
ECHO Homeless Navigation Pilot

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Ending Community Homelessness Coalition



Program – Goals and Objectives

- Actively connecting individuals experiencing homelessness in Austin/Travis County to opportunities for safe, stable, and permanent housing.
- Three primary sub-goals:
 - **Housing Outreach:** Bringing housing services and housing opportunities directly to individuals experiencing homelessness (“clients”) where they are
 - **Housing Navigation:** Once housing opportunities are identified, removing barriers to specific housing opportunities (such as lack of State identification or lack of medical documentation)
 - **Services Coordination:** Creating a common communication and services coordination structure between field service programs, drop-in service programs, and permanent housing programs.



Program – Clients and Areas Served

- The primary target population for this program is individuals experiencing homelessness outside of Austin’s downtown core.
- Special focus and attention are paid to:
 - Highly visible campsites
 - Populations living in public or semi-public spaces such as highway overpasses and pedestrian bridges.
 - Underserved areas in southern and northern Austin
- Program funds two FTE’s and part of one manager position
 - Contract goal of serving 180 unique individuals every fiscal year
 - 213 clients served in Fiscal Year 2019



Services – Housing Outreach

- **Housing Outreach:** Bringing housing services and housing opportunities directly to individuals experiencing homelessness (“clients”) wherever they are experiencing homelessness
 - Primary focus is on individuals who may be unaware of the services available to them, or who have been unable to or unwilling to access existing service locations
 - Goal is to help clients identify needs and preferences in returning to permanent housing, then connect to resources and supports
 - Specific housing opportunities include emergency shelter, the Coordinated Entry process for Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Re-housing, and Diversion opportunities to re-unite with friends or family.
 - Support services include mainstream resources such as veteran services, healthcare, disability benefits, and employment programs.



Services – Housing Navigation

- **Housing Navigation:** Once housing opportunities are identified, removing barriers to specific housing opportunities (such as lack of State identification or lack of medical documentation)
- Intended as a follow-up engagement service for individuals who are already requesting housing services, but who need assistance obtaining program-specific documentation or removing specific housing barriers in order to prove or obtain program eligibility.
- Services are primarily geared towards clients who have already completed a Housing Assessment and are potentially eligible for a community housing intervention such as Permanent Supportive Housing, but who need to document eligibility criteria such as chronic homelessness or proof of a disabling condition in order to enroll in the program.



Services – Coordination and Partnership

- **Services Coordination:** Creating a common communication and services coordination structure between field service programs, drop-in service programs, and permanent housing programs.
- Goal is to create a systematic framework so that other Navigation and Outreach programs can also take advantage of shared partnerships when serving clients in similar situations or with similar needs.
- ECHO has established partnerships with existing local outreach programs and organizations such as Community Health Paramedics, Integral Care's PATH team, Community Care's Street Medicine Team, Austin Police Department, LINC, Downtown Austin Community Court, Sunrise Navigation Center, Integral Care's M3 team, LifeWorks Street Outreach, HOST, Trinity Center, the VA, AIDS Services of Austin, Front Steps, and SAFE Alliance (among others).



Challenges and opportunities

- Challenges and opportunities:
 - The community continues to struggle with an acute shortage of permanent housing programs dedicated to individuals leaving homelessness
 - Especially low-barrier, Housing First Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Rehousing programs
 - Permanent housing shortages create Street Outreach shortages (because time must be dedicated to preserving the health and safety of individuals experiencing long-term unsheltered homelessness, rather than helping them move directly into permanent housing)
 - When permanent housing opportunities ARE available, Street Outreach and Navigation services ensure that people experiencing homelessness can access them with speed as well as enthusiasm



Questions and Follow-up

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