

Current Strategies in Unsheltered Service Delivery for Rural Communities

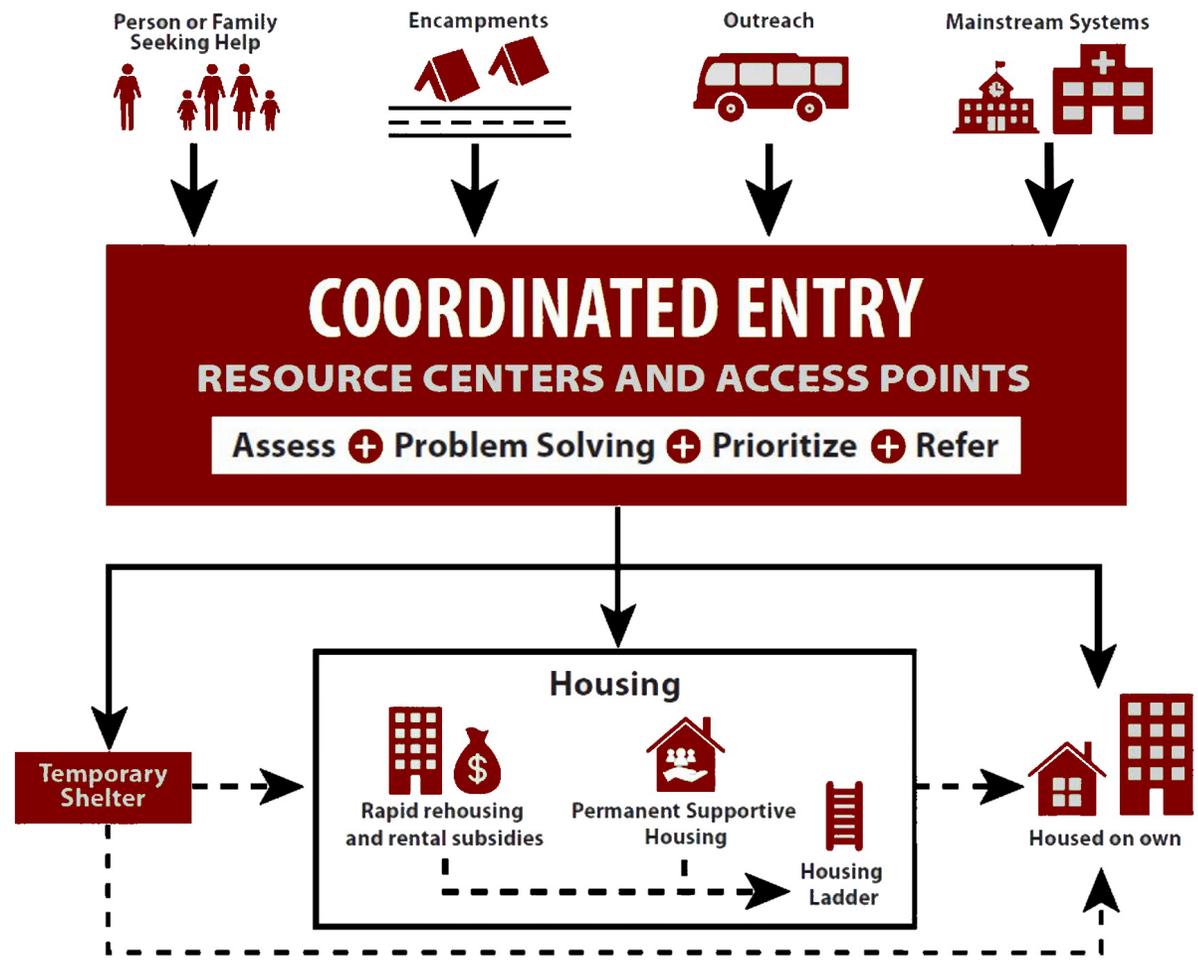
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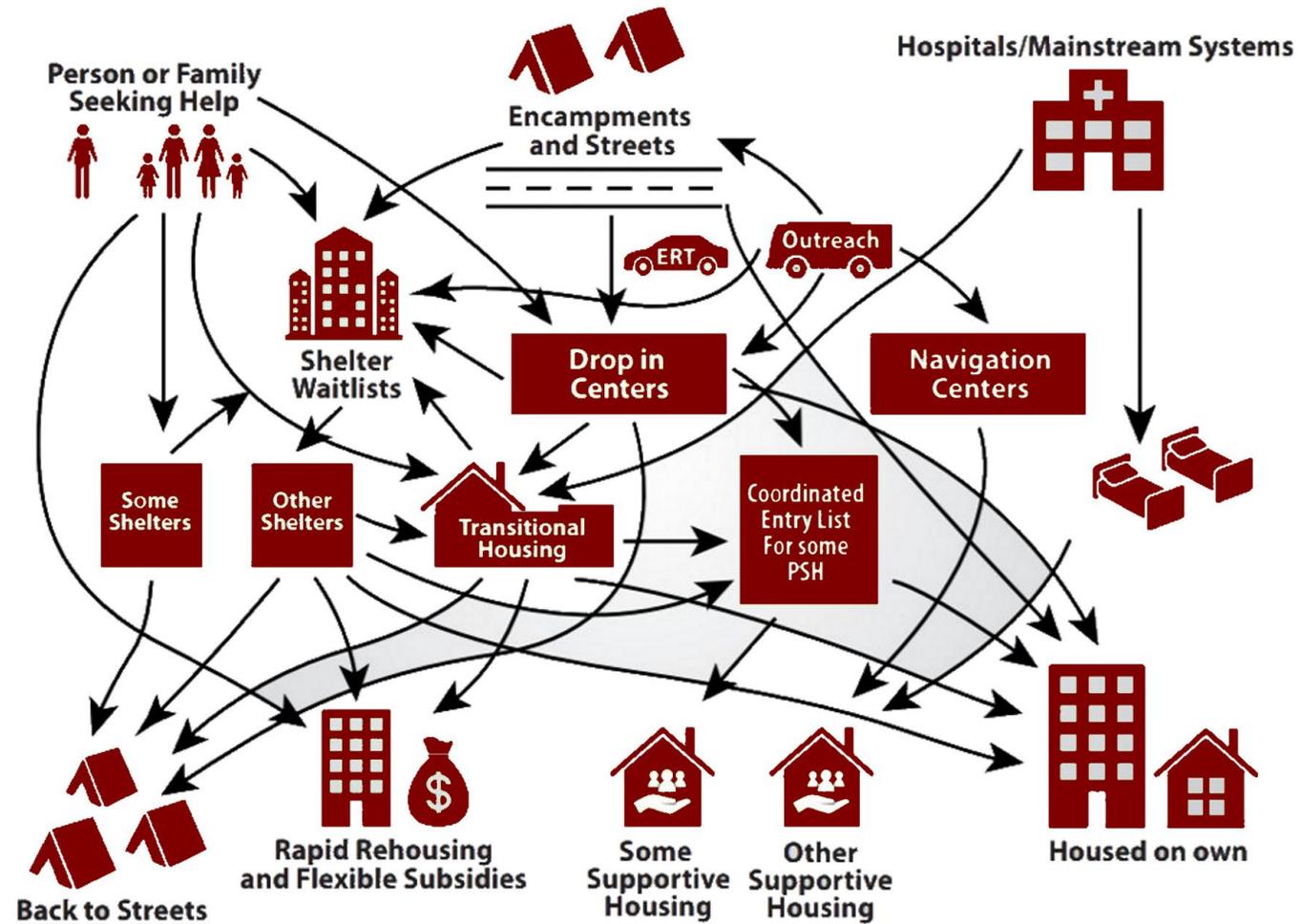


**CENTER ON CHILDREN,
FAMILIES, AND THE LAW**

HELPING THE HELPERS



SF Dept. of Homelessness & Supportive Housing,
https://twitter.com/SF_HSH/status/1365088007347343361



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Today's Talk:

Goal

Share Useful Knowledge

- Effective strategies require understanding, planning, and connection
- Strategies can be adopted/adjusted based on communities' needs, resources, etc.

Focus

Outreach and Community Engagement

- Outreach key for effective service delivery and relationship building
- Engaging local community members to enhance response efforts and build connections

How

Summarize Challenges and Strategies

- Literature review on rural unsheltered homelessness service delivery challenges and strategies
- Describe rural unsheltered homelessness
- Common factors to becoming unhoused and barriers to rehousing in rural areas
- Evidence-based strategies that can be tailored to the community

Understanding Where We Are:



What Rural Unsheltered Homelessness Looks Like:

First-time homelessness

Shorter / Fewer homelessness episodes

Local community members—Hypermobility may depend on level of transportation access

Veterans

Younger Families

Mental
Illness

Women

Non-
Hispanic
Caucasians

DV
Survivors

Single
Mothers
with
Children

Youth and
Young
Adults

Substance
Use
Disorder

Community
Newcomers

Indigenous
Persons



Word cloud of rural unsheltered homelessness demographics generated from literature review notes. Larger, lighter values represent higher term frequencies.



What Rural Unsheltered Homelessness Looks Like:

Wide range of outdoor living situations

Vehicles

Insufficient housing

Wide range of encampment locations

Geographically isolated / Less visible

Food / Service deserts

Doubled-up—possibly in response to lack of accessible emergency shelters



Word cloud of rural unsheltered homelessness living situations generated from literature review notes. Larger, lighter values represent higher term frequencies.



Common Factors for Rural Unsheltered Homelessness:

Affordable Housing

- Housing instability
- Poor housing conditions
- Limited purpose-built rental housing

Formal Services

- Lack of resources to support prevention
- Low prevention service availability
- Low prevention service coordination

Community

- Gentrification / Agricultural commercialization
- Micro-economic changes
- Lack of public infrastructure (e.g., transit)
- Rural cultural norms (e.g., self-reliance and independence)



Common Barriers to Effective Service Delivery:

Affordable Housing

Barriers to accessing rental units (e.g., credit checks, connections with landlords)

Lack of affordable housing

Transit to housing

Formal Services

Low access to services

Lack of coordination

Lack of process transparency

Administrative barriers

Community

Large geographies

Mistrust of services providers

Stigmatization

Rural cultural norms (e.g., self-reliance and independence)

What Can We Do?



Evidence-based Solutions: What are Our Tools





Evidence-based Solutions: How We Use Our Tools

Centering Lived Experience Experts (LEEs)

- Guidance at every stage of partnership / planning

Foster Meaningful Outreach

- Keystone for service connection / delivery

Engage in a Coordinated Community Effort

- Welcome / include diverse representation of skills, identities, and perspectives from the community



Center Lived Experience:

Service system structures must align with unsheltered persons' needs and how they understand/use services to be successful

Those with lived experience are best able to communicate how systems are working "on the ground" and how to best improve them

Center Lived Experience: Enacting the 7 Principles



Nothing about us without us: Seven principles for leadership & inclusion of people with lived experience of homelessness

LIVED EXPERIENCE ADVISORY COUNCIL

During the 2014 Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness conference in Vancouver, a group of individuals came together with a common goal: to ensure that individuals with lived experience received equitable representation from service providers, researchers, policy makers, and others, so that they can better understand and tackle the problem of homelessness.

We believe that without including individuals with lived experience in the decision making process, in research, and in all other endeavours, it creates an unbalanced approach to ending homelessness in Canada.

To that end, our council was formed. Our first action was to articulate principles for the inclusion and leadership of people with lived experience in organizations and initiatives that aim to address homelessness. We presented these principles to the conference plenary under the banner, "Nothing About Us Without Us."

These principles point to the importance of first voice inclusion in all endeavours to end homelessness. This is true of any social issue - the people who are living it usually have the best understanding about what the problem is and what needs to be done to address it. Inclusion is especially vital in the context



Center Lived Experience: Enacting the 7 Principles

1 Bring Lived Experience to the Forefront

- Stand next to LEEs, and ensure all voices are heard
- Use professional power to support LEE goals, advocacy, and grassroots social change

2 Include LEEs at All Levels

- Foster sustainable hiring opportunities for LEEs at all levels
- Actively work to remove barriers to engagement

3 Value Time and Provide Support

- Compensate based on what community members need and can access
- Develop new, safe, and accessible ways of doing business

4 Challenge Stigma, Confront Oppression

- Provide Anti-Oppression training to all for a shared foundation
- Confront oppression when we see it

5 Recognize Lived Experience Expertise

- Mandate LEEs into decision-making roles
- Support LEEs in self-advocacy around decision-making

6 Work Together Towards Equitable Representation

- Equitable representation as a strategic planning goal
- Set concrete objectives and timeframes, driven by LEE guidance

7 Build Authentic Relationships

- Cultivate an environment where all are celebrated and acknowledged
- Break down rigid roles like “service provider” and “service user”



Foster Meaningful Connections with Outreach:

May be first point of contact to services

Can ameliorate mistrust / negative perceptions

Positive connections are crucial for successful CE



Foster Meaningful Connections with Outreach:

Core Elements

- Focused on housing, safety, and client choice
- Coordinated effort, use outreach activities as CE access point
- Person-Centered, Transparent, and Honest
- Trauma-Informed and Culturally Responsive

Considerations for Rural Outreach

- Engage non-traditional partners (e.g., law enforcement, postal service)
- Use lived experience guidance to divide large geographies and deploy resources strategically
- Hire Lived Experience Experts and from the community



Engage in a Coordinated Community-wide Effort:

Social connections may have a high impact for unsheltered rural community members' lives and community wellbeing

Intersectional collaboration helps address resource limitations and maintain sustainability

Coordinated efforts between local groups, grassroots organizations, and local / state governments target shortcomings of intersecting systems



Engage in a Coordinated Community-wide Effort:

Core Elements

- Collaborative, local effort
- Transparent in its roles and responsibilities
- Cross-system and diverse in perspectives

Engage the Community

- Collaborate with non-traditional partners
- Tap into additional support / resources in community
- Volunteerism, advocacy, and policy change

Conclusion:



Centering Lived Experience Experts

Meaningful Outreach

Coordinated Community Effort

Additional Resources.

Topic	Resource Name (hyperlink embedded)	Resource Link
Engaging LEEs	Methods and Emerging Strategies to Engage People with Lived Experience	https://aspe.hhs.gov/reports/lived-experience-brief
	Nothing about us without us: Seven principles for leadership & inclusion of people with lived experience of homelessness	https://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/LEAC-7principles-final.pdf
	Homeless System Response: Paying People with Lived Experience and Expertise	https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/COVID-19-Homeless-System-Response-Paying-People-with-Lived-Experience-and-Expertise.pdf
Meaningful Outreach	Guidance for Recruiting, Hiring, and Retaining People With Lived Experience and Expertise of Homelessness	https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/COVID-19-Homeless-System-Response-Guidance-Recruiting-Hiring-Retaining-People-With-Lived-Experience-Expertise-of-Homelessness.pdf
	OUTREACH & ENROLLMENT QUICK GUIDE: Promising Strategies for Engaging the Homeless Population	https://nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/outreach-enrollment-quick-guide.pdf
	Core Elements of Effective Street Outreach to People Experiencing Homelessness	https://www.usich.gov/sites/default/files/document/Core-Components-of-Outreach-2019.pdf
Community-wide Engagement	Closing the Gap: Homelessness to Housing – Street Outreach	https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Closing-the-Gap-Homelessness-to-Housing-Street-Outreach-Slides.pdf
	A Field Review of the Five Interconnected Practice Areas	https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/hubfs/2022_engage_april_story2_finalv2.pdf?hsCtaTracking=4a2a2167-c38f-4ec9-b06f-2934d5e8ca49%7C5794a367-1897-451b-b1d0-a4fa79389d77
	Interconnected Practices for Community and Systems Impact	https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/hubfs/Article_Interconnected-Practices-for-Community-and-Systems-Impact.pdf?hsLang=en-ca
	Community engagement: How to create meaningful connections in an age of distrust	https://thesocialchangeagency.org/blog/community-engagement-in-age-of-distrust/
	Social Change Wheel	https://iamncampuscompact.org/resources/social-change-wheel/

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