

STREET OUTREACH SERVICES AND HOMELESS ENCAMPMENT RESPONSE

OFFICE OF HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

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LEXINGTON

Background and Overview of Street Outreach Services

- Street outreach services are mobile, community-based supports connecting individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness with essential resources (shelter and housing, healthcare).
- Street outreach:
 - Targets those least likely to seek assistance for themselves;
 - Focuses on building trust and rapport through consistent engagement;
 - Meets people where they are (streets, parks, vehicles, encampments);
 - Works to meet immediate needs (food, hygiene, other basic needs);
 - Aims to guide individuals toward stable, long-term solutions.
- Street outreach is a vital frontline service and the initial point-of-contact with the local response system for many unhoused individuals.

Background and Overview of Street Outreach Services

- Hope Center Street Outreach Pilot (2016-2019)
 - Initial iteration within Fayette County
 - Funded at \$75,000/year
 - Focus on “first touch” service provision
 - Target of 40 unduplicated contacts per year
- Community Action Council Assertive Street Outreach (2019-2023)
 - Expanded model with increasing levels of service such as intensive case management
 - Funded at \$280,000/year
 - Target of 110 unduplicated contacts per year
- Expanded Pandemic Response
 - Community Action Council’s outreach team operated non-congregate, hotel-based shelter
 - LFUCG leveraged Coronavirus funding to expand outreach via Hope Center and Lexington Rescue Mission

Background and Overview of Street Outreach Services

- Hope Center Progressive Street Outreach (2023-Current)
 - Expanded hours of operation and integrated clinical supports
 - Funded at \$316,640/year
 - Target of 60 unduplicated contacts monthly
 - Additional funds awarded in late 2025 to facilitate expansion with downtown focus
- Since August 1, 2023:
 - 809 unique contacts
 - Over 29% of persons exited to positive housing destinations
 - 32% of persons enrolled in intensive case management
 - 63% of persons exiting intensive case management moved to permanent housing
- Downtown outreach team to fully launch January 2026

Increased Need for Outreach Services

- Increase in unsheltered homelessness
 - While the 2025 LexCount saw fewer unsheltered persons (n=67) than the previous year (n=82), rates remain above the average from the previous 10-year period.
 - As outlined in the 2025 Lexington Emergency Shelter Study, the local response system (1) has seen an increase in individuals with barriers to accessing shelter and (2) presently lacks year-round bed inventory to meet needs.
- Increased costs to address homeless encampments
 - Combined with shelter barriers and capacity, implementation of House Bill 5 has contributed to increased costs related to homeless encampment removals.
 - Average cost per removal:
 - FY23 \$1,510
 - FY24 \$1,850
 - FY25 \$2,979

Encampment Coordinator Position

- To facilitate improved encampment response, the OHPI requested a dedicated position in FY26.
- Position filled in September 2025
- The Encampment Coordinator position has:
 - Allowed for greater oversight of street outreach services, identifying opportunities to improve processes and produce case-specific solutions.
 - Facilitated responses to more complex encampments—for example, those that include multiple properties.

Example: Russell Cave Road Encampment Removal

- In October, OHPI was notified of an issue by a private property owner. That issue was found to span public property, multiple private properties, and railroad property.
- Response included OHPI, Environmental Services, Code Enforcement, Police, and Solid Waste.
- Encampment Coordinator was able to:
 - Reduce removal costs by facilitating removal of debris by Solid Waste as opposed to a contractor.
 - Recommend and facilitate landscaping to mitigate future activity.
 - Facilitate long-term plan for ongoing oversight.
 - Reduce burdens on private owners by coordinating a single, synchronized response.

Example: Russell Cave Road Encampment Removal



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Looking Ahead

- Hope Center Downtown Outreach Team to launch this month
 - Increases focus on downtown
 - Expands clinical supports
 - Adds part-time weekend coverage
- Current street outreach services are contracted through July 31, 2026. OHPI will be releasing an RFP later this year to re-bid services.
- OHPI will be able to utilize data and insight gained from the Encampment Coordinator as well as approximately 6 months of expanded outreach data to inform RFP and to identify recipient of funding.
- Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness is presently working to identify tangible recommendations for continued efforts to reduce homelessness locally.

Questions?



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