



Fredericksburg Regional Continuum of Care Street Outreach Program Standards

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I. Purpose

This document is intended to serve as a guide for organizations providing Street Outreach within the Fredericksburg Regional Continuum of Care (FRCoC). Street Outreach is a program designed to provide essential services to unsheltered individuals experiencing homelessness, meeting individuals where they are, both physically and psychologically. Program design includes engaging and developing relationships with unsheltered persons in unconventional settings (CFR 576.101).

This document describes a set of standards for Outreach in locations where individuals and families experiencing homelessness reside, including streets, parks, campsites, abandoned buildings, cars, and other places not meant for human habitation, to establish relationships, build trust and rapport, provide necessities, and begin the process of linking households to housing and support services. Fidelity to these principles and policies will help ensure that all individuals in need of assistance will have equal access to effective services.

II. Eligibility

To be eligible for Street Outreach, an individual or family must meet the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition for literal homelessness, imminent risk of homelessness, or fleeing/attempting to flee domestic violence. Service providers may adopt additional eligibility criteria that are consistent with their mission, such as limiting service to individuals who are fleeing or at risk of domestic violence. However, the FRCoC is committed to low-barrier services, as described in the Fredericksburg Regional Continuum of Care Policy Priorities. To support this vision, Street Outreach providers that receive FRCoC funding should adopt eligibility standards that do not require a minimal level of income, participation in services not required by grants, or other criteria that screen out individuals in need of support.

III. Standards and Performance Indicators

The following program standards are required for Street Outreach services that are conducted through the FRCoC, along with associated performance indicators. These standards and indicators are adapted from "[Core Elements of Effective Street Outreach to People Experiencing Homelessness](#)" (United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2019).

A. Street Outreach Efforts are Systematic, Coordinated, and Comprehensive

- Street Outreach is conducted on behalf of the community, requiring collaboration among multiple stakeholders. Knowledge of and engagement with all partners leads to more strategic use of resources and more comprehensive coverage and identification of all people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.
- Street Outreach is coordinated among various FRCoC partners utilizing multiple funding sources.
- Street Outreach efforts are also coordinated with the broader network of programs, services, businesses, and individuals who are likely to encounter individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness, but whose regular focus is broader than homelessness. This might include law enforcement and other first responders, hospitals, health and behavioral healthcare providers,

child welfare agencies, homeless education liaisons, workforce systems, faith-based organizations, and other community-based providers.

- Street Outreach efforts are connected to Coordinated Entry processes. Participation in Coordinated Entry will ensure that individuals and households with the highest need will gain access to shelter as soon as possible.
- All Street Outreach contacts, and housing outcomes are documented in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) or another local data system. Outreach workers will have access to HMIS to be able to input data, look up previous contacts with the person experiencing homelessness, and access information that helps them deliver services more effectively. Prompt and accurate data collection helps the homeless system determine which services and programs participants are utilizing, evaluate the impact of Street Outreach and other services, and make system improvements. It is the responsibility of Outreach staff and administrators to ensure data entered in HMIS is timely, accurate, and complete.

B. Street Outreach Efforts Are Housing-Focused

- Street Outreach does not require individuals to enter emergency shelter or transitional housing as an ‘interim step’ or prerequisite to accessing stable housing. However, Street Outreach does make immediate connections to emergency shelter or temporary housing to provide safe options while individuals and families are on a pathway toward stability.
- To the extent possible, Street Outreach utilizes Housing First approaches that do not impose preconditions to make referrals to permanent housing, shelter, or other temporary housing, such as sobriety, minimum income requirements, absence of a criminal record, completion of treatment, participation in services, or other conditions.

C. Street Outreach Efforts Are Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed, and Culturally Responsive

- Street Outreach utilizes a person-centered approach, focused on the individual’s strengths and resources, and never makes assumptions about what a person might want or need.
- Street Outreach workers provide people experiencing homelessness with multiple opportunities to say ‘no’ and make repeated offers of assistance as necessary throughout the engagement process.
- Street Outreach staff receive regular training in evidence-based practices, including trauma-informed care, and are proficient in utilizing such practices.
- Street Outreach providers employ Outreach staff with lived experience and offer commensurate compensation to all Outreach staff.
- Street Outreach workers provide warm handoffs to Coordinated Entry or to shelter, housing, and service providers (e.g., Outreach staff may offer to physically accompany the individual to appointments to provide support).
- Street Outreach efforts are respectful and responsive to the beliefs and practices, sexual orientation, disability status, age, gender identity, cultural preference, and linguistic needs of each household.
- Street Outreach providers analyze local data regarding racial inequities and disparities among people experiencing homelessness and customize their Outreach efforts to ensure that equity is being achieved. This might include tailoring materials or procedures, assuring appropriate

geographic coverage, training all staff in issues of equity and cultural competency, and regularly analyzing performance and outcomes with a focus on racial equity.

- Street Outreach workers utilize problem-solving techniques to identify existing support networks, explore possible safe housing options outside the homelessness service system, such as reunification with family, and connect the individual to community supports and services.

D. Street Outreach Efforts Emphasize Safety and Reduce Harm

- Street Outreach providers have protocols in place to ensure the safety of all individuals seeking assistance. These protocols help ensure that people fleeing domestic violence, as well as dating violence, sexual assault, trafficking, or stalking, have safe and confidential access to the Coordinated Entry process and appropriate services.
- Street Outreach efforts utilize harm reduction principles, including non-judgmental, non-coercive provision of services and resources.
- Street Outreach efforts accept that some individuals may not initially accept offers of emergency shelter or housing assistance. While maintaining a focus on creating connections to permanent housing, Outreach workers establish rapport and reduce harm by providing critical, life-saving resources such as food, water, clothing, blankets, and other necessities.

IV. Performance Evaluation

Street Outreach services will be evaluated on their ability to identify eligible participants and provide assistance that results in positive housing outcomes, based on the metrics detailed in the most recent FRCoC Project Performance Standards. Project performance will inform decisions made by the Funding and Performance Committee and FRCoC Board regarding funding allocations.