



Coordinated Outreach Policy

Updated September 2024

Northern Nevada Continuum of Care Coordinated Outreach Policy

Purpose

To coordinate efforts in the Washoe County area to ensure that outreach teams are deployed at the locations and times that they are most likely to effectively engage with unsheltered homeless individuals and move them toward housing while minimizing duplication between providers.

Background

The purpose of a Coordinated Outreach Policy is

1. To effectively case conference all individuals in encampments or who are unsheltered
2. To utilize the Homeless Information Management System (HMIS) to collect data and share information
3. To reduce the number of unsheltered individuals in the Northern Nevada Continuum of Care
4. To meet all requirements set forward by HUD

Mapping the Geographic Region

1. Washoe County Housing and Homeless Services staff will meet Bi-weekly with local outreach providers and encampment clean up entities to identify new encampments in the region.
2. New encampments are shared with outreach agencies, and county staff will assign who will be responsible for engaging with the individuals in the encampment.

Program Enrollment

1. If an individual fits the criteria for the outreach agency, an agency Street Outreach program enrollment should also be completed in HMIS. Followed by a Current Living Situation Assessment
2. If specific needs of an individual cannot be met by the outreach agency collecting initial information, separate and more specialized agencies may be deployed (Such as Veterans Affairs, Transition Age Youth, Trafficking or Domestic Violence Victims). These agencies will then complete the Street Outreach program enrollment in HMIS or comparable database if they are actively engaging with the individual.
3. Outreach programs should be set to auto exit participants in no more than 60 days to ensure participants who are not engaging are exited in a timely manner.

Existing Outreach Area Coverage by Partner Agencies

Veteran's Affairs (VA) – serves all military Veterans in Washoe County. Eligibility criteria depends on the services or programs being accessed, as well as an individual's discharge status. The VA will assess eligibility for all those they encounter and have the necessary forms completed for assessment.

Reno Initiative for Shelter and Equality (RISE) – operates within the City of Reno limits but does not concentrate efforts within the Reno Business Improvement District (BID) which is covered by Downtown Reno Partnership (DRP) nor the Karma Box area on 4th Street and the surrounding areas between Virginia Street and Wells Avenue in Reno, unless specifically dispatched by either DRP, Karma Box, or the City of Reno. RISE has no eligibility requirements that dictate who receives services.

Health Plan of Nevada (HPN) – serves current HPN members only throughout all of Washoe County.

Restart Homeless Services – Restart’s PATH street outreach program operates within both Reno and Sparks city limits. The PATH outreach program serves those who are literally homeless and have a presumed mental health and/ or a co-occurring disorder.

City of Reno Clean and Safe – operates within the City of Reno limits, providing outreach and addressing encampments.

Downtown Reno Partnership (DRP) – DRP ambassadors concentrate their outreach efforts within the BID in the City of Reno which covers approximately Wells Avenue, north to 9th Street, west to Keystone Avenue, and south to California Avenue. No outreach calls are taken for locations outside of the BID, but DRP staff utilizes an agency van to take clients to various locations for support getting to shelters, detox, other medical appointments which may extend beyond the BID. DRP’s street outreach focuses on those who are literally homeless, but they will try to support anyone who comes to their office.

Eddy House – Eddy House conducts outreach to transitional aged youth (TAY) 18-24 across Washoe County with weekly checks through the BID (covered by DRP) and the Karma Box areas under Wells Bridge and the railroad tracks. Eddy House outreach covers the North and South Valleys, and occasionally BLM land.

Washoe County HOPE Team - The primary outreach focus area for the Washoe County HOPE team is the unincorporated areas (outside of Sparks and Reno city limits) within the jurisdiction of Washoe County. Eligibility criteria includes the following: Participant must reside within Washoe County, are unsheltered, over the age of 18, and are not receiving Case Management through another agency. The HOPE Team Case Managers also attempt to assist anyone who requests assistance, if possible.

Karma Box – operates in both the City of Reno with outreach efforts concentrated between Wells Avenue, Oddie Blvd., El Rancho Dr. to I-80, and south to the Truckee River. Karma Box is willing to support all those they encounter who need assistance.

Case Conferencing

1. Bi-weekly, outreach agencies with access to HIMS and Washoe County Housing and Homeless Services Staff will meet to share information regarding individuals and encampments in the region.
 - 1.1. Only agencies with access to HMIS are able to attend the meeting due to the confidentiality of the information being shared from HMIS.
2. The purpose of this meeting is to:

- 2.1. Continue to identify new and existing encampments and share information regarding new encampments.
- 2.2. Identify potential resources and housing plans for individuals living in each encampment.
- 2.3. Connect individuals to Coordinated Entry.
- 2.4. Assign specialized outreach entities (TAY, Veterans, etc.) to specific individuals if needed.
- 2.5. Allow for requests from help to other outreach agencies if needed.
3. Third party information can be accepted from a reliable source such as a case worker or police officer who has worked with the individual and shared this information with a member of this case conferencing partner meeting.

HMIS Data Entry

1. Individual outreach workers will be responsible for:
 - 1.1. Collecting Data in HMIS and profile creation
 - a. Check to see if individuals in the area have an active profile in HMIS.
 - If they do not, create profiles for individuals in HMIS who are actively staying in places that are not meant for habitation. Examples: Encampments, vehicles, benches, sidewalks, etc.
 - Encampments are defined as A place where one or more individuals stay for a continuous time that includes temporary or permanent structures and personal belongings. May include an outdoor location or other conditions meeting the definition of a “place not meant for habitation.”
 - b. If unsure, these questions can be asked to help determine the individual’s living arrangements.
 - Where did you sleep last night?
 - How long have you been staying there?
 - Do you usually stay in this area?
 - c. If an individual is not comfortable sharing information, data does not have to be collected during the initial interaction and can be reattempted when the outreach worker has created rapport with the individual experiencing homelessness
 - Profiles should not be created for individuals without identifying information. For example, John “Face Tattoo”. An attempt to collect information on subsequent contact with individual.
 - 1.2. All information captured during interactions with individuals experiencing homelessness in the encampments should be documented in HMIS, including the Current Living Situation Assessment.
 - 1.3. One-time services (i.e. providing food, a blanket etc.) should be entered as a service in HMIS. One-time services are those where the Outreach worker reasonably believes there will not be follow up interactions with that individual.
 - 1.4. Interactions past a one-off where workers are having multiple contacts with the participant and providing services, referrals and or case management should be enrolled in the organization’s street outreach Program. In this way:
 - a. Other agencies can see interactions with that individual,
 - b. A duplication of services can be avoided and

- c. New participants will be pulled into biweekly Outreach Case Conferencing updates that drive the Outreach Case Conferencing meetings.
- 1.5. The number of individuals captured in all the encampments will contribute to the monthly Built For Zero “Actively Homeless” count. This number will reflect how many individuals are homeless in our community by month.

PATH Data Requirements

1. PATH (Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness) funded projects collect or report on Coordinated Entry projects. PATH grantees are encouraged to work with the CoC and HMIS leadership to determine data collection requirements for PATH-funded projects supporting the Coordinated Entry process. If PATH-funded projects are an access point for CES, the applicable data elements (CE Participation Status (data element 2.09), Coordinated Entry Assessment (data element 4.19) and Coordinated Entry Event (data element 4.20)) should be recorded. Additionally, Current Living Situation (data element 4.12) is collected, recorded, and used for CES projects. PATH providers and the community’s CES should collaborate to ensure data collection processes are consistent across all users collecting information for Current Living Situation (data element 4.12) and any other CES data elements the community wishes PATH funded workers to collect. For more information on CES program data collection requirements, please refer to the [2024 HMIS Data Standards](#)
2. A street outreach project is likely to encounter difficulty engaging persons experiencing homelessness. Street outreach projects may record a Project Start Date (data element 3.10) with limited information about the client and improve upon the accuracy and completeness of client data over time by editing data in an HMIS as they engage the client. The initial entry may be as basic as the project start date and an alias or other “made-up” name (e.g., Redhat Tenthstreetbridge) that would be identifiable for retrieval by the PATH-funded worker in the system. Over time, the data must be edited for accuracy (e.g., replacing “Redhat” with “Robert”) as the worker learns that detail.
3. It is possible in a street outreach setting that a single client may be contacted by multiple street outreach workers over a period of time in different locations. Local protocols should be established to determine how coordination among PATH projects and other street outreach projects effectively manages the identification and data collection of clients. In smaller CoCs, it may be possible to coordinate street outreach efforts and reduce duplication of client records through case conferences or other efforts to coordinate outreach services. In all CoCs, client search functionality may be made available in HMIS so that street outreach workers can perform queries or client searches by a “made-up” name or alias, or other informal identifier shared with street outreach workers in order to manage the identification of clients. The use of temporary “made-up” names should not be an excuse for excessive de-identified clients or poor data quality. PATH projects and local HMIS leadership should work together to minimize the use of “made-up” names and attain high data quality.
4. PATH programs should be set to auto exit participants at 90 days to be in compliance with Statewide PATH policy.

5. Reporting on data quality for PATH is limited to clients with a Date of Engagement (data element 4.13). Therefore, it is important that PATH-funded workers record the engagement date and review all of the Universal, Common Program Specific, and Federal Partner Program Specific Data Elements for completeness and accuracy. The Date of Engagement is the point at which data quality begins to be measured for the PATH Program; therefore, all Universal Data Elements should be entered into HMIS on or before the Date of Engagement. PATH grantees are encouraged to work collaboratively with their HMIS Lead Organizations to understand and comply with local data quality requirements and expectations.