

REACH Program Guide – Homeless Outreach Effort

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The Importance of Consistent Training for Street Outreach/Community Responder Teams

The importance of the REACH Program Outreach Team cannot be overstated. To ensure the highest level of effectiveness, it is crucial that all community responders involved in street outreach across all departments receive consistent and standardized training.

This document outlines why uniform training is essential for Kansas City's success and the well-being of those we serve.

Building a Unified Approach

1. Consistency in Service Delivery:
 - Standardized Protocols: Consistent training ensures that every member of the outreach team follows the same protocols and procedures. This uniformity minimizes confusion and errors, leading to a more reliable and effective service delivery. When all team members operate with the same understanding and approach, we can provide a seamless and cohesive support system for those in need.
2. Improved Communication and Coordination:
 - Unified Language and Practices: A shared training foundation allows for clearer communication among team members. Using common terminology and practices enhances coordination, making it easier to share information and collaborate on interventions. This improved communication ensures that all team members are on the same page, working towards the same goals with a clear and unified strategy.
3. Enhanced Trust and Relationships:
 - Building Trust with Clients: When individuals experiencing homelessness and other vulnerable populations encounter different members of the outreach team, they should receive the same level of care and approach. Consistent training helps build trust with these individuals, as they experience a predictable and reliable interaction regardless of which team member they engage with. Trust is a critical component in successful outreach, enabling us to better support and assist those in need.
4. Increased Efficiency and Effectiveness:
 - Streamlined Processes: Standardized training streamlines processes and reduces redundancy. With a common understanding of roles and responsibilities, team members can work more efficiently, avoiding duplication of efforts and ensuring that resources are used effectively. This efficiency translates into better outcomes for our clients and a more impactful outreach program.
5. Professional Development and Confidence:
 - Empowering Team Members: Consistent training empowers all members of the outreach team by providing them with the knowledge and skills they need to perform their roles confidently. When team members feel well-prepared and supported, they are more likely to engage positively with clients and handle

challenging situations effectively. Continuous professional development through uniform training also fosters a culture of learning and improvement within the team.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the importance of consistent training for all community responders/outreach workers results in the best care to our community. A unified, efficient, and effective approach to addressing the needs of our community's most vulnerable individuals will allow us to build stronger relationships, improve communication, and deliver the highest standard of care. With dedication and a shared commitment, we will make a profound difference in the lives of those we reach, fostering a healthier and more compassionate community for all.

Training Module: Progressive Engagement for Street Outreach/Community Responder

Time Commitment:

- 1 day in the classroom,
- 1 day technology training,
- 3 day service provider tour,
- 5-15 sessions out in the field shadowing,
- Ongoing check-in/shadowing

Kansas City's Office of Unhoused Solutions can conduct the training, as they have with entities such as:

- Kansas City Housing Department
- Kansas City Police Department
- CORE (Coordinated Outreach Resources & Engagement)
- Community Outreach training
- ZERO KC Stakeholder training

Introduction

- Definition: Progressive engagement is a person-centered approach that tailors assistance to individual needs, starting small and adjusting support levels as needs evolve.
- Goal: Efficiently allocate resources based on identified needs, ensuring lighter-touch support for those with lower needs and substantial assistance for those with higher needs.

Key Concepts of Progressive Engagement

1. Person-Centered Approach: Tailors assistance to individual needs.
2. Resource Allocation: Adjusts support based on evolving needs.
3. Continuous Communication: Maintains consistent dialogue to assess changes and adapt support.

Steps of Progressive Engagement in Street Outreach

1. Initial Interaction
 - Approach individuals in public spaces where those without stable housing gather.
 - Goal: Establish initial contact and begin building rapport.
2. Problem-Solving Conversations
 - Engage in conversations to understand immediate needs and challenges.
 - Topics: Factors contributing to homelessness (e.g., shelter, mental health, substance abuse, economic difficulties).
3. Assessment of Immediate Needs

- Focus on immediate survival needs (food, clothing, hygiene, emergency shelter).
- Goal: Establish trust and meet basic needs.
- 4. Identification of Strengths and Barriers
 - Identify individual strengths, supports, and barriers.
 - Topics: Social support networks, employable skills, obstacles to accessing services.
- 5. Connection to Resources
 - Connect individuals to available resources and support systems.
 - Examples: Shelters, healthcare services, food assistance, mental health services, substance abuse treatment.
- 6. Follow-up and Ongoing Engagement
 - Maintain regular communication to track progress and changes.
 - Goal: Adjust support levels as needed and build a foundation for long-term solutions.
- 7. Collaboration with Service Providers
 - Coordinate with various service providers for a comprehensive approach.
 - Programs: Rapid Re-housing (RRH), Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH).
- 8. Adaptation to Evolving Needs
 - Adjust support based on changing needs as individuals progress from street homelessness to stable housing.
 - Goal: Ensure appropriate support levels for all stages of the journey.
- 9. Empowerment and Individualized Solutions
 - Empower individuals to actively participate in decision-making.
 - Focus: Tailor interventions to individual strengths, challenges, and aspirations.

Importance of Trust-Building in Outreach

1. Vulnerability and Stigma
 - Address the sense of vulnerability and stigma associated with homelessness.
 - Goal: Create a safe, non-judgmental space for sharing experiences.
2. Establishing Rapport
 - Build rapport to create meaningful connections.
 - Outcome: Effective communication and collaboration.
3. Engagement in Support Services
 - Increase likelihood of individuals engaging in support services.
 - Services: Shelters, healthcare, mental health resources, substance abuse treatment.
4. Coordination of Care
 - Ensure effective communication and collaboration among service providers.
 - Goal: Enhance overall impact of support services.
5. Understanding Individual Needs
 - Gain a better understanding of unique individual needs.
 - Outcome: Tailored assistance and interventions.
6. Motivation for Change

- Use trust as a motivator for positive change.
 - Focus: Address underlying issues (e.g., mental health, substance abuse, unemployment).
7. Long-Term Success
- Foster long-term engagement and success in securing stable housing.
 - Goal: Improve overall well-being.
8. Reducing Reluctance and Fear
- Alleviate reluctance or fear of engaging with service providers.
 - Outcome: Comfortable environment for seeking assistance.
9. Empowerment and Dignity
- Reinforce autonomy and dignity in decision-making processes.
 - Focus: Foster a collaborative approach to seeking solutions.

Conclusion

- Summary: Progressive engagement is an adaptive, person-centered approach that builds trust and tailors support to individual needs, enhancing the efficacy of street outreach programs.
- Final Note: By implementing this approach, outreach workers can more effectively help individuals transition from homelessness to stable housing, taking into account the complexities of their circumstances.



Department Job Title: Administrative Officer (REACH Responder – Homeless Outreach)

Reports to: Division Manager

FLSA Status: Exempt

Job Code: 1729

Status: Exempt

Grade: EX2

Relates to HR Job Class Specification: Administrative Officer

Posting Description: The Kansas City REACH program is seeking a full time Community Responder/Outreach Administrative Officer. This position will provide street outreach services for individuals experiencing homelessness in Kansas City, MO. This position will collaborate with both the Kansas City Health Department and the Office of Unhoused Solutions (OUS) to perform effective outreach in the field. The right candidate will provide quality outreach to those who are currently unsheltered, maximize available resources and promote a community collaborative response to homelessness.

Position duties include but are not limited to responding to active calls for engagement, assessing, monitoring, and communicating actions required to meet the client's necessary and/or immediate services.

Note: This position does not require medium or long-term case management but does act as a "boots on the ground" response. The goal for this position is to support individuals in encampments, connect serving agencies to the unhoused community, and support efforts to create a safer community experience.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

- Respond in real time to calls for engagement
- Conduct street-outreach and engagement to unhoused persons who are sleeping in shelters, on the streets, in encampments or other places not meant for human habitation (i.e., streets, under bridges or automobiles)
- Utilize City resources to document engagement reports or other required data collection in the field (training will be provided.)
- Conduct initial screenings with the goal of connecting the most appropriate level of service by assessing acuity and prioritizing need.
- Provide light-touch referral-based case management to individuals. This involves being a secondary support for the agency who is handling referrals made through this position
- Seek and refer supportive services based on specificity of need. Services may include but are not limited to assistance with housing support and connections, accessing identification and eligibility documents, food, clothing, linkage to income supports, and linkage to physical and mental health treatment.

- Work closely with REACH and OUS leadership to share information gathered regarding services available, the means through which to access those services, and contacts which may be helpful in efforts to ensure clients are well served.
- Develop effective working relations and cooperate with partners/agencies
- Participate in community engagement inclusive of business owners and/or requests for assistance
- Utilize the principles of Progressive Engagement as appropriate
- Record outreach and client information accurately and complete all necessary forms
- Attend scheduled meetings
- Participate in program success recognition events as well as the twice annual Point in Time Count event
- Distribute materials in the field, inclusive of documents outlining area program services
- Adhere to professional standards as outlined by any protocols, rules and regulations
- Other duties as assigned.

Technical Skills and Requirements:

- Bachelor's degree or three years' experience in Human Services or related field preferred.
- Sensitivity to low-income people of diverse backgrounds.
- Ability to work well as a member of a dynamic team.
- Valid license and reliable transportation.
- Assessment, advocacy and case management skills.

Supervisory Responsibilities: No

Education & Experience:

Accredited Bachelor's degree and three (3) years professional experience in business or public sector administration to include at least two (2) years performing administrative and/or supervisory work involving more complex projects or programs.

OR

An equivalent combination of education and experience with at least two (2) years performing administrative and/or supervisory work involving more complex projects or programs

Work Environment:

- Ability to stand, walk or sit for extended periods of time; bend, stoop or reach.
- Ability to be on feet for approximately 25 hours per week.
- Ability to work outside for approximately 25 hours per week.
- Ability to walk through densely wooded and hilly areas.
- Ability to lift and/or carry up to 40 pounds.
- Talk on telephone and use computer extensively

ZERO KC

IMPACTFUL STREET OUTREACH TRAINING

This training will provide an in-depth understanding of the two types of street outreach, encampment response strategies, coordination efforts and an overview of the current homeless response system in the Kansas City area. This event is open to City staff, folks who engage in outreach to people experiencing homelessness, non-profits and other interested parties.

Tuesday, Oct. 31st, 1-4P

Church of the Resurrection Downtown
1601 Grand Blvd
Kansas City, MO 64108

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