



Kentucky  
Housing  
Corporation

*Investing in quality housing solutions.*

# Street Outreach Best Practices

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May 13, 2021



# Agenda

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- **Defining Street Outreach**
- **Understanding Unsheltered Homelessness**
- **Effective Outreach Workers**
- **Outreach Engagement Approaches**
- **Operationalizing Street Outreach**
- **Outreach Within a Homeless Response System**
- **ESG Street Outreach Eligible Activities**
- **Questions & Break!**

# Defining Street Outreach

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*Street Outreach is a professional intervention that is structured, documented and strategic, to meet people where they are at - literally and circumstantially - which is respectfully persistent in helping people achieve housing and exit unsheltered homelessness through a process of assessing, understanding and addressing immediate and housing needs.*

- OrgCode Consulting



# Understanding Unsheltered Homelessness

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*Street Outreach as a service should be:*

- Evidence focused, not opinion focused
- View housing solutions as possible and necessary
- Focused on the similarities between people outreach workers engage with and people who are housed
  - Unsheltered homelessness should not be pathologized
  - Being unhoused is not a character flaw, lack of willpower or an overall moral failing

# Understanding Unsheltered Homelessness

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*Unsheltered homelessness does not happen by accident:*

- Rejection of shelter
- Rejection by shelter
- Lack of shelter space
- Absence of shelter
- Past experiences within the shelter system

# Understanding Unsheltered Homelessness

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*Research tells us people who experience unsheltered homelessness are:*

- Most likely to be male
  - Specifically, between the ages of **18-24 or 40+**
- More likely to be chronically homeless
- More likely to have been incarcerated
- Have a higher likelihood of TBI
- More likely to have unmanaged chronic health concerns
- Have higher rates of tri-morbidity
- Have higher propensity of depression, schizophrenia and/or personality disorders

# Living Unsheltered

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- Requires a great deal of organization to survive; to meet basic needs
- Difficult to be reclusive
- Difficult to have human contact
- If a structure is involved (tent, makeshift structure, semi-permanent walls, etc....) it can be even more difficult to sustain
- Weather influences every single day of existence

# Living Unsheltered

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## *Messaging and mission can be confusing:*

- Charitable groups may want to provide food and tents/supplies
- Street Outreach workers may want to connect to housing and stabilization services
- General outreach workers (PATH, medical providers, HIV/AIDS providers etc...) may want to help problem solve and provide access to other system of care services
- Businesses, neighborhoods may want people to vacate or move on

# Living Unsheltered

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- One and done
- Tumbleweed
- Anchor

# Role of Street Outreach Workers

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- Find people living outside
- In-reach Vs. Outreach
- Assess and connect
- Prioritize
- Re-Find
- Solve their homelessness
  - Focus on outcomes, not outputs.
  - Do not confuse being busy with being effective.

# Street Outreach

## Core Competencies

- Safety strategies
- Cultural competency
- Motivational Interviewing skills
- Assertive Engagement
- Harm Reduction
- Mental Health First Aid
- Trauma-Informed Care
- Client-centered
- Overdose first aid training (NARCAN)

# Types of Outreach

	Type 1	Type 2
<b><i>Generally Understood as</i></b>	Making contacts, addressing immediate needs and coordinating/delivering transportation assistance	Intensive, assertive and housing-focused
<b><i>Really helpful for</i></b>	Locating and knowing every person outside; keeping people alive; responding to crisis; having a visible presence (many hours of the day, most days)	Problem solving; ending homelessness
<b><i>Staffing</i></b>	Lower skilled, more often than not entry level or trained peers	Highly skilled, usually higher education and years of experience
<b><i>Struggles with</i></b>	Solving homelessness; meeting the needs of people with complex, co-occurring issues; demonstrating outcomes	Demands of caseload; expectations of others; solving issues that require input from other systems

# Types of Outreach

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*Which one is best?*

- If the intent is to end homelessness the second type is best
- If the intent is look responsive to homelessness and try to keep people alive, type one is best
- Both can co-exist to get the best of both worlds!
  - Can be tricky
  - Managing agency, community and client expectations
  - Managing client messaging

# Engagement Approach

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## *When engaging with people:*

- Physically approach at an angle
  - If they are on the ground, crouch at an angle
- Identify yourself, have identifying credentials
- Make eye contact
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear
  - avoid constrictive attire such as scarves, no open toed shoes
- Hands at your side, never in your pockets
- Always know your exit route
- Do not disrupt people who are sleeping
- Do not enter a structure/tent

# Engagement Approach

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## Be Trauma-Informed:

- Acknowledge the person with whom you are engaging
- Indicate exactly what you are there to discuss
- Express how long your discussion/interaction is expected to take
- Lead with the purpose of engagement
- Do NOT lead with offers of supplies (food, hygiene, or cigarettes, etc....)
  - You want the person to engage and trust you because of what you will do for will do for their homelessness

# Engagement Approach

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- Use Motivational Interviewing skills
- Prepare open-ended questions that spark conversation:
  - Do you want services today?
  - What types of assistance do you need today?
  - Are you interested in housing?
  - What would it take for you to move forward with getting housing?

# Operationalizing Street Outreach

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- Teams are OK, never more than 4 people
  - Can be situational; use best judgement
- Assigned geographic areas
  - Regional/LPCs
- Separation of crisis response and from ongoing contact and resolution
- Informed consent; sharing of information across system providers
- Lower outreach worker to client ratios in Type 2
  - More intensive outreach efforts
- Daily tasks/goals are established in advance whenever possible
- Engagement plans established for those have declined services and seem unwell
- Objective-based, solution-focused interactions

# Outreach Time Allocation Based on Type and Approach

- One and done, and tumbleweeds can often be served through **Type 1**
- One and done and tumbleweeds are best served through 7 day a week outreach with early morning and evening hours
- Anchors are best served through **Type 2**
- Anchors are best served through early morning and daytime availability

# Outreach: Type 1

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- Challenges: managing follow up engagement
  - Often appointment or call-in based
- Ideally, set specific set days or hours within a shift to allow for different types of service activities

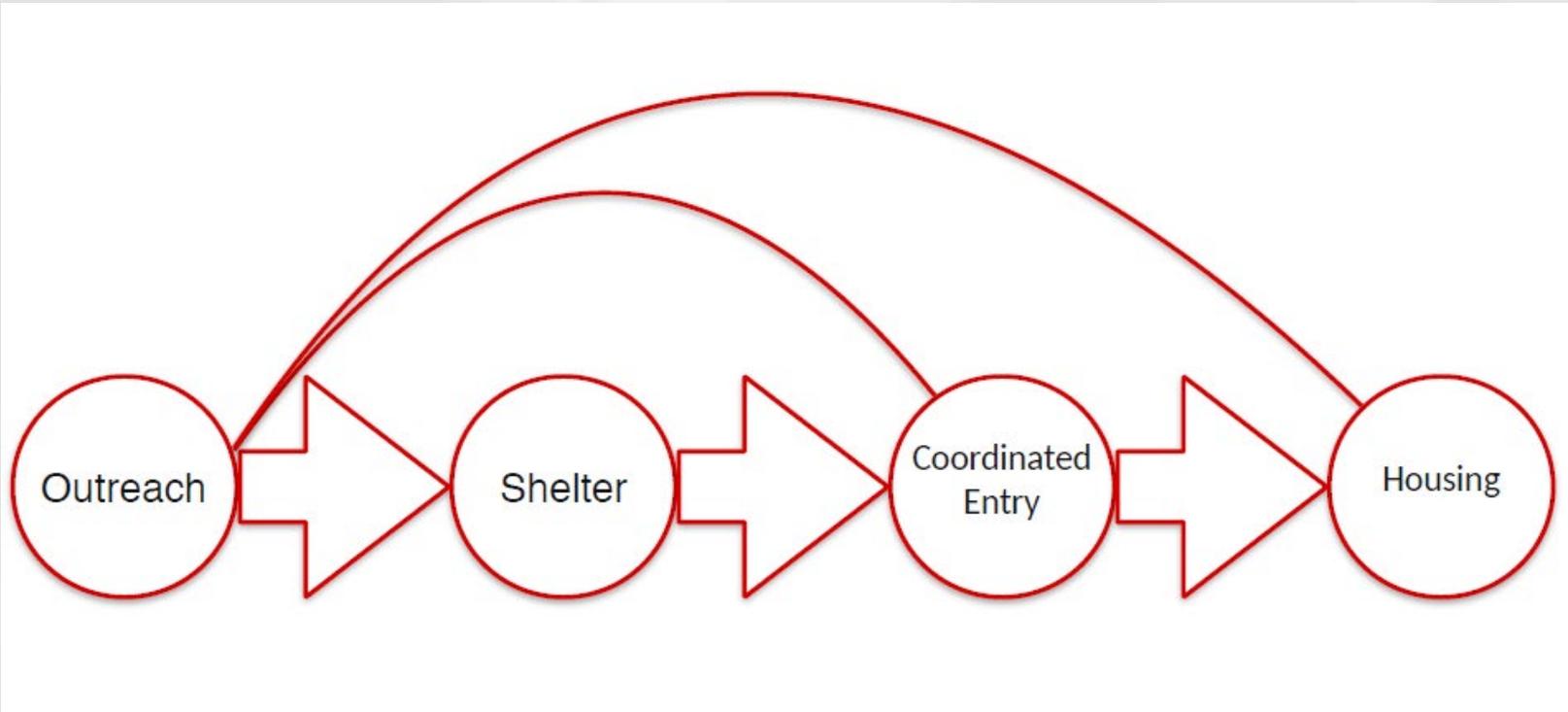
# Outreach: Type 2

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- Delivered Monday-Friday
- Best times: 6am-2pm or 7am-3pm
- Objectives planned in advance
- Typically engaging with 2-6 people per day
- Rest of time spent working with other providers, documentation and managing system communication

# Street Outreach & CES

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# Street Outreach & CES

- Street Outreach plays an essential role within the homeless response system.
  - Locates people experiencing homelessness where no shelter/homeless programs exist.
- Street Outreach projects can enter people living unsheltered directly into the CES for housing triage, prioritization and referral.
  - Typically, within 3 engagements.
- Street Outreach projects can attempt connect people to available shelter resources.
  - People do NOT have to go to shelter before receiving access to CES.

# ESG Eligible Activities

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***Street Outreach: Unsheltered individuals and families, meaning those who qualify under 24 CFR § 91.5 paragraph (1)(i) of the definition of “homelessness”.***

**Essential Services** to eligible participants provided on the street or in parks, abandoned buildings, bus stations, campgrounds, and in other such settings where unsheltered persons are staying. Staff salaries related to carrying out street outreach activities are eligible.

# ESG Eligible Activities

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**Essential Services** – Services necessary to reach out to unsheltered homeless people; connect them with emergency shelters, housing, or critical services; and provide urgent, nonfacility-based care to unsheltered homeless people who are unwilling or unable to access emergency shelter, housing, or an appropriate health facility.

Eligible Essential Services are as follows...



# ESG Eligible Activities

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**Engagement** – activities to locate, identify, and build relationships with unsheltered homeless people for the purpose of providing immediate support, intervention, and connections with homeless assistance programs and/or mainstream social services and housing programs.

- Initial assessment of needs and eligibility
- Providing crisis counseling
- Addressing urgent physical needs
- Actively connecting and providing information and referral
- Cell phone costs of outreach workers

# ESG Eligible Activities

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**Case Management** – assessing housing and service needs, and arranging/coordinating/ monitoring the delivery of individualized services.

- Using the centralized or coordinated assessment system
- Initial evaluation/verifying and document eligibility
- Counseling
- Developing/Securing/Coordinating Services
- Helping obtain Federal, state, and local benefits
- Monitoring/evaluating participant progress
- Providing information and referral to other providers
- Developing an individualized housing/service plan

# ESG Eligible Activities

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**Emergency Health Services** – Outpatient treatment of urgent medical conditions by licensed medical professionals in community-based settings (e.g. streets, parks, and campgrounds) to those eligible participants unwilling or unable to access emergency shelter or an appropriate healthcare facility. ESG funds may be used only for these services to the extent that other appropriate health services are inaccessible or unavailable within the area.

- Assessing participants' health problems and developing treatment plans
- Assisting participants to understand their health needs
- Providing or helping participants obtain appropriate emergency medical treatment
- Providing medication and follow-up services

# ESG Eligible Activities

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**Emergency Mental Health Services** – Outpatient treatment of urgent mental health conditions by licensed professionals in community-based settings (e.g. streets, parks, and campgrounds) to those eligible participants unwilling or unable to access emergency shelter or an appropriate healthcare facility. ESG funds may be used only for these services to the extent that other appropriate health services are inaccessible or unavailable within the area.

- Crisis Intervention
- Prescription of psychotropic medications
- Explain the use and management of medications
- Combination of therapeutic approaches to address multiple
- problems

# ESG Eligible Activities

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**Transportation** – Travel by outreach workers, social workers, medical professionals or other service providers during the provision of eligible street outreach services.

- Transporting unsheltered people to emergency shelters or other service facilities
- Cost of a participant’s travel on public transit
- Mileage allowance for outreach workers to visit participants
- Purchasing or leasing a vehicle for use in conducting outreach activities, including the cost of gas, insurance, taxes, and maintenance for the vehicle
- Costs of staff to accompany or assist participant to use public transportation

# KHC ESG Resources

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[HCA Help Desk ESG Page](#)

[KHC ESG Compliance Toolkit](#)

[KHC ESG Policy Manual](#)

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# Questions?

