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## **San Diego Continuum of Care Street Outreach Standards**

### **Version 4 – May 2025**

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*OrgCode Consulting Inc., under contract to the Regional Task Force on Homelessness, facilitated the creation of the original standards with input from service providers, the County of San Diego, the City of San Diego, the San Diego Housing Commission and the Regional Task Force on Homelessness, and Version 4. Input on Version 4 was achieved through a survey of street outreach teams and funders providing more than 130 responses, a community meeting, and a review of best and promising practices.*



# 1. Applicability of the Standards and the Role of Funders

- 1.1 These standards apply to non-law enforcement personnel (non-profit street outreach providers/publicly funded social services staff) conducting street outreach throughout the San Diego Continuum of Care and funded through any or all of the following:
- The City of San Diego
  - The County of San Diego
  - The San Diego Housing Commission
  - The Regional Task Force on Homelessness
- 1.2 Street outreach providers are guided by their contractual obligations with their funder. Among other criteria, the contracts inform the approach to be used for street outreach, the activities to be performed with the funding, activities that are not permitted with the available funding, hours of service, area(s) to be served, and service targets.
- 1.3 Funders provide monitoring and oversight to their investment in street outreach services. Each service provider is responsible for meeting the expectations of their funder to allow for future investment in street outreach activities.
- 1.4 The Regional Task Force on Homelessness, the County of San Diego, the City of San Diego, and the San Diego Housing Commission share a commitment to these standards for all of the street outreach work funded by the four entities. Organizations funded by any or all of these four entities are expected to abide by the standards unless the street outreach contract specifically indicates otherwise.
- 1.5 Cities and funders throughout the Continuum of Care are encouraged to adopt and enforce these standards to create a consistent approach in conducting outreach to unsheltered persons throughout the region.



## 2. Taking Direction in the Coordination and Delivery of Street Outreach Services

- 2.1 The Regional Task Force on Homelessness is responsible for providing a system coordinator for all outreach activities across the entire San Diego Continuum of Care.
- 2.2 The Regional Task Force on Homelessness shall work with the County of San Diego to identify an entity responsible for providing regional coordination for North, East and South parts of the San Diego Continuum of Care. The City of San Diego is responsible for providing a regional coordinator for the city/central part of the San Diego Continuum of Care.
- 2.3 The Regional Task Force on Homelessness is responsible for establishing policy direction related to serving unsheltered persons. The Regional Task Force, together with the Housing Commission, County and City provide funding to organizations to engage in street outreach activities to fulfill that policy direction. Street outreach policy and action in San Diego City and County shall be developed and/or amended through a collaborative process between the major funders, regional coordination entities, and the Regional Task Force on Homelessness to ensure effective alignment and leveraging resources across the region that supports consistent, system-wide best practice in outreach provision.
- 2.4 Street outreach staff take direction from their employer only. An organization that provides street outreach services may be contractually obligated to take direction from, and/or respond to requests for action or information by their regional coordinator or the system coordinator. The organization is responsible for directing their staff to take appropriate action based upon the request from a coordinator.
- 2.5 A regional coordinator may request that a street outreach team respond to a particular person or group of persons who are unsheltered. Unless otherwise specified or operationally imperative, such requests shall be made to the supervisor of the street outreach team. All reasonable measures shall be taken by the street outreach staff to respond to those requests within three business days, so long as it does not interfere with the ability of the street outreach staff to spend 50% or more of their time with known unsheltered persons that they are actively assisting towards the goal of housing. The supervisor or their designate shall report back any necessary information to the coordinator on the outcome

of the request within one business day of the response to the unsheltered person(s).

- 2.6 Any details about the unsheltered person(s) or the activities undertaken with them can only be communicated to a coordinator when appropriate consent is in place from that specific person. Otherwise, the only information to be relayed to the coordinator is whether or not the request to respond was fulfilled or not.
- 2.7 A coordinator and/or monitor for the funder may be directly involved in accompanying street outreach teams and providing, observing or monitoring street outreach services.
- 2.8 The regional coordinators are responsible for ensuring appropriate street outreach coverage and reducing duplication of service. Changes to geographic areas served, hours of service, street outreach activities and/or information exchange may be requested and contracts may be amended by funders to reflect those changes.



### 3. Defining Street Outreach

- 3.1 Street outreach often begins with an initial encounter to engage an unsheltered person to understand their situation and environment. Unless immediate resolution is possible, the definition of street outreach provided in 3.2 applies.
- 3.2 Street outreach, as per the Policy Guidelines for Regional Response for Addressing Unsheltered Homelessness and Encampments Throughout San Diego County, is defined as, *“a professional homeless services intervention that focuses primarily on supporting individuals with accessing permanent or temporary housing by building trusting relationships and ongoing rapport. Street outreach seeks to engage individuals living unsheltered in a culturally competent and trauma informed manner, provide links to mainstream services, and use diversion and problem-solving techniques to connect people with safe housing options whenever possible. The primary and ultimate goal of street outreach is to find affordable housing for each individual, with access to voluntary wraparound services needed to stay healthy, including employment, substance use treatment and mental health care. While this is ideally accomplished quickly, outreach often requires time and interactions with individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness therefore should not be seen as one-time engagements. Rather, each interaction should be seen as an opportunity for outreach staff to build a relationship and help people work toward making a connection to housing and services. Key to the success of outreach and engagement efforts is regular follow-up and building trust with individuals through regular interactions, including learning about the individuals' current social network and supports.”*
- 3.3 Street outreach is a critical and necessary service to people experiencing unsheltered homelessness within the San Diego Continuum of Care. Street outreach is an essential part of the system of care.

## 4. Professional Training and Ethics

- 4.1 Funders of street outreach activities, named in 1.1, are responsible for coordinating, offering, making available and/or providing funding for training to meet these standards. Funders will ensure training is provided by trainers with expertise and practical experience. Employers of street outreach staff are responsible for ensuring their staff attend, participate in, and complete the necessary training, as well as keeping a record of all street outreach training that is completed by each street outreach staff that is employed by their agency. Funded organizations may provide the training to their own staff “in house”, subject to approval from their funder.
- 4.2 Cultural appropriate services and culturally safe support training shall be completed within six months of starting employment as a street outreach staff, unless completed within the past two years, and shall be refreshed once every three years thereafter.
- 4.3 Training on documentation, including case notes, and the use of HMIS (Clarity), especially as it pertains to street outreach and Coordinated Entry, shall be completed within the first month of starting employment as a street outreach staff and shall be refreshed once every two years thereafter, or sooner if there are substantial changes to documentation standards or the expected use of HMIS.
- 4.4 Training on de-escalation as it pertains to street outreach situations shall be completed within three months of starting employment as a street outreach staff, unless completed within the past two years, and shall be refreshed once every two years thereafter.
- 4.5 Motivational interviewing training shall be completed within three months of starting employment as a street outreach staff, unless completed within the past two years, and shall be refreshed once every two years thereafter.
- 4.6 Assertive outreach training shall be completed within three months of starting employment as a street outreach staff, unless completed within the past two years, and shall be refreshed once every three years thereafter.
- 4.7 Trauma-informed care training shall be completed within three months of starting employment as a street outreach staff, unless completed within the past two years, and shall be refreshed once every two years thereafter.

- 4.8 Wellness promotion and harm reduction training shall be completed within three months of starting employment as a street outreach staff, unless completed within the past two years, and shall be refreshed once every three years thereafter.
- 4.9 First aid and CPR shall be completed within three months of starting employment as a street outreach staff unless current certification is already in place, and shall be refreshed as necessary to ensure street outreach staff maintain certification.
- 4.10 Training on Substance Use Disorders shall be completed within three months of starting employment as a street outreach staff, unless completed within the past two years, and shall be refreshed once every three years thereafter.
- 4.10 Training on overdose response and the administration of Naloxone (NarCan) shall be completed within three months of starting as street outreach staff, unless completed within the past two years, and refreshed once every three years thereafter.
- 4.11 Mental health first aid training shall be completed within three months of starting employment as a street outreach staff, unless completed within the past two years, and refreshed once every three years thereafter.
- 4.12 Training on mental health recovery shall be completed within six months of starting employment as a street outreach staff, unless completed within the past two years, and shall be refreshed once every three years thereafter.
- 4.13 Training on self-care, burnout, compassion fatigue, moral injury and vicarious trauma shall be completed within six months of starting employment as a street outreach staff, unless completed within the past two years, and shall be refreshed once every three years thereafter.
- 4.14 Training on professional boundaries shall be completed within one month of starting employment as a street outreach staff, unless completed within the past two years, and shall be refreshed once every three years thereafter.



- 4.15 Training on the VI-SPDAT and Coordinated Entry practices shall be completed within three months of starting employment as a street outreach staff, and shall be refreshed once every three years thereafter. If changes are made in San Diego's Coordinated Entry process, training will be provided on a more-timely basis to ensure compliance with local Coordinated Entry policies and procedures.
- 4.16 Training on street outreach staff safety shall be completed within the first month of starting employment as a street outreach staff, and refreshed once every three years thereafter.
- 4.17 Training on ethics and street outreach delivery shall be completed within one month of starting employment as a street outreach staff, and refreshed once every three years thereafter.
- 4.18 Training on effective goal-setting (e.g., SMARTER goal-setting: Specific Measurable Attainable Relevant Time-bound Evaluated Revisited) shall be completed within six months of starting employment as a street outreach staff, unless completed within the past two years, and refreshed once every three years thereafter.
- 4.19 Training on CalAIM (California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal) shall be completed within six months of starting employment, unless completed within the past two years. This training shall be refreshed annually to ensure alignment with updates to CalAIM policies and practices.
- 4.20 Training on accessing Social Security benefits and other public entitlements for unsheltered individuals shall be completed within three months of starting employment, unless completed within the past two years. This training shall be refreshed every three years to ensure staff remain knowledgeable of current procedures, eligibility criteria, and best practices.
- 4.21 Training on Mandated Reporting shall be completed within six months of starting employment as a street outreach staff, unless completed within the past two years, and refreshed once every three years thereafter.
- 4.22 Training on the Policy Guidelines for Regional Response for Addressing Unsheltered Homelessness and Encampments Throughout San Diego County

shall be completed by supervisors and street outreach frontline staff within three months of starting employment, unless completed in the past two years, and shall be refreshed every three years thereafter, or sooner if there is an amendment to the Policy.

- 4.23 Until such time as all required training is completed, newer street outreach staff shall be paired with an experienced outreach staff that has completed the training, whenever operationally possible.



## 5. Acknowledging the Risks that Come with the Work & Personal Safety

- 5.1 Street outreach staff perform their work in community and may witness or encounter first hand risks that are inherent with serving people who are street involved and/or living outdoors. Street outreach staff are responsible for reducing the impacts of those risks whenever possible, as per their training, and supports provided by or through their employer. In rare instances, street outreach staff may refuse to engage in a location or with particular people that they deem to be too high-risk. These instances shall be reported to the supervisor of the street outreach team. In exceptional circumstances, the regional coordinator may request this information, and it shall be furnished.
- 5.2 Street outreach providers shall develop and implement a comprehensive Safety Plan for outreach staff, which shall be reviewed and updated annually. This plan shall include protocols for identifying, assessing, and responding to safety risks in the field.
- 5.3 Street outreach staff may encounter secondary or vicarious trauma as a result of performing the duties of the job. Street outreach staff are encouraged to engage in self-care, as per their training to the best of their ability, and process critical incidents appropriately with their employer and/or resources provided by their employer such as Employee Assistance Program, and as outlined in contracts with funders.
- 5.4 Street outreach staff and their employer are responsible for promoting personal safety of street outreach staff and taking the necessary measures to decrease risks as is reasonable in the context of street outreach, as per their training on staff safety.
- 5.5 Street outreach teams shall establish an Emergency Communication Protocol, which includes:
  - Immediate access to a mobile phone for all staff while conducting outreach.
  - Regular check-ins with supervisors, especially when visiting high-risk locations.
  - A designated emergency contact system for rapidly reporting critical incidents.
  - Use of a code word or phrase for discreetly indicating a safety concern during a call or text.

- 5.6 Each street outreach team shall be equipped with:
- A fully stocked First Aid Kit.
  - A charged mobile phone with emergency contact numbers pre-programmed.
  - A communication device (e.g., walkie-talkie, emergency radio) for use in areas without reliable cell coverage.
  - Personal safety devices such as whistles or personal alarms, where appropriate.
- 5.7 In the event of a real or perceived imminent risk, street outreach staff shall remove themselves from the real or perceived imminent risk. These instances shall be reported to and tracked by their supervisor. A coordinator may request this information, and it shall be furnished.
- 5.8 Street outreach teams shall establish clear procedures for engaging with unsheltered individuals who exhibit aggressive or violent behavior, including:
- Using verbal de-escalation first.
  - Maintaining safe distance and identifying escape routes.
  - Requesting law enforcement support only when there is an imminent threat to safety.
  - Documenting all incidents involving aggression or violence.
- 5.9 Street outreach staff shall inform their supervisor of their planned locations during their outreach shift, and shall update their supervisor, as appropriate, if there are deviations from the planned locations identified for the shift.
- 5.10 Street outreach staff conduct street outreach without police escort whenever it is safe and appropriate to do so. This does not preclude street outreach staff from conducting service engagement activities with law enforcement's Homeless Outreach Teams when contracted or invited to do so.

## 7. Service Orientation

- 7.1 There may be a perceived power differential between the street outreach staff and the unsheltered person being served. Street outreach staff shall be sensitive to this power imbalance in every exchange with an unsheltered person and work to ensure the potential power imbalance does not prevent or stall the effectiveness of the engagement and subsequent services with the unsheltered person.
- 7.2 Empathy and compassion are necessary for effective engagement. The street outreach worker engages and supports unsheltered people not by seeing the relationship as one of healer and wounded, but as a relationship between equals. Street outreach workers shall be non-judgmental in each encounter with an unsheltered person experiencing homelessness.
- 7.3 A person-centered and strengths-based approach is encouraged for effective street outreach engagement and supports. Street outreach workers shall create service support plans based upon the specific needs and presenting issues of the unsheltered person and leverage the strengths of the individual to help them create and act on a plan to resolve their homelessness.
- 7.4 Trauma and its impacts are widespread within the unsheltered homeless population, and as such, street outreach staff will employ a trauma-informed approach to all encounters, planning and action. The guiding principles of a trauma-informed approach shall be employed in the work of street outreach when encountering and supporting unsheltered persons.
- 7.5 Traumatic brain injury is common amongst the unsheltered homeless population, and as such, street outreach staff shall communicate with unsheltered individuals in ways that use plain language, are clear and concise, and which appropriately articulate actions steps. Behaviors associated with traumatic brain injury may make it necessary for street outreach staff to amend their approach to engagement and planning appropriately.
- 7.6 Individuals served through street outreach will have a broad range of cognitive abilities for a variety of reasons, in addition to Traumatic Brain Injury. As such, street outreach staff shall employ diverse engagement and communication strategies to be as effective as possible in these instances.

- 7.7 Mental health recovery shall be practiced by street outreach staff in their approach to supporting unsheltered persons. In particular, street outreach staff shall address stigma associated with mental illness and strive to connect individuals with compromised mental wellness to appropriate mental health and community supports.
- 7.8 Wellness promotion and harm reduction practices shall be supported by street outreach staff to help address risks and potential harms related to use of alcohol and other drugs and/or participation in sex work by unsheltered persons. When an outreach staff is prevented from distributing harm reduction supplies (e.g., condoms, clean needles, etc.) by their employer or by law, they shall be knowledgeable of where and how to access harm reduction supplies. All street outreach staff shall be conversant in, and practice, harm reduction strategies that do not require access to harm reduction supplies.
- 7.9 Progressive engagement customizes the level of support for an unsheltered individual based upon their assets and strengths. The onus is on the unsheltered person to demonstrate what they are capable of doing on their own and being empowered as such to do so. Increased supports are provided only when there is inertia or inability to perform tasks themselves that would expedite their exit from homelessness.
- 6.10 Choice is necessary for effective engagement, planning and action. Street outreach staff shall provide meaningful information to unsheltered persons to allow them to discern a course of action that makes the most sense to them, up to and including the reasonable characteristics of the accommodation they seek in order to exit homelessness.
- 7.10 Trust and rapport are necessary for effective engagement, and often are built over time. In developing trust and rapport, street outreach staff shall be sensitive to professional boundaries. Neither communications nor actions should misconstrue the professional nature of the engagement.



## 8. Anti-Discriminatory and Fair Service

- 7.1 Street outreach services within the San Diego Continuum of Care shall be delivered in a manner that is equitable, inclusive, and free from discrimination. Street outreach staff shall ensure that all individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, language, immigration status, or socioeconomic background, are treated with dignity and respect.
- 7.2 Street outreach providers shall implement culturally responsive engagement practices, ensuring that staff are trained to recognize and address implicit biases, and are equipped with the skills necessary to engage with diverse populations effectively.
- 7.3 Outreach teams must prioritize language accessibility, providing interpretation services where feasible, and using plain language in communication to accommodate individuals with limited English proficiency or cognitive impairments.
- 7.4 Organizations delivering street outreach services shall adopt and maintain an anti-discrimination policy that aligns with local, state, and federal non-discrimination laws. This policy shall be communicated to all staff and incorporated into regular training.
- 7.5 Street outreach providers are encouraged to hire, promote, and meaningfully include individuals with lived experience of homelessness, substance use, or other marginalized experiences, ensuring that diverse perspectives are represented in program planning, service delivery, and evaluation.
- 7.6 Regular reviews of outreach practices shall be conducted to identify and address any disparities in service delivery, with corrective actions implemented as necessary to promote equity.

## 9. Integrating Peer Supports and the Voice of People with Lived Experience

- 8.1 Street outreach providers within the San Diego Continuum of Care are encouraged to integrate Peer Support Workers (e.g., individuals with lived experience of homelessness, substance use, mental health challenges, or other relevant experiences) into their outreach teams. Peer Support Workers shall be recognized as integral members of the outreach team, contributing unique insights and building rapport through shared experience.
- 8.2 Peer Support Workers shall receive the same core training as other street outreach staff, including training on trauma-informed care, harm reduction, mental health crisis response, professional boundaries, and self-care. Additional training tailored to peer support roles, such as storytelling for change, self-disclosure boundaries, and navigating dual relationships, shall be provided.
- 8.3 Peer Support Workers shall be empowered to build trusting relationships with unsheltered individuals, share their lived experience when appropriate, and support unsheltered individuals in navigating the complexities of accessing services and housing.
- 8.4 Supervisors of street outreach teams shall provide specific supervision and support to Peer Support Workers, recognizing the potential for vicarious trauma, role strain, and the emotional impact of outreach work on individuals with lived experience.
- 8.5 Street outreach providers shall establish a clear policy for recruiting, training, supervising, and supporting Peer Support Workers, including protocols for maintaining professional boundaries, ensuring equitable treatment, and providing access to ongoing professional development.
- 8.6 Peer Support Workers shall be involved in team case conferences, debriefings, and service planning, ensuring their insights and observations are valued and contribute to the effectiveness of outreach efforts.
- 8.7 The inclusion of Peer Support Workers shall be regularly evaluated to ensure that their contributions are being leveraged effectively, and to identify any additional supports they may need to succeed in their roles.

## 10. Operational Documentation

- 10.1 For newly contacted unsheltered persons, street outreach staff shall ensure Universal Data Elements are recorded completely in the HMIS (Clarity) within three business days of contact. If the newly contacted unsheltered person is unable to choose whether or not to give consent to share their data within the HMIS their profile may be privatized according to the HMIS privacy policy and done so in accordance with current HMIS privacy training(s).
- 10.2 For unsheltered persons who have previously enrolled in street outreach, staff shall ensure street outreach activities and project exits are recorded completely in HMIS within three business days, as per the HMIS training.



## 11. Interface with Law Enforcement

- 11.1 Except when required to do so through Mandated Reporting, street outreach staff shall never be the entity responsible for communicating or leading enforcement activities.
- 11.2 Whenever possible, street outreach staff shall be available to assist unsheltered homeless individuals in the event law enforcement engages in activities that dislodge the individual(s) from where they are staying, when notified by law enforcement in advance of enforcement activities. Efforts shall be made by street outreach staff to make referrals and help the individual connect to resources in the event of enforcement activities. Street outreach staff are present to assist the homeless individual(s) only, and are not engaged in any enforcement activities themselves.
- 11.3 When there is planned closure of an encampment, street outreach providers shall provide advanced intensive outreach efforts, and provide information to law enforcement on their efforts when consents are in place to do so, without providing personal identifying information to law enforcement.
- 11.4 When law enforcement's Homeless Outreach Team undertakes outreach and engagement activities they may request street outreach staff participate in those activities with them. Street outreach staff will participate when operationally available, and/or their participation will not jeopardize the relationship between the street outreach staff and the unsheltered person.
- 11.5 In some circumstances, street outreach staff may witness behavior or actions on the part of an unsheltered person that triggers a legal mandate to report the incident or information to law enforcement (e.g., human trafficking). Street outreach staff shall do so promptly and thoroughly in these instances, in accordance with training on Mandated Reporting.

## 12. Structured Engagement

- 12.1 Street outreach staff shall preferably work in groups of two, but shall not have four or more outreach staff approach the same unsheltered person at the same time.
- 12.2 Except in limited circumstances, street outreach staff shall exit their vehicles to engage with unsheltered persons.
- 12.3 The structured engagement of street outreach staff shall occur outdoors in the majority of instances, especially with first time encounters with unsheltered persons. Follow-up engagement with the unsheltered person may occur in sheltered locations as necessary but cannot be mandated or expected on the part of the street outreach staff, and shall not consume more than 25% of outreach hours in any given week.
- 12.4 Street outreach staff shall verbally identify themselves, the organization they work for, and the intention of their engagement in every encounter with an unsheltered person they have not previously engaged with during street outreach.
- 12.5 Participating in street outreach services is understood as voluntary. Street outreach workers shall seek and record consent (which can be verbal, but must be documented) to engage with unsheltered persons and their voluntary desire to engage with the street outreach workers.
- 12.6 In the event an unsheltered person does not wish to engage with street outreach staff, this shall be respected during the encounter. Street outreach workers shall make offers of service again in the future to that same person who previously declined service offers. Street outreach staff shall use their professional discretion in determining the length of time between offers of service, but shall not exceed 7 calendar days whenever possible and circumstantially appropriate for the individual. The follow up outreach attempt does not need to be completed by the same outreach staff that was involved in the initial encounter.
- 12.7 The street outreach provider shall not employ any punitive measures to individuals who either refuse offers of services, or decide at a later date that they would like to receive services.

## 13. Inclement Weather or Other Emergencies

- 10.1 Notwithstanding the intentions for Structured Engagement outlined in Section 9, a funder and/or the Regional Task Force on Homelessness may become aware of impending inclement weather or other emergencies and may direct street outreach staff to suspend their Structured Engagement activities to focus on notifying unsheltered individuals of the impending weather event or other emergency.
- 10.2 In the event of an impending inclement weather situation or other emergency, street outreach staff shall work with unsheltered persons to help them prepare for the event and/or access available emergency resources, if recommended by their regional coordinator.



## 14. Provision of Goods

- 11.1 Street outreach staff must focus encounters with unsheltered persons on housing and accessing other resources in the community that may be of assistance in accessing and maintaining housing. During the course of these encounters, street outreach staff may choose to make hygiene kits, food, clothing, blankets, sleeping bags, harm reduction supplies, or other resources available. The provision of these materials shall never be the primary function of street outreach.
- 11.2 Street outreach staff are not obligated to make the provision of materials available under any circumstance.
- 11.3 The provision of goods should only be used to advance progress towards goals, including housing. Street outreach staff must discern in each instance where goods may be provided whether or not the provision of goods is enabling or creating a dependence.

## 15. Interface with Other Service Providers and Government Entities

- 12.1 Although scarce, shelter space remains an invaluable resource to make available to unsheltered persons whenever possible. Street outreach workers shall connect with the system coordinator during their shift to understand availability within shelters. On days when shelter space is available, the coordinator shall prioritize to whom the offer(s) of the shelter opportunity is made based the following hierarchical criteria:
- 1 Vulnerabilities
  - 2 Priorities as established for Coordinated Entry
  - 3 Advanced notification by law enforcement to vacate a particular location
- 12.2 When geographically and operationally possible, street outreach staff shall leverage the resources and opportunities of the Housing Navigation Center and day centers when following up with a known unsheltered person.
- 12.3 Benefits and income access are often necessary to move from homelessness to housing. Street outreach staff shall assist individuals on their caseload in accessing and maintaining benefits and income, including accompanying individuals to Social Security and helping them navigate available resources, including employment programs.
- 12.4 Unsheltered individuals who are veterans shall have the opportunity to be referred to Veterans Affairs and/or other veteran-serving organizations if the individual so chooses and the individual is eligible.
- 12.5 Some unsheltered individuals use alcohol and/or other drugs. Others may be involved in other high-risk behavior such as sex work. Street outreach staff shall refer and connect unsheltered individuals to harm reduction resources when the individual is interested.
- 12.6 Securing identification is most often necessary for securing housing. As such, street outreach staff shall engage with appropriate entities with the unsheltered person to help them secure identification, when required.

## 16. Previously Unknown Unsheltered Persons

- 13.1 The majority of street outreach team time should be invested with unsheltered persons already known and to continue to advance the work of helping them achieve a solution to their homelessness. Therefore, less than 50% and ideally no more than 25% of street outreach team time each week shall be spent identifying unsheltered homeless persons who have not previously been connected to street outreach.
- 13.2 When previously unknown unsheltered persons are encountered, the street outreach staff shall engage in diversion and shall endeavor to problem-solve an alternative or rapid resolution to their homelessness. Contact and engagement information shall be recorded in HMIS, as per training provided.
- 13.3 In the event that immediate or rapid resolution to homelessness is not possible for the previously unknown unsheltered person, the street outreach staff shall share information on available services and make referrals to those services based upon the desire of the unsheltered person.
- 13.4 In the event rapid resolution to homelessness is not possible for the previously unknown unsheltered person, and when the unsheltered individual wishes to stay connected and receive outreach services, the street outreach staff shall complete an intake enrolling them in the street outreach program, including all required HMIS data, and a plan shall be created to guide when the next engagement will occur between the unsheltered homeless individual and the street outreach staff and the action steps that will be taken in subsequent encounters.

## 17. Staying Connected to Existing Unsheltered Persons

- 14.1 Each week, 50% or more, and ideally closer to 75% of street outreach team time shall be spent re-engaging and serving unsheltered individuals that were previously encountered by street outreach staff, and preferably already enrolled in street outreach in HMIS.
- 14.2 Each street outreach staff shall have a minimum of 10 unsheltered persons and a maximum of 25 unsheltered persons on their caseload at any given time. At least 60% of persons on their caseload must be persons actively working on activities or goals that directly assist the person in progressing toward housing, within or outside of Coordinated Entry.
- 14.3 In the event that the unsheltered person is hospitalized, incarcerated or provisionally accommodated for more than 30 days, that person shall be moved off the caseload. Should they re-engage in the future and there is space on the caseload, the person can immediately be added back to the caseload. If the person is off the caseload and inactive for more than 90 days, they will need to be re-enrolled in the Street Outreach program in HMIS.
- 14.4 A minimum of one contact must be recorded in HMIS each 90-day period to be considered active in HMIS.
- 14.5 Each day the street outreach team shall be planned, documented and strategic in identifying which individuals will be re-engaged and the intended actions for each encounter.
- 14.6 Re-engagement activities shall be designed and implemented to assist the unsheltered person take steps from being unhoused to housed.
- 14.7 As part of the re-engagement activities with unsheltered persons, street outreach staff shall endeavor to verify chronic homeless status, whenever it is warranted.
- 14.8 As part of the re-engagement activities with unsheltered persons, in addition to verification of chronic homeless status where it is warranted, the street outreach staff shall take any and all actions to ensure the person is "document ready" to move into housing.

## 18. The Interface with Coordinated Entry

- 15.1 Street outreach staff shall ensure unsheltered persons are added to the CES By-Name List, if they are not already included on the list.
- 15.2 The street outreach staff shall complete all necessary documentation to refer an unsheltered person to Coordinated Entry if they are not already included on the CES By-Name List.
- 15.3 When an unsheltered person has been identified as a match for a vacancy through Coordinated Entry, street outreach staff shall assist in locating the individual as well as organizing and arranging transportation and connection to the housing opportunity.



## 19. Maintaining a Housing Focus

- 16.1 Street outreach engagement and support is anchored in the objective of helping the unsheltered person move from being unhoused to housed. A range of housing options, from institutional care to family reunification, roommates to independent living, should be discussed, offered and operationalized as appropriate.
- 16.2 Street outreach staff shall be knowledgeable of the housing process within and outside of Coordinated Entry. When housing options are explored independent of Coordinated Entry, the street outreach staff are required to support the unsheltered person in accessing housing when the unsheltered person has the personal means to do so. If there is a handoff to another organization or another staff person within the same organization to do this part of the work, there should be a warm handoff. In these instances, street outreach staff shall still maintain direct contact with the unsheltered person.
- 16.3 When an unsheltered person does not desire or is ambivalent about housing, the street outreach staff shall respectfully be persistent and use all available skills like Motivational Interviewing and Assertive Engagement to support and assist the individual in considering housing.
- 16.4 Street outreach staff shall not coerce, force, bribe, trick or bargain with unsheltered persons to accept housing.
- 16.5 Once a person moves into housing and is no longer unsheltered, street outreach staff may follow-up, engage and support the person in transferring to Rapid ReHousing or Permanent Supportive Housing supports for a period no longer than six weeks from the time of the lease beginning. If the individual is housed outside of Coordinated Entry, the length of time shall still aim for six weeks, however, the length of time may be increased based upon the circumstances of the individual and the availability of local resources. Coordinators may request information on the volume of people being supported that are housed, and may direct the street outreach staff to reduce or cease support services.

## 20. Geographic Coverage and Overlap

- 17.1 Street outreach staff shall ensure their contractually obligated service area receives outreach in its entirety at least once every two weeks, and subject to input from their regional coordinator.
- 17.2 When more than one street outreach team serves overlapping geographic areas, those teams shall coordinate to reduce duplication of service and share information and/or case conference as necessary.
- 17.3 The majority of time for street outreach staff within the geographic area shall be spent engaging with unsheltered persons outdoors.



## 21. Hours of Services

- 18.1 Street outreach staff shall provide service within their contractually obligated hours.
- 18.2 When not specified by a particular contract, street outreach teams shall endeavor to provide outreach services at different times of the day including early morning and evening hours, and also to provide services on weekends when operationally possible.
- 18.3 In geographic areas served by multiple street outreach teams, those teams shall reasonably coordinate to provide the greatest amount of street outreach coverage each day and across multiple days of the week including weekends. If challenges in overlap or lack of coordination occur, the supervisor of the affected street outreach staff will report these challenges the regional coordinator so that the funders can coordinate with each other to address and resolve challenges for the teams quickly.



## 22. Transportation

- 19.1 Street outreach teams shall provide transportation directly to unsheltered persons when a referral is made to an organization or service not within reasonable walking proximity. That transportation will most often be accomplished through the street outreach agency vehicle, but in some circumstances may include providing transportation, or accompanying the person as necessary, on public transit or private transportation like a taxi or Uber.
- 19.2 Prior to providing transportation to any unsheltered person in any circumstance, staff shall determine if it is appropriate to provide transportation based upon the individual's current state and safety considerations.



## 23. Providing Information on Available Resources

- 20.1 Street outreach staff are responsible for maintaining current knowledge of available resources to unsheltered persons within their specific coverage area, and across the county more generally.
- 20.2 Street outreach teams shall provide information on available resources in writing if requested by the unsheltered person.
- 20.3 Street outreach staff shall inform unsheltered persons of the 211 Community Information Exchange when relevant for ongoing knowledge of community resources and hours of services.



## 24. Consent

- 21.1 Street outreach teams shall attempt to collect explicit consent to share data within HMIS from any unsheltered person they are serving and recording within HMIS. Until such consent is obtained, street outreach teams will follow current HMIS policies and guidelines for how to correctly restrict client data within HMIS, as well as understanding how to make the data unrestricted once consent were to be obtained.
- 21.2 The organization for whom street outreach staff work, are responsible for maintaining records of consent to receive service, as well as any consents pertaining to the release and sharing of personal information.
- 21.3 Street outreach staff are responsible for ensuring HMIS consent is in place prior to entering data into HMIS, as per HMIS training.
- 21.4 Some unsheltered individuals encountered will not be cognitively well enough to provide consent. In those rare instances, street outreach staff shall work with allied professionals to have a capacity assessment completed on the person to determine their legal ability to provide consent for themselves. Funders may request the volume of instances where this occurs, and it shall be furnished.

## 25. Confidentiality

- 22.1 Street outreach staff shall confidentially maintain the identity of all unsheltered persons encountered through their professional efforts unless there is explicit consent to share that information with others. Where consent is in place, street outreach staff are encouraged to share necessary information with other parties that are instrumental in helping the person resolve their homelessness.
- 22.2 Electronic records of information shall be password protected to decrease the potential of a privacy breach.
- 22.3 Street outreach staff that make physical notes on paper related to their street outreach efforts shall ensure the papers remain confidential during and after work hours. If stored in a personal vehicle, these notes shall be in a locked box.
- 22.4 Information about an unsheltered person including, but not limited to, name, date of birth, Social Security Number, location, presenting issue(s), referrals, and action steps, shall not be divulged to any third party unless there is explicit consent to do so or a legal mandate to report.



## 26. Record Keeping

- 23.1 Street outreach staff are responsible for meeting their employer's requirements for record keeping, as well as all record keeping requirements identified in their funding contract.
- 23.2 Unsheltered persons receiving street outreach may request information regarding how to access information that is stored and used regarding outreach services. If the request is made, street outreach staff shall inform the unsheltered person which information is part of the record of an engagement and service, how that information is stored and protected, and how to access or amend that information in the future if they so desire.
- 23.3 Unsheltered persons may request that a street outreach staff maintain their identification or other records in safekeeping. This can only be done when there is an explicit internal agency policy for doing so, and all documents collected and stored shall be recorded internal to the organization.

## 27. Case Conferencing

- 27.1 When appropriate consents are in place, a street outreach staff or team may organize a case conference to improve engagement, services or follow-through with any particular unsheltered person. Examples of reasons to convene a case conference include such things as:
- There are barriers to getting the person on the By-Name List for Coordinated Entry;
  - The person is on the By-Name List, is of higher needs and experiencing chronic homelessness, and has barriers to moving forward with accessing housing;
  - The individual being assisted has service needs that are co-occurring and transcend a single sector (e.g., a person experiencing chronic homelessness with a Substance Use Disorder, schizophrenia and declining physical health, while also being in and out of jail).
- 24.2 Whenever possible, the unsheltered person that is being referenced in the case conference shall be invited to attend and participate in the case conference.
- 24.3 When a case conference is convened, the lead on the case file is responsible for providing a brief written summary of efforts and progress in assisting the individual to all entities participating in the case conference. The lead is also responsible for presenting the case in the case conference.
- 24.4 The regional coordinator shall convene a quarterly case conference to discuss persons in that region that have expressed interest in housing, but have been homeless 12 months or more and not on a pathway to housing. If invited to attend by the regional coordinator, street outreach staff shall participate in the case conference.
- 24.5 Case conferences are intended to be action-oriented, focused on what can be tried to move forward in supporting the individual, rather than revisiting barriers or complaining about systemic issues.
- 24.6 The lead of the case conference is responsible for providing a summary of decisions and action-steps to the participants in the case conference, including the person experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

## 28. Transferring Care and/or Shared Engagement

- 28.1 Whenever the street outreach staff are transferring contact with an unsheltered person to another street outreach staff or any other staff or program from the same or different organization, all reasonable efforts shall be made to ensure that there is a complete and transparent sharing of information, as well as an in-person meeting with all relevant parties to transfer care. Transferring care occurs best when all relevant parties, including the unsheltered person, are in the same location and are sharing information transparently.
- 28.2 In instances where the unsheltered person transitions into a safer sleeping site, safe parking, or transitional housing and the street outreach worker stays involved in developing a permanent housing option for the person, a meeting should be held with the unsheltered person, lead street outreach worker, and staff at the safer sleeping site, safe parking, or transitional housing to determine roles and responsibilities of all staff involved, ensure there is open communication with appropriate consent and release of information, and, provide assurance to the person experiencing homelessness that there is a coordinated and strategic shared plan for engagement.
- 28.3 It is the responsibility of the street outreach worker to provide their contact information to the staff of the other program (e.g., safe parking), as well as the program participant so that there is improved follow-up and ongoing communication as needed.

## 29. Grievances

- 26.1 All organizations delivering street outreach services shall have a grievance policy and accompanying procedures for investigating, and when appropriate, act on grievances.
- 26.2 Once an unsheltered person has provided consent to receive street outreach services, they shall be made aware of the grievance policy.



## 30. Equipment

- 27.1 Street outreach staff shall have a phone with them at all times during the delivery of street outreach duties.
- 27.2 Each street outreach team shall have access to a First Aid Kit during the delivery of street outreach duties to be used in accordance with the training received on First Aid.
- 27.3 Street outreach staff shall have access to a computer/tablet for the purposes of data entry into HMIS, case notes, email, and maintaining knowledge of available resources to unsheltered persons.



## 31. Encountering a Person That is Homeless and in Distress

- 28.1 In some instances, street outreach staff will encounter an unsheltered person in physical, emotional, or mental distress. Efforts will be made to engage the unsheltered person and address their distress. When necessary, safe, and appropriate, street outreach staff shall mobilize First Responder resources within the community to help address the unsheltered person's distress.
- 28.2 If the unsheltered person encountered in distress has not already provided informed consent to receive street outreach services, a First Responder may still be appropriate.
- 28.3 If an unsheltered person is in distress and a First Responder response has been activated, the street outreach staff shall take reasonable efforts to stay with the unsheltered person until assistance arrives and to relay pertinent information to First Responders, when it is safe to do so.
- 28.4 When directed by a funder or supervisor to do so, a summary of an incident involving an unsheltered person in distress and the response shall be provided within 24 hours of the encounter with the unsheltered person in distress.

## **32. Encountering a Person Who is Deceased and Homeless**

- 29.1 In very rare instances, street outreach staff will encounter an unsheltered person who has died. A 911 response will be activated in these instances.
- 29.2 When appropriate and necessary, street outreach staff shall administer efforts to revive the unsheltered person until first responders arrive on scene in accordance with their employer's policies and the First Aid/CPR training.
- 29.3 When directed by a funder or employer to do so, a summary of an incident involving an unsheltered deceased person and the response shall be provided within 24 hours of the encounter with the deceased unsheltered person.

### **33. Encountering an Individual Experiencing Homelessness During Non-Work Hours**

- 30.1 From time to time, street outreach staff may encounter unsheltered persons that they know during non-work hours. During those instances, the off-duty street outreach staff is not to acknowledge the unsheltered person unless the unsheltered person initiates acknowledgement first.
- 30.2 No street outreach activities are to occur during non-work hours.
- 30.3 In the event the off-duty street outreach staff is with others during the time of acknowledgement with the unsheltered person, no information about the person's name, circumstances, services or care shall be shared with the others.
- 30.4 Street outreach staff shall never post details regarding individuals, locations or content of the work on social media or divulge details to a third party that is not professionally involved in the provision of services to persons who are homeless.

## 34. Responding to Encampments

- 31.1 When one or more unsheltered persons is occupying space on public property through a tent, tarp or other handmade structure, or the individual has occupied a building on public property for the purpose of habitation, it is considered an encampment. The street outreach staff shall report the location of all encampments they know to be occupied to their regional coordinator once per month.
- 31.2 Street outreach staff may not participate in the construction of any encampment, though, in exceptional circumstances may provide access to materials like a tent that make the encampment possible, unless otherwise prohibited by the funder.
- 31.3 Street outreach staff may engage people near their encampment, but shall not enter into a tent or other similar structure during the provision of services.
- 31.4 If an enforcement body has identified a particular encampment for closure, and the street outreach staff has advanced notice of such, no materials shall be provided by street outreach to the unsheltered person that will exacerbate the clean-up process of the encampment.

## 35. Service Restrictions

- 32.1 In rare circumstances, an unsheltered homeless individual will behave in such a manner that presents a real and credible threat to the street outreach staff, or defaces or destroys property of the street outreach staff. In these instances, a service restriction may be issued by the street outreach staff to the unsheltered person if other attempts to de-escalate the situation have been unsuccessful.
- 32.2 Service restrictions may be issued verbally to the unsheltered person, but must be documented.
- 32.3 If it is the first time an unsheltered person has exhibited behavior prompting a service restriction, the service restriction period shall last no longer than seven calendar days.
- 32.4 If the unsheltered person has engaged in the same behavior repeatedly resulting in subsequent service restrictions, the service restriction period shall last no longer than 14 calendar days.
- 32.5 No unsheltered person in San Diego City or County shall receive a permanent service restriction. However, for the health and safety of specific street outreach staff, in extreme cases that are approved by their supervisor a particular street outreach staff may be exempt from having to engage with the unsheltered person in the future.
- 32.6 Information pertaining to any or all service restrictions may be requested by the coordinators and shall be furnished within three business days if requested.

## 36. Engaging in Street Outreach Activities on Public Property and Private Property

- 33.1 Street outreach services shall be provided on all public property within the area they are funded to serve.
- 33.2 Street outreach services may be available inside public buildings within the area they are funded to serve such as libraries and community centers on a limited basis. Doing so should come with knowledge and permission of the staff within the public buildings. Engaging in in-reach activities should consume a minimum (ideally less than 25%) of the street outreach team's time in any given week. In-reach should be limited to engaging only those homeless persons who are unsheltered when not in the public building.
- 33.3 Should street outreach staff observe the need for services in areas that are not public but are within a public agency's control (e.g., a culvert or environmentally sensitive land), the street outreach staff may request permission from the agency to enter the property to perform services.
- 33.4 Street outreach services may be provided on quasi-public property within the area they are funded to serve, such as the parking lot surrounding a strip-mall or business unless expressly requested by the property owner or operator not to do so.
- 33.5 Unless there is explicit permission by the owner or operator of a private building, street outreach activities are not to occur within a private building such as a business or restaurant or on private property.

## 37. Coordinating with Health-Focused Street Outreach Services

- 34.1 Street outreach staff shall identify unsheltered persons who would benefit from being assessed and/or receiving service from health-focused activities serving unsheltered persons, in jurisdictions within the region where health-focused outreach services exist. With consent, those individuals and their location shall be communicated to the health care team.
- 34.2 Street outreach staff shall not divulge health related information to the health team about any unsheltered person unless there is a consent in place that explicitly allows the street outreach staff to do so.
- 34.3 When consents are in place, street outreach staff shall exchange information with the health team related to housing progress and other relevant service details.



## 38. Collaborating and Participating in Street Outreach Meetings

- 35.1 Street outreach staff shall make their knowledge and skill available to assist with Point-In-Time counts.
- 35.2 The regional coordinator will work with street outreach teams in their region to decrease duplication and maximize the strengths of each service provider. Joint planning with the regional coordinator and street outreach teams is expected.
- 35.3 Street outreach staff are expected to participate in meetings, gatherings and trainings organized by the regional coordinator, system coordinator, and/or funders.
- 35.4 Street outreach staff are expected to work effectively with law enforcement conducting outreach activities, so long as those activities are not related to enforcement.
- 35.5 Street outreach staff are expected to work effectively with non-profit, health, homeless and social service providers.
- 35.6 Street outreach staff are expected to work effectively with members of the broader community, including neighborhood businesses and residents. However, communications must not reveal confidential details regarding any particular individual or their supports unless there is consent by the unsheltered person to do so.

## 39. Monitoring

- 36.1 Every street outreach program should demonstrate that they are providing internal oversight of their program related to their contracted activities. Furthermore, where there is under-performance, the contracted entity for street outreach should be able to demonstrate the steps and measures they are or have taken to improve their performance, if requested by their funder.
- 36.2 Any of the funders, as part of its contract monitoring activities, may choose to monitor compliance with one or more of the street outreach standards for street outreach services within their jurisdiction.
- 36.3 An organization found to be out of compliance with one or more of the street outreach standards may be placed on a remediation plan to ensure future fidelity to the standards. Failure to remediate may result in loss of future funding.

## 40. Amendments to the Standards

- 37.1 These street outreach standards for San Diego Continuum of Care shall be formally reviewed at least once every five years. The Regional Task Force on Homelessness shall lead this process. Amendments may occur at that time.
- 37.2 During the intervening period, if necessary, funders shall collaborate to make any changes to the standards. Unless otherwise legally obligated to do so, all amendments will be communicated to street outreach services with an “in force” date of at least 30 days after the amendment to the standard.
- 37.3 A contracted street outreach provider may formally request an amendment to the street outreach standards in the intervening period. These requests are to be made by the supervisor of the street outreach program, their designate, or the executive leadership of the organization, and sent to the attention of the Chief Operations Officer of the Regional Task Force on Homelessness. The standard to be amended or deleted, or a standard to be added, shall be identified in writing, along with a rationale for making the amendment. The Regional Task Force on Homelessness shall undertake an internal review of all such requests. Correspondence on the request shall occur within 30 days of the request being made. If the amendment, subtraction or addition to the standards are made, the Regional Task Force on Homelessness and/or other funders will establish an “in force” date which may be different than the timeframe associated with the correspondence.