



# HOUSING-FOCUSED STREET OUTREACH FOR *System Leaders*

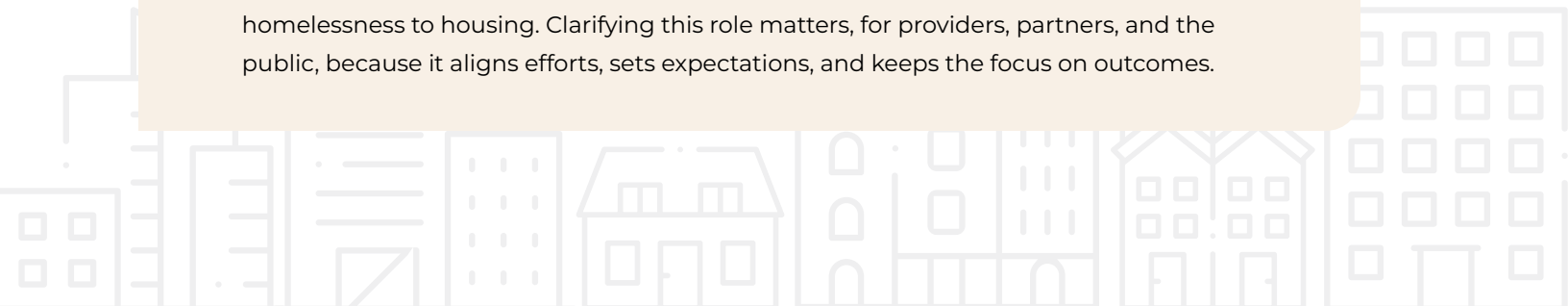
Street outreach is often the most visible response of a Homeless Response System's efforts to address unsheltered homelessness, but without clear direction, it can become fragmented, inconsistent, disconnected, and fall short on any systemwide collective outcomes. The **Housing-Focused Street Outreach (HFSO) Framework** brings collective purpose to the work, giving system leaders the foundational knowledge needed to increase coordination, accountability, and impact of outreach happening within their local systems.

At its core, HFSO asks leaders to treat outreach as a necessary component of a functional homeless response system. To that end, the ultimate goal of street outreach should not only be engagements or service counts but ultimately housing connections. Outreach should consistently connect people experiencing unsheltered homelessness to permanent housing as quickly and safely as possible. As a system strategy, HFSO is about improving conditions for everyone in the community both in the short and long term by reducing street homelessness in durable and humane ways.

## **System leaders have an essential role in implementing HFSO.**

### **Their responsibilities include:**

- ▶ ***Creating alignment around a shared goal.*** Outreach teams often operate with different focuses, priorities, tools, and expectations. Leadership can improve alignment by defining the role of outreach clearly: every interaction should move people toward housing. This clarity encourages consistency across providers, reduces duplicative efforts, and ensures outreach is contributing to system-wide goals.
- ▶ ***Improving conditions on the ground.*** HFSO reduces the harms associated with unsheltered homelessness for individuals, outreach staff, and the broader community by creating real pathways off the street. This shift in approach from managing the needs of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness to focusing on shortening the time spent unsheltered improves conditions for everyone.
- ▶ ***Strengthening accountability.*** HFSO defines success clearly and provides guidance for measuring progress. Effective outreach is measured by people's rapid movement through programs, off streets, and into housing. When leaders deploy HFSO as a system level strategy, accountability for the system's outcomes becomes a collective responsibility. Moreover, outreach workers can be engaged as key strategists for understanding local dynamics of unsheltered homelessness, identifying system gaps and inefficiencies, and ensuring there aren't specific populations who are being excluded.
- ▶ ***Supporting better decision-making through data.*** Effective outreach starts with knowing who is unsheltered, where they are, and what they need. HFSO encourages leaders to use data as a management tool for targeting resources, identifying inequities, and adjusting strategy in real time. This allows systems to plan strategically and deploy resources intentionally, rather than reactively.
- ▶ ***Enhancing system flow.*** When outreach is fully integrated with coordinated entry and other parts of the homeless response system, it becomes a true tool for ending homelessness. Integration of outreach into the larger system accelerates movement from unsheltered homelessness into housing, which is critical in environments where shelter capacity is limited and demand is high.
- ▶ ***Reinforcing a clear and consistent message.*** HFSO provides a steady anchor to define the value proposition of street outreach: to connect people experiencing unsheltered homelessness to housing. Clarifying this role matters, for providers, partners, and the public, because it aligns efforts, sets expectations, and keeps the focus on outcomes.



*The five core components of HFSO apply to leadership's role to shape system design. They include:*



Using data to drive resource allocation and targeting, ensure accountability, and operationalize service continuity



Creating a collaborative culture by normalizing shared decision-making and democratic governance, and providing support for coordination efforts



Making person centered engagement the standard for service delivery across the whole system



Treating health and safety as shared responsibilities



Setting system-wide expectations for housing focused service delivery

For system leaders, this is not just about improving outreach, it is about improving how the whole system functions. HFSO ensures outreach is not an endpoint, but a starting point for housing.

In a moment of rising unsheltered homelessness and increasing pressure for visible results, the framework offers a clear path forward: align outreach, connect it directly to housing, improve conditions on the ground, and measure success by how many people move inside.

[See more here.](#)