

“The Southern Nevada region has no cross-jurisdictional plan for addressing encampments. Each of three political entities[...] has its own strategy, and that has led to overlapping, fragmented, or even conflicting approaches to addressing encampments.”

--EXPLORING HOMELESSNESS AMONG PEOPLE LIVING IN ENCAMPMENTS AND ASSOCIATED COST, 2020



IMPORTANCE

- ▶ 9% out of 511 unsheltered people interviewed last year staying at an encampments accepted a shelter referral in Clark County and Henderson.
- ▶ Last year the top reason for refusing a shelter referral in Clark County was being homeless with someone else. Safety concerns or being afraid of the area was the top reason given in Henderson.
- ▶ UNLV Unsheltered Homeless and Water Quality study interviewed clients at encampments and The Courtyard
 - ▶ People encountered at encampments were younger while 94% of those interviewed over age 60 were staying at the Courtyard.
 - ▶ Surveyors found that several participants at the Courtyard left to sleep at vehicles or encampments at night.
 - ▶ Participants at encampments were more mobile than those at the Courtyard, with 25% reporting that they slept at four or more places in the past week.
 - ▶ Tunnels appear to be special – even several people interviewed staying at tent encampments found them to be too unsafe to stay at.

HOMELESS ENCAMPMENT WRITTEN RESPONSE STANDARDS

- ▶ Created by representatives from multiple jurisdictions and agencies.
- ▶ Developed from City of Houston/Harris County Homeless Encampment Response Strategy and models used in other cities
- ▶ Outlines standards for outreach procedures.
- ▶ Provides guidelines for encampment responses and encampment assessments.



Guiding Principles

- ▶ Borrows principles from the Nevada Interagency Strategic Plan and the Dedicating Opportunities to End Homelessness initiative.
 - ▶ Collaboration and coordination across partners
 - ▶ Treat every person with dignity and respect
 - ▶ Invest in solutions and data-driven strategies
- ▶ Everyone can be housed with the right supports
- ▶ People do best with clear, low barrier pathways to housing
- ▶ Addressing encampments requires collaboration from multiple sectors

Responding to encampments

- ▶ Standardized by rating system and given a corresponding response
- ▶ Responses can be tailored to the needs of the site
 - ▶ Level Three – score a 5-15 on the scale. Encampments are visited periodically to inform residents of available services.
 - ▶ Level Two – score a 16-21 on the scale. Workers visit three times to provide intensive services and help clients attempt to resolve their homelessness.
 - ▶ Level One – score a 22-25. Outreach workers for Clark County and the respective jurisdiction respond with multiple providers to provide intensive services.
- ▶ Ratings are based on the number of people at the site and worker ratings on encampment factors.



Abatements/Weather Conditions

- ▶ Abatements should be communicated to outreach teams to provide services before the scheduled clean-up date
 - ▶ Outreach teams respond to the designated location
 - ▶ Encampment residents are informed that a clean-up is scheduled and the timeframe
 - ▶ Outreach teams will offer available services and a shelter referral
- ▶ Rain or extreme heat
 - ▶ Extreme heat – distribute water and information on cooling stations
 - ▶ Rainfall – visit tunnels and washes before expected rainfall to alert residents of danger and advise relocating

Providing Services

- ▶ Outreach workers provide housing assessments to those unwilling or unable to go to an assessment site.
- ▶ Outreach workers do not coerce, beg, trick, deceive, or force clients into accepting services.
- ▶ Assess fully engaged clients on the following
 - ▶ Substance use
 - ▶ Mental health
 - ▶ Medical issues
 - ▶ Homeless history
 - ▶ Legal issues
 - ▶ Identification documents
- ▶ Protect client confidentiality
- ▶ Housing orientation

WARM
HANDOFFS

Outreach Workers

- ▶ Should respond to encampments in teams of at least two.
- ▶ Should not use their personal phones or vehicles to contact or transport clients.
- ▶ Should be provided with identifying work clothing, safety equipment, and PPE for the position.
- ▶ Service providers should monitor for burnout and vicarious trauma.
- ▶ All outreach workers will complete HMIS Training.
 - ▶ Suggested trainings: boundaries & ethics, motivational interviewing, trauma informed care, identifying human trafficking, and administering naloxone.
- ▶ Mandated reporting for child abuse/neglect, threats of harm, cases of self-neglect.

Considerations for specialty populations

- ▶ Domestic violence/human trafficking
 - ▶ De-identify HMIS profiles
 - ▶ Offer to contact police/medical and/or domestic violence hotline.
 - ▶ Offer to link human trafficking survivors to an advocate.
 - ▶ Transport to shelter (preferably a DV shelter) if room is available.
- ▶ Adults have the choice about whether or not to report trafficking.
- ▶ Workers must report trafficking for anyone under the age of 18.
- ▶ Workers will report to CPS when youth under the age of 18 are encountered at encampments.



Coordination

- ▶ Engagement on public & private property
 - ▶ Street outreach activities may take place on private property, but workers will vacate if requested by the owner.
 - ▶ Outreach will not occur inside private buildings without permission of the owner. In-reach is capped at 20% of an outreach team's time weekly.
- ▶ Coordination with law enforcement
 - ▶ Outreach workers not responsible for communicating enforcement activities
 - ▶ Outreach workers may vacate the scene if enforcement begins so clients do not associate them with it
 - ▶ Outreach staff will assist law enforcement with encampment responses

Coordination

- ▶ Street outreach staff will assist with PIT counts
- ▶ Staff will plan and coordinate to avoid duplication of services and ensure geographic coverage
- ▶ Agencies are encouraged to attend the Coordinated Outreach Working Group
- ▶ Amending standards
 - ▶ Standards will be reviewed annually during Coordinated Outreach
 - ▶ Providers may request an amendment and send the request to ROC, who will forward it to the Coordinated Outreach Working Group for approval.
 - ▶ Then goes to CoC for ratification within 30 days.
 - ▶ CoC may make amendments at their discretion.