will assist in the annual clearance of tunnels under the Las Vegas Strip before the New Year's holiday.

Street outreach staff shall plan and coordinate efforts to avoid duplication of services, especially when two teams are operating in the same jurisdiction.

Agencies providing street outreach services are encouraged to attend the monthly Coordinated Outreach Working Group.

Taking Direction in the Delivery of Outreach Services

Street outreach staff take direction from their employer only. An agency that provides street outreach services may be contractually obligated to take direction from, and/or respond to requests for action or information by their funder. The agency is responsible for directing their staff to take appropriate action based upon the request from their funder.

Dedication of Time

Street outreach workers will dedicate time to locating unsheltered clients who have previously not had contact with outreach teams and to following up with existing clients. Street outreach workers will use all available problem-solving skills to find a fast housing resolution when connecting with new clients for the first time. Outreach workers will complete a program enrollment with clients and collect all HUD-required data.

When a rapid resolution to end homelessness is not possible for new clients, outreach workers will thoroughly document scheduled follow-ups with the client and action steps to take to help the client resolve their homelessness.

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