

Street Outreach Policy

Purpose of the Street Outreach Policy

The Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance (the Continuum of Care or “CoC”) seeks to facilitate and support robust, well-coordinated Street Outreach efforts that engage unsheltered individuals and families throughout the region. The purpose of this policy is to provide common language and clarity about the focus, scope, and practices related to Street Outreach activities within the region served by the CoC.

Focus of Street Outreach

Street Outreach aims to 1) meet immediate and critical health and safety needs of unsheltered individuals and families, and 2) engage unsheltered individuals and families and assist them to access shelter, housing, and other critical resources.

Definitions/Terms

Unsheltered

Individuals and families with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation, including but not limited to a vehicle, park, abandoned building, or sidewalk.

Street Outreach Worker

An individual affiliated with an agency or organization that seeks to meet the immediate and critical health and safety needs of unsheltered individuals and families, and/or engage unsheltered individuals and families and assist them to access shelter, housing and other critical resources.

Street Outreach Manager

A supervisor of Street Outreach Workers, responsible for designing, directing, and evaluating an outreach program that seeks to meet the immediate and critical health and safety needs of unsheltered individuals and families, and/or engage unsheltered individuals and families and assist them to access shelter, housing, and other critical resources.

Coordinated Entry System

The Coordinated Entry System standardizes the way individuals and families at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness access, and are assessed for and referred to the housing and services that they need for housing stability. The components of the Coordinated Entry System include 1) access, 2) assessment, 3) prioritization, and 4) referral. HUD requires CoCs to have a centralized or coordinated entry system. The Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance (the CoC) has designated Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency as the manager of the CoC’s Coordinated Entry System.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is used to collect unduplicated counts of individuals and families experiencing homelessness, track services provided, and support community needs analyses and identification of funding priorities. HUD requires CoCs to have a Homeless Management Information System and an HMIS Lead Agency. Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) is the HMIS Lead Agency for the Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance (the CoC). OHCS has designated Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency as the CoC’s HMIS Coordination Entity.

Scope of Street Outreach

Collectively, Street Outreach efforts will contact and engage unsheltered individuals and families throughout the Marion and Polk county region, including cities, towns, and unincorporated areas. Geographic coverage will be assessed annually, and plans for continuous improvements updated.

Street Outreach Practices

The following practices will guide the Street Outreach activities within the region served by the Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance (the CoC).

Communications

Street Outreach Workers will

- 1) Participate in regularly scheduled Coordinated Outreach networking meetings; and
- 2) Use the *Basecamp* application for real-time communication about needs, available resources, and sharing other relevant information.

Coordinated Scheduling

Street Outreach Workers will coordinate schedules and otherwise align efforts to assure an equitable distribution of resources and efforts to connect with and engage individual families throughout the region. Individual agencies will share their team's schedule with other agencies, and collaborative "all call" outreach times will be scheduled. For example, this was the collaborative outreach schedule in April 2021:

Mondays: AWARE Food Bank - Woodburn; 10am-12pm (Shower Truck 10am-2:00pm)

Tuesdays: Cascades Gateway Park; 10am-12pm

Wednesdays: Market Street Camp; 10am-12pm

Thursdays: Wallace Marine Park; 10am-12pm

Check Basecamp for the current schedule.

Shared Supplies

Outreach Teams will cooperate and share supplies to help meet the needs of unhoused individuals and families throughout the region. Agencies with the capacity to store supplies will serve as collection sites for community donations, with the philosophy that the supplies are for the equitable benefit of all unhoused neighbors, and not just the people that the one agency reaches.

Training

Street Outreach Managers will jointly develop and assure delivery of "basic training" for Street Outreach Workers throughout the region, as well as supplemental training to address site-specific and/or population-specific issues.

Street Outreach Role with Coordinated Entry

Street Outreach Workers will 1) connect unhoused neighbors with the CoC's Coordinated Entry Assessment Team and 2) facilitate updates to client data to assure accurate information is used to address the client's current needs. Street Outreach Workers will participate in the CoC's Coordinated Entry general training, as well as their specific role related to Coordinated Entry.

Documenting Street Outreach Contacts in HMIS

The CoC's goal is to have all Street Outreach contacts documented in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Agencies will develop capacity to participate in HMIS, and the CoC will provide training, licenses, and technical assistance for effective data collection. Programs with CoC and ESG funding are required to participate in HMIS.

Collaborative Planning

Street Outreach Managers will participate in monthly planning meetings to develop training, give and receive updates, address emerging needs, and identify ways to improve and extend Street Outreach throughout the region.

Prepared by: Street Outreach Managers from Be Bold Street Ministries, Marion County Health & Human Services, MWVCAA ARCHES Project, MWVCAA HOME Youth Services, Northwest Human Services, Salem Housing Authority, and staff from the Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance (May 2021).

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