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Street Outreach

Street Outreach engages individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness in locations such as streets, encampments, or other non-residential areas. Unlike facility-based programs, it delivers services directly to people where they live. The primary aim is to connect individuals with housing, healthcare, and essential resources.

Measures and Performance Ranges

Housing-focused street outreach programs have three performance measures for housing outcomes.

1. Successful exits from street outreach: This measure assesses how programs help clients exit street outreach and move into Transitional Housing, Bridge Housing, or Emergency Shelters
 - a. Performance Ranges
 - i. Stretch: 40%
 - ii. Target: 35%
 - iii. Foundation: 30%
 - b. Citations
 - i. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2024). National Summary of Homeless System Performance 2019-2023. <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/National-Summary-of-Homeless-System-Performance.pdf>
 - ii. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (n.d.). HUD CoC system performance measures: Measure 1 - Length of stay. Tableau Public. <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/system.performance.measures.hud.public.data/viz/HUDCoCSystemPerformanceMeasures/M1LengthofStay>
 - iii. Weare, C. (2021). Housing Outcomes for Homeless Individuals in Street Outreach Compared to Shelter. Journal of Poverty, 25(6), 543-561. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10875549.2020.1869664>
2. Average length of street outreach participation: This measure captures the average duration of client participation in street outreach. The measure begins at their initial entry into the street outreach program and ends with their exit to another program setting.
 - a. Performance Ranges
 - i. Stretch: 165 days
 - ii. Target: 217.5 days
 - iii. Foundation: 272 days
 - b. Citations
 - i. Weare, C. (2021). Housing Outcomes for Homeless Individuals in Street Outreach Compared to Shelter. Journal of Poverty, 25(6), 543-561. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10875549.2020.1869664>
3. Exists to homelessness: This measure looks at returns to homelessness for individuals who have exited the street outreach program, looking at returns in the context of one through three years.
 - a. Performance Ranges
 - i. Stretch: 30%
 - ii. Target: 35%
 - iii. Foundation: 40%

b. Citations

- i. Weare, C. (2021). Housing Outcomes for Homeless Individuals in Street Outreach Compared to Shelter. *Journal of Poverty*, 25(6), 543-561. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10875549.2020.1869664>

Evidence-Based Strategies for Street Outreach

Street outreach services a more acute, highly chronic population experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Street outreach is a critical tool for building relationships and connecting people to essential healthcare services, but it can also be an effective, housing-focused tool when done appropriately.

Housing-focused street outreach should prioritize the following elements:

- Person-centered engagement
 - Relationship-building is one of the strongest tools for effective street outreach. Providers should recognize the dignity of people experiencing homelessness while supporting their autonomy and decision-making in housing.
- Embedded coordinated entry
 - To ensure street outreach providers are best positioned to support transitions into permanent housing, outreach workers should prioritize coordinated entry registration, timely assessments, prioritization processes, and referrals to housing as core services.
- Outreach should be connected to permanent housing programs
 - Outreach is most effective when it's directly connected to a housing program. For example, Rapid Re-Housing assistance, transitional housing, or permanent supportive housing should all be leveraged whenever possible to convert outreach into a successful outcome.

Emergency Shelter

Emergency Shelters provide temporary, rent-free accommodation for individuals experiencing homelessness. Guests do not sign leases or occupancy agreements. Beyond offering safe, short-term refuge, shelters aim to reduce harms linked to unsheltered homelessness, such as exposure, violence, exploitation, and trauma, while connecting guests to housing and supportive services.

Measures and Performance Ranges

Housing-focused emergency shelters have three core housing-focused outcome performance measures.

1. Emergency shelter exits to permanent housing: This measure examines the housing status of individuals and families upon exiting shelter. The goal of this measure is to help individuals exit shelter to permanent housing, which may include rentals with or without a subsidy, homeownership, or family reunification.
 - a. Performance Ranges
 - i. Stretch: 45%
 - ii. Target: 40%
 - iii. Foundation: 35%
 - b. Citations
 - i. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2019). Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress: Part 2—Homelessness in the United States: Data Collection and Methods.
<https://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/2018-AHAR-Part-2.pdf>
 - ii. Henry, M., Mahathay, A., & Takashima, M. (2020, September 28). The 2018 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress: Part 2—Estimates of Homelessness in the United States. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research.
<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2018-AHAR-Part-2.pdf>
2. Average length of shelter stay before permanent housing placement: This measure looks at the average number of days participants spent in emergency shelter.
 - a. Performance Ranges
 - i. Stretch: 90 Days
 - ii. Target: 120 Days
 - iii. Foundation: 150 Days
 - b. Citations
 - i. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2019). Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress: Part 2—Homelessness in the United States: Data Collection and Methods.
<https://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/2018-AHAR-Part-2.pdf>

3. Exits to homelessness: This measure looks at returns to homelessness for individuals who exited emergency shelter to permanent housing, looking at returns in the context of one through three years.
 - a. Performance Ranges
 - i. Stretch: 30%
 - ii. Target: 35%
 - iii. Foundation: 40%
 - b. Citations
 - i. Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress: Part 2—Homelessness in the United States: Data Collection and Methods.
<https://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/2018-AHAR-Part-2.pdf>

Evidence-Based Strategies for Emergency Shelter

High-performing emergency shelter programs were housing-focused. Meaning, support services were offered with urgency to connect individuals and families to housing as soon as possible. These emergency shelter programs often utilize a variety of housing programs, including:

- Homelessness Diversion programs, which aim to resolve homelessness within the first two weeks of entering shelter
- Rapid Rehousing
- Permanent Supportive Housing

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, there are five key components to housing-focused emergency shelter.

1. Housing First Approach: Embrace the belief that permanent housing is the cornerstone of transformative change. Shelter settings should focus on helping people return to housing as soon as possible.
2. Safe and Appropriate Diversion: Utilize housing-focused problem-solving strategies to help individuals resolve their housing crises safely and appropriately.
3. Immediate Low-Barrier Access: Guarantee that individuals can access shelter services upon arrival, regardless of their circumstances, removing barriers to entry.

4. Housing-Focused Rapid Exit Services: Maximize available resources and swiftly connect individuals to permanent housing solutions.

Rapid Re-Housing

Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) is a short- to medium-term housing intervention that helps households quickly exit homelessness and secure permanent housing. Participants receive rental assistance and flexible, housing-focused services tailored to their needs. Using a progressive engagement model, programs start with minimal aid that can increase or decrease over time to support housing stability. While RRH typically aims to help households achieve independence within 24 months, time limits vary depending on funding and household circumstances.

Measures and Performance Ranges

Rapid Re-Housing programs have three core housing-focused outcome performance measures.

1. Rapid Re-Housing exits to permanent housing: This measure examines HMIS exits to permanent housing supported by Rapid Re-Housing assistance.
 - a. Performance Ranges
 - i. Stretch: 80%
 - ii. Target: 75%
 - iii. Foundation: 65%
 - b. Citations
 - i. Gubits, D., Spellman, B. E., Dunton, L., & Khadduri, J. (2018). Understanding rapid re-housing: Systematic review of rapid re-housing outcomes literature. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/Systematic-Review-of-Rapid-Re-housing.html>
 - ii. Finkel, M., Henry, M., Matthews, N., Spellman, B., & Culhane, D. (2016). Rapid Re-housing for Homeless Families Demonstration Programs Evaluation Report: Part II: Demonstration Findings—Outcomes Evaluation. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/RRHD-PartII-Outcomes.pdf>
2. Reduce the time program participants spend experiencing homelessness: This measure focuses on reducing the time Rapid Re-Housing participants spend in HMIS programs before exiting to permanent housing.
 - a. Performance Ranges

- i. Stretch: 30 days
 - ii. Target: 60 days
 - iii. Foundation: 90 days
 - b. Citations
 - i. National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2016). Rapid re-housing evaluation and improvement toolkit.
<https://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/rrh-evaluation-and-improvement-toolkit.pdf>
3. Returns to homelessness: This measure looks at returns to homelessness for individuals who exited an HMIS program to permanent housing utilizing Rapid Re-Housing assistance, looking at returns in the context of one through three years.
- a. Performance Ranges
 - i. Stretch: 10%
 - ii. Target: 13%
 - iii. Foundation: 15%
 - b. Citations
 - i. Finkel, M., Henry, M., Matthews, N., Spellman, B., & Culhane, D. (2016). Rapid Re-housing for Homeless Families Demonstration Programs Evaluation Report: Part II: Demonstration Findings—Outcomes Evaluation. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research.
<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/RRHD-PartII-Outcomes.pdf>
 - ii. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2023). Supplemental analysis to the national impact evaluation of the Rapid Re-Housing for Homeless Families demonstration program. Office of Policy Development and Research.
<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/Supplemental-Analysis-Rapid-Re-housing.html>
 - iii. Gubits, D., McCall, T., & Wood, M. (2017). Family Options Study: Effects on family living situation. Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research, 19(3), 357-376. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research.
<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/cityscpe/vol19num3/ch20.pdf>
 - iv. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (n.d.). HUD CoC system performance measures: Measure 1 - Length of stay [Data visualization]. Tableau Public.

<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/system.performance.measures.hud.public.data/viz/HUDCoCSystemPerformanceMeasures/M1LengthofStay>

Evidence-Based Strategies for Rapid Re-Housing

High-performing Rapid Re-Housing programs have standard programmatic components. These programs embrace Rapid Re-Housing assistance as a tool that prioritizes getting participants into permanent housing, regardless of situation or context, and meet clients where they are.

1. Permanent housing is the goal.
 - a. Rapid Re-Housing prioritizes getting participants into permanent housing and embraces the Housing First philosophy, which holds that housing is the foundation for stability and further engagement with various systems, including physical and behavioral healthcare.
2. Progressive engagement with participants
 - a. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH, 2021), progressive engagement is a person-centered approach to ending homelessness. This means programs meet people where they are and are flexible enough to address their immediate needs to keep them housed. These programs do not use a fixed subsidy level or narrow their scope to exclude immediate needs; instead, they embrace a philosophy of prioritizing whatever it takes to keep people housed (NAEH, 2021).
3. Prioritize building long-term, ongoing relationships with landlords
 - a. High-performing programs are often strategic and intentional in cultivating relationships with landlords.

Permanent Supportive Housing

Supportive Housing is a non-time-limited model that provides safe, affordable, community-based housing along with tenancy support and access to intensive supportive services. Programs typically follow best practices such as Housing First, Harm Reduction, and trauma-informed approaches. Effective Supportive Housing improves tenant well-being and reduces returns to homelessness, emergency room visits, hospital stays, psychiatric admissions, Medicaid costs, and justice system involvement. Housing can be single-site (project-based) or scattered-site (tenant-based), and units must meet standards set by Public Housing Authorities, including payment and Housing Quality Standards.

Measures and Performance Ranges

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) programs have three core housing-focused outcome performance measures.

1. Percent of successful placements in permanent supportive housing: This measure examines HMIS exits to permanent supportive housing.
 - a. **Performance Ranges**
 - i. Stretch: 95%
 - ii. Target: 85%
 - iii. Foundation: 80%
 - b. **Citations**
 - i. Padgett, D. K., Henwood, B. F., & Tsemberis, S. J. (2016). *Housing First: Ending homelessness, transforming systems, and changing lives*. Oxford University Press.
 - ii. Goering, P., Veldhuizen, S., Watson, A., Adair, C., Kopp, B., Latimer, E., Aubry, T., Nelson, G., MacNaughton, E., Streiner, D., Rabouin, D., Ly, A., & Powell, G. (2014). *National At Home/Chez Soi Final Report*. Mental Health Commission of Canada.
https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/wp-content/uploads/drupal/mhcc_at_home_report_national_cross-site_eng_2_0.pdf
2. Successful supportive housing placement for more than 24 months: This measure assesses the duration of participants' sustained placement in permanent supportive housing.
 - a. **Performance Ranges**
 - i. Stretch: 90%
 - ii. Target: 80%
 - iii. Foundation: 70%
 - b. **Citations**
 - i. Padgett, D. K., Henwood, B. F., & Tsemberis, S. J. (2016). *Housing First: Ending homelessness, transforming systems, and changing lives*. Oxford University Press.
 - ii. Palepu, A., Patterson, M. L., Moniruzzaman, A., Frankish, C. J., & Somers, J. (2013). Housing First improves residential stability in homeless adults with concurrent substance dependence and mental disorders. *American Journal of Public Health*, 103(S2), e30-e36. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2013.301628>

Evidence-Based Strategies for Permanent Supportive Housing

According to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), successful permanent supportive housing programs have standard programmatic components.

- Minimal requirements for programmatic engagement
 - Programs often assume that housing is a fundamental good and the first step toward addressing other physical and economic issues.
- Low barrier to entry
 - Along similar lines, permanent supportive housing should not have strict, lofty barriers to entry, particularly regarding income, rental history, criminal history, and other factors.
- Services should be multidisciplinary and prioritized, but voluntary
 - Adequate permanent supportive housing includes connections to various services (healthcare, behavioral healthcare, dental care, substance use therapy, etc.), and engagement should be readily available and regularly offered. However, evidence shows that making them mandatory leads to worse outcomes.

Transitional Housing

Transitional Housing provides temporary housing and tailored supportive services to households experiencing homelessness who face barriers to housing stability. It often serves as an intermediate step between Emergency Shelter and permanent housing. Transitional Housing is typically longer-term, more service-intensive, and more private than Emergency Shelters, but remains time-limited, usually between three months and three years. Programs are generally single-site, with supportive services integrated into property management. Participants have a signed lease, sublease, or occupancy agreement with a minimum one-month term, automatic renewal unless notice is given, and a maximum term set by the program or funding source.

Measures and Performance Ranges

Transitional housing programs have two core housing-focused outcome performance measures.

1. Successful exits from transitional housing to permanent housing: This measure looks at HMIS transitional housing exits to permanent housing.
 - a. Performance Ranges
 - i. Stretch: 90%
 - ii. Target: 85%
 - iii. Foundation: 80%

- b. Citations
 - i. Burt, M. R. (2010, March). Life after transitional housing for homeless families. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research.
<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/pdf/lifeaftertransition.pdf>
 - ii. Gubits, D., Shinn, M., Wood, M., Brown, S. R., Dastrup, S. R., & Bell, S. H. (2016). Family Options Study: 3-year impacts of housing and services interventions for homeless families. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research.
<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/Family-Options-Study-Full-Report.pdf>
- 2. Average length of stay in transitional housing: This measure examines participants' average length of stay in transitional housing before exiting to permanent housing.
 - a. Performance Ranges
 - i. Stretch: 12 months
 - ii. Target: 24 months
 - iii. Foundation: 36 months
 - b. Citations
 - i. Gubits, D., Shinn, M., Wood, M., Brown, S. R., Dastrup, S. R., & Bell, S. H. (2016). Family Options Study: 3-year impacts of housing and services interventions for homeless families. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research.
<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/Family-Options-Study-Full-Report.pdf>

Evidence-Based Strategies for Transitional Housing

Housing-focused transitional housing programs with strong outcomes often prioritize the following programmatic components.

- Permanent housing navigation is a priority
 - While transition housing provides a longer runway, active housing navigation should start with an intake, in-depth assessment, and explicit next steps to secure permanent housing.
- Flexible length of stay

- While guidelines for length of stay can be helpful, they should be adapted to clients' needs, with existing or permanent housing as the top priority.
- Supportive services should be holistic
 - Supportive services should be geared toward long-term wellness factors, including employment and income, rather than behavioral and physical health.

Bridge Housing

Bridge Housing provides temporary housing for individuals who have been matched with a permanent housing opportunity, allowing them to safely reside while finalizing the logistics for moving in. Housing opportunities may include tenant-based or project-based vouchers, Rapid Re-Housing, and other permanent housing resources. Bridge Housing combines access to housing and supportive services to promote participant choice and facilitate a rapid transition to permanent housing. This approach is particularly important for individuals with complex barriers to housing stability or those who have struggled to maintain housing in the past.

Measures and Performance Ranges

Bridge housing programs have one core housing-focused outcome performance measure.

1. Successful exits to permanent housing: This measure looks at successful transitions from bridge housing to permanent housing.
 - a. Performance Ranges
 - i. Stretch: 100%
 - ii. Target: 95%
 - iii. Foundation: 90%
 - b. Citations
 - i. Zerger, S., Francombe Pridham, K., Jeyaratnam, J., Connelly, J., Hwang, S., O'Campo, P., & Stergiopoulos, V. (2014). The role and meaning of interim housing in housing first programs for people experiencing homelessness and mental illness. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 84(4), 431-437.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/h0099842>

Eviction Prevention - Legal

Eviction and Homelessness Prevention programs provide financial assistance and supportive or legal services to help households avoid eviction, shelter entry, or homelessness.

There are three primary mechanisms for preventing eviction.

1. Pre-proceedings cases dismissed or settled: This measure looks at pre-proceedings legal mediation interventions for participants facing eviction. Successful outcomes are defined as having cases dismissed or settled.
 - a. Performance Ranges
 - i. Stretch: 70%
 - ii. Target: 60%
 - iii. Foundation: 50%
 - b. Citations
 - i. National Low Income Housing Coalition. (2022, October 31). Research demonstrates importance of holding tenant-landlord mediation prior to eviction litigation. <https://nlihc.org/resource/research-demonstrates-importance-holding-tenant-landlord-mediation-prior-eviction>
 - ii. Parrish, D. P. (2024, August 15). Sustaining eviction mediation efforts “post pandemic”: Out of the courtroom and into public health? Harvard Negotiation & Mediation Clinical Program. <https://hnmcp.law.harvard.edu/hnmcp/opeds-articles/sustaining-eviction-mediation-efforts-post-pandemic-out-of-the-courtroom-and-into-public-health/>
 - iii. Tokarz, K., Stragand, S. H., Geigerman, M., & Smith, W. (2020). Addressing the eviction crisis and housing instability through mediation. Washington University Journal of Law & Policy, 63, 243-272. https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2170&context=law_journal_law_policy
2. Percent of cases with positive outcomes (no eviction on their record or received an extended timeline to vacate): This measure looks at cases/programs where renters had legal representation and received a positive outcome. A positive result is defined as staying in their housing, avoiding an eviction on their record, or receiving an extended timeline to vacate the property.
 - a. Performance Ranges
 - i. Stretch: 80%
 - ii. Target: 70%
 - iii. Foundation: 60%

- b. Citations
 - i. National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel. (n.d.). Organizing around right to counsel. Retrieved April 11, 2025, from https://civilrighttocounsel.org/resources/organizing_around_right_to_counsel/
 - ii. Cassidy, M. T., & Currie, J. (2022, July). The effects of legal representation on tenant outcomes in housing court: Evidence from New York City's Universal Access program (NBER Working Paper No. 29836). National Bureau of Economic Research. https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w29836/w29836.pdf
 - iii. Schultheis, H., & Rooney, C. (2019, October 2). A right to counsel is a right to a fighting chance. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/right-counsel-right-fighting-chance/>
- 3. Percent of cases where housing was maintained: This measure specifically examines the number of cases in which participants remained in housing after receiving legal representation.
 - a. Performance Ranges
 - i. Stretch: 75%
 - ii. Target: 65%
 - iii. Foundation: 50%
 - b. Citations
 - i. National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel. (n.d.). Organizing around right to counsel. Retrieved April 11, 2025, from https://civilrighttocounsel.org/resources/organizing_around_right_to_counsel/
 - ii. Office of Civil Justice, Universal Access to Legal Services: A Report on Year Five of Implementation in New York City, New York City Department of Social Services (2022), https://www.nyc.gov/assets/hra/downloads/pdf/services/civiljustice/OCJ_UA_Annual_Report_2022.pdf.

A complementary tool across both approaches is emergency rental assistance (ERA). Evidence suggests that ERA can increase the likelihood that participants can pay rent; however, its impact on preventing homelessness is less clearly established. Many mediation and legal representation programs use ERA strategically as part of a broader intervention. When paired with services such as mediation, case management, or legal support, ERA is more likely to contribute to positive housing stability outcomes.