



WHY DOES HOUSING-FOCUSED STREET OUTREACH *Matter?*

Street outreach is one of the most demanding, and most meaningful, roles in the homelessness response system. It demands that providers meet people where they are, often in moments of deep crisis, and build trust over time in conditions that make consistency hard. **At its best, outreach has always been grounded in presence, respect, and relationship.**

Unfortunately, the work can too often become a reactive cycle, responding only to urgent needs day after day without a clear path to get people off the streets. *The Housing-Focused Street Outreach (HFSO) Framework* offers a shift that brings clarity to that reality, defining effective practices of delivering care, while sharpening the purpose of the approach. The HFSO Framework centers a simple idea: every interaction is intentionally working toward housing.

At its core, HFSO is about helping people move from unsheltered homelessness into permanent housing as quickly and safely as possible, while still responding to immediate needs in a person-centered way. It clarifies the scope of outreach providers' work of building relationships while helping people exit homelessness.

Why Does This Framework Matter?

- ▶ **HFSO approach creates clarity in complex work.** Outreach often must balance crisis response, relationship-building, and coordination with multiple systems. A housing-focused approach unites those competing priorities around a shared goal. That shared goal helps guide decision making, prioritizing staff time, determining engagement strategies, and assessing individual goal progression. It brings clarity and cohesion across outreach teams, reducing overwhelming challenges for workers while ensuring everyone's hard work contributes toward the same overall outcomes.
- ▶ **HFSO builds accountability** from providers, system leaders, the people we are serving, and from our broader communities. Being housing-focused means that we are clear about what we are working toward and honest about progress. It pushes us to follow through, stay connected, and keep moving with people toward housing, even when it's difficult. At the same time, it respects each person's choice and pace. Accountability here is about shared commitment, trust, and clarity of purpose.
- ▶ **HFSO strengthens relationships.** Maintaining a housing focus in this context requires deepening trust, increasing collaboration, and strengthening alignment across systems of care. The framework emphasizes person-centered engagement: listening, honoring autonomy, and supporting people as they regain a sense of control. When housing is the goal, conversations become more focused while staying grounded in dignity and choice.
- ▶ **HFSO improves impact.** Outreach has often been seen as a bridge to services. HFSO turns that bridge into a pathway, connecting engagement directly to housing. By working closely with coordinated entry and housing resources, outreach staff can focus on helping people move out of homelessness. Unsheltered homelessness decreases when outreach staff have the resources to do this housing-focused work.
- ▶ **HFSO supports safer, more sustainable practice.** Focusing on housing reduces the amount of time people spend in unsafe conditions and helps staff see real outcomes from their work. It also reinforces that health and safety — for clients, staff, and the broader community — is a shared responsibility.

Across all of this, five core components guide the work:



Using data to understand the local dynamics of unsheltered homelessness and create tailored solutions



Coordinating with partners



Centering relationships and choice



Promoting health and safety



Staying grounded in a Housing First approach

Outreach is not new. HFSO builds on the work that outreach providers are already doing, clarifying a vision for how this work can contribute to an end to homelessness. It affirms what matters most—trust, persistence, presence—while adding focus and direction. It helps ensure that outreach is not just about showing up, but about helping people move forward.

See more [here](#).