

City of Huntsville Homeless Outreach Initiative

The Homeless Outreach Initiative (HOI) is a City of Huntsville program administered by the Community Development Department and the Huntsville Police Department to execute a multidisciplinary outreach team to address unsheltered homelessness in Huntsville.

The vision of the HOI is to improve the quality of life for all individuals with a mission to deliver a multidisciplinary and community-wide approach to addressing and reducing unsheltered homelessness in Huntsville.

The purpose of the HOI is to identify goals and objectives concerning the unsheltered homeless that will produce positive outcomes benefiting Huntsville.

Goals

- Increase accountability.
- Reduce unsheltered homelessness.
- Conserve public resources.
- Improve efficiency and effectiveness of supportive services and programs.
- Provide a safer and healthier environment.

Objectives

- Collaborate and partner with service providers, agencies, and city departments to identify and develop solutions surrounding unsheltered homelessness.
- Engage and encourage individuals experiencing homelessness to access resources and seek self-sufficiency.
- Assist and inform community stakeholders.

To accomplish the goals and objectives, the HOI will be executed by the multidisciplinary Outreach Team, consisting of professionals and peers collaborating and working together cohesively to address concerns and develop solutions surrounding unsheltered homelessness in Huntsville.

The Outreach Team consists of:

- Administration: Community Development
- Law Enforcement: Huntsville Police Department Community Outreach Unit and Patrol
- Community Partners: Service providers and City of Huntsville Departments

Community Development – The Community Development Department’s mission is to stabilize lower income neighborhoods, encourage economic empowerment of lower income persons and/or persons living in lower income neighborhoods and provide assistance to the special needs population through federal and state grant programs.

Additional responsibilities of the Community Development Department may include:

- Provide administrative coordination of the Homeless Outreach Initiative's implementation and program activities.
- Make information and access to community programs, funding, and opportunities available to the unsheltered population and all community residents.
- Collect and manage unsheltered data and responsibly submit to government entities and the community as requested.
- Administer Homeless Outreach Initiative Steering Committee Meetings.
- Partner with Huntsville Police Department on Homeless Outreach Initiative community presentations and trainings.
- Partner with Huntsville Police Department on addressing citizen complaints and concerns regarding unsheltered homeless.
- Help administer the Homeless Outreach Initiative in the Continuum of Care (CoC) and CoC activities.
- Comply with applicable federal, state, and local regulations and guidelines.
- Establish accountability protocols.

Community Outreach Unit (HPD) – The purpose of the Community Outreach Unit is to be a system to help with the delivery of police services to our most vulnerable communities. The foundation of this system is the relationships developed between citizen groups and police, in which these citizen groups acquire vested interests and perform vital roles in the prevention and reduction of homelessness.

The Community Outreach Unit is assigned directly to the Community Outreach Supervisor to assist Community Development with the City of Huntsville's Homeless Outreach Initiative for the purpose of addressing homelessness. The Community Outreach Unit implements a general knowledge of state laws, city ordinances, public and private property rights as well as resources available to persons experiencing homelessness.

Additional responsibilities of the Community Outreach Unit include:

- Educate the public.
- Provide access to resources.
- Address citizen concerns.
- Hold unsheltered accountable.
- Provide safety and security to the HOI Outreach Team

Community Partners – Community Partners include service providers, partnering agencies, city departments that work collaboratively to address concerns in relation to unsheltered homelessness. Concerns require a multidisciplinary and solution-oriented approach involving multiple entities that will address mental health, substance use disorders, physical health, crisis services, animal care, physical safety, private property rights, environmental safety, shelter, etc.

Participating Service Providers may include:

- Catholic Center of Concern – Rental and Utility Assistance, Food, Clothing, Supplies
- Continuum of Care (CoC)
- Downtown Rescue Mission – Emergency Shelter, Recovery Assistance, Food, Clothing
- ***First Stop, Inc. – Case Management, Food, Clothing, Showers, Laundry**
- Huntsville Hospital – Emergency and Preventative Healthcare

- Partnership for a Drug-Free Community – Recovery Services
- Rose of Sharon – Food, Clothing, Showers
- ***R.O.S.S. Recovery – Recovery Assistance Programs, Support Programs, Recovery Center**
- Salvation Army – Emergency Shelter, Food, Clothing, Recovery Program, Case Management
- ShowerUp – Mobile Hygiene Services
- The Vet Center – Veterans Resource Center
- ***Wellstone – Mental Health Care, Supportive Housing Programs**

*Service providers participating on the Homeless Outreach Initiative Steering Committee and engaged in weekly street outreach camp engagement.

Participating Partnering Agencies may include:

- Madison County Sheriff's Office
- Madison City Police Department
- Norfolk Southern Police
- UAH Police
- Faulkner University Police
- TVA Police
- Huntsville City Schools
- ALDOT
- Probate Court

Participating City Departments may include:

- Animal Services
- City Council
- Code Enforcement
- Communications
- Emergency Management
- Fire and Rescue
- Landscape Management
- Legal
- Municipal Court
- Parks and Recreation
- Public Transportation
- Public Works

Outreach Implementation – The Initiative is implemented through a variety of regularly occurring community-wide activities and engagement. These activities are coordinated and reviewed by the HOI Steering Committee during the monthly steering committee meetings.

Activities may include:

- Weekly Homeless Camp Visits
- Unsheltered Engagement
- Point in Time Counts (PIT)

- Homeless Data Management
- Collaborative Partner Meetings
- Warming/Cooling Centers
- Citizen Engagement
- Training Sessions
- Community Presentations

Outcomes – Outcomes are essential to measuring the success of the HOI and effectiveness of the Outreach Team.

Identified projected outcomes may include:

- Reduce the number of unsheltered homeless.
- Reduce homeless-related crime.
- Increase effectiveness and utilization of service providers.
- Ensure both individual and property rights are protected.
- Collect and dispense accurate data and information.
- Reduce burden on emergency response agencies.
- Increase trust and reliability.
- Improve the quality of life for all individuals in the community.