

MACCH Street Outreach Policy and Procedures 2019

Brief Description

Goal(s): The Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless (MACCH) Street Outreach Team works collectively to find and assist individuals who are unsheltered (have a primary residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation.) The MACCH Street Outreach team connects individuals to emergency shelter, housing and long-term services as well as mainstream resources. The team will follow individuals until they are connected to shelter/housing and no longer living in a place not meant for human habitation.

Objective: Assist unsheltered individuals in accessing shelter, appropriate housing and/or supportive services as identified by client and outreach team member.

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Services Provided</u>
Charles Drew Health Center(CDHC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical case management • Health Advocacy • Referrals to Housing • Connection to SOAR
Community Alliance (CA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Management • Housing referrals • Mental Health Care • Connection to SOAR • Employment services
Heartland Family Service (HFS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals to Housing • Referrals to Supportive Services • Case Management
Nebraska AIDS Project (NAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for HIV/STD healthcare • Case Management
New Visions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection to emergency shelter for men • Connection to treatment for men
Siena/Francis House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection to emergency shelter for men & women • Substance abuse treatment program
Stephen Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection to emergency shelter for men, women & families

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inpatient & outpatient substance abuse treatment programs
Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help with mainstream resources • Birth Certificate & ID help • Employment resources
Veterans Affairs (VA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support services for veterans • Housing referrals for veterans
Visiting Nurse Association (VNA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of health needs • Minor medical attention • Referrals to healthcare clinics
Women's Center for Advancement (WCA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services for survivors of DV, Sexual Assault/Trafficking • Women's clothing closet • Case Management/Advocacy
Youth Emergency Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals to Housing for youth • Referrals to Supportive Services for youth

Location of Services

MACCH's coverage area includes Douglas and Sarpy Counties in Nebraska and Pottawattamie County in Iowa. Outreach is conducted at various community locations with high a concentration of the unsheltered population, including but not limited to:

- Bridges, riverbeds, wooded encampments, truck stops, public library branches, free meal sites, parks/trails, abandoned buildings, and others.

Shifts and Working Hours

The Omaha and Council Bluffs Street Outreach team goes out at varying times, ever day of the week. If clients have a phone they will be contacted beforehand to coordinate. If weather necessitates, the team leaves the option open to go out on the weekends to help ensure safety.

MACCH Street Outreach Team members are limited in their flexibility to respond to immediate Outreach needs due to other responsibilities at their respective agencies. Their ability to assist outside of designated outreach shifts are at the discretion of their management based on current workload and restricted by business hours.

Direct Services Provided

Outreach services link individuals with needed services and housing options, maintaining flexibility, in order to respond to the unique needs of homeless individuals. Outreach services consist of activities to engage persons for the purpose of providing immediate support and intervention, as well as identifying potential program participants for supportive housing.

Component activities and services consist of:

-Initial assessment; crisis counseling; addressing urgent needs, such as providing meals, blankets, clothes, or toiletries; actively connecting and providing individuals with information and referrals to homeless and mainstream resources; publicizing the availability of the housing and/or services provided within the geographic area covered by the Continuum of Care.

Outreach workers provide, either directly or through referral, an array of services that meet basic needs and help integrate/re-integrate clients into the community.

Services may include:

Basic Needs

- Hygiene products (toothbrushes, socks, soap, etc.)
- Small snacks and water
- Blankets and Cold weather clothing (hats, gloves, coats available during office hours)
- Condoms, Safer Injection Supplies, health information
- Sheltering
- Seasonal supplies when available (sunscreen, bug spray, hand warmers, etc.)

Housing Assistance

All clients are assessed and, based upon their specific needs, are provided resources/referrals to any housing options they may qualify for, both in and out of the CoC. If a client is referred to a CoC housing program, outreach workers make all efforts to facilitate a connection to that provider, and assist, as needed throughout the housing process.

Case Management

- Housing First case management
- Housing Referrals
- Benefits enrollment (mainstream resources, connection to SOAR, etc.)
- Navigation of courts
- ID/Birth Certificate assistance
- Health referrals
- Treatment referrals
- Employment referrals
- Transportation to appointments
- Family Reunification
- Crisis Intervention
- Advocacy (hospitals, community, law enforcement, etc.)

Indirect Services

Beyond the outputs above MACCH Street Outreach workers often are the only people that individuals in crisis turn to when an emergency or need arises. MACCH Street Outreach provides trust and safety to those on the streets by being consistent, reliable, and familiar faces in individuals' lives. They leverage support and provide referrals to behavioral and physical health services, as well as community relations.

Behavioral Health

The MACCH Street Outreach often encounters individuals in crisis. Outreach workers assess the crisis for lethality, including suicidal and homicidal risk. Outreach responds depending on the perceived severity of the crisis:

- Assess for safety and try to resolve the crisis onsite,
- Complete appropriate documentation
- If necessary call 9-1-1 and request a Crisis Intervention Trained (CIT) Officer
- Complete Outreach Safety Plan with individual if appropriate [\(See attached: client safety plan\)](#)

Physical Health

Charles Drew Health Center (CDHC) Homeless Clinics offers a health clinic to meet the primary health care needs for the area homeless population. CDHC services offered include primary health, acute care, women's Health, medication management, behavioral health and dental care referrals. In addition to meeting basic health care needs CDHC offers the CHAP program. This program serves to connect those experiencing homelessness with a Community Health Worker to assist in meeting their health care goals as well as assistance completing applications and referrals to additional community based resources. Emergency medical care is primarily provided by The Nebraska Medical Center and Catholic Health Initiative, both emergency departments and social work staff from inpatient units can coordinate follow-up care with CDHC prior to discharge.

Council Bluffs Street Outreach Specialists work in partnership with All Care Community Health Center staff to ensure that individuals with an identified physical or behavioral health need are connected to medical staff. Documentation of homeless status is provided, as needed, to clinic staff by Outreach Staff.

Legal

Outreach Workers assist individuals in navigating the legal system, to include but not limited to:

- Legal Aid Clinic referrals
- Protection Order information/assistance/referrals
- Transportation to sheriff office to register for sex offense
- Advocacy with law enforcement
- Fair Housing information/referrals
- In-reach to jails
- Coordinate with probation/diversion services
- Coordination with Adult Protective Services, Child Protective Services (Juvenile Court), and Department of Health and Human Services

Safety Guidelines

Staff completing work on behalf of MACCH Street Outreach are expected to evaluate each situation for safety, this would include transporting clients. Street outreach to homeless camps should always be completed with at least one other person. The MACCH Outreach Team has established safety protocols for staff when conducting outreach in order to ensure the safety of both outreach workers and clients.

(See attached: safety tips for outreach staff and client safety plan)

Client Safety Plan

The client safety plan is designed to be used when outreach teams encounter individuals who appear to be showing signs of distress. The plan addresses warning signs for an impending crisis, coping strategies, identifying helping professionals or agencies that can assist, and locations for medical help. Additionally, The Suicide Prevention Hotline number is located on the plan.

Assessment and Engagement

Outreach is the process of bringing individuals into treatment who do not access traditional services. Effective Outreach utilizes strategies aimed at engaging individuals into the needed array of services, including identification of individuals in need, screening, development of rapport, offering support while assisting with immediate and basic needs, and referral to appropriate resources. Outreach workers work to build trust with homeless individuals and assess their immediate health and safety needs. Outreach results in increased access to and utilization of community services by individuals who are homeless.

Outreach may include methods such as distribution of flyers and other written information, public service announcements, and other indirect methods.

Screening

Outreach teams use the Coordinated Entry Assessment tool, to screen individuals at the first contact, if possible. The tool helps triage, explore divertible opportunities, as well as assess for CoC housing programs. It is a survey that anyone could complete, to help navigate clients through their homelessness.

Informed Consent & Release of Information for Shared Data

Client Information is entered into the local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) a database called the Nebraska Management Information System (NMIS) also referred to as Service Point. HMIS is used by many service providing agencies in the metro area which allows client information to be shared in order to improve service delivery to clients. Signed Releases of Information (ROI) are valid for one year from the date signed, unless the client chooses to revoke sooner. Client Personally Identifiable Information (PPI) can be omitted, if requested.

Intake/Entry

For outreach programs, clients are entered into the MACCH Interagency Street Outreach project on the date of first contact with the client. The project entry date indicates a client is now being assisted by the project, and serves as on-going documentation of their homelessness, outside the shelter system.

This information is regularly monitored/updated to ensure the best possible accuracy of data. Clients remain with an open entry in the project for as long as they remain engaged, and until a permanent exit

from homelessness is obtained. Clients are given 60 days of inactivity with the project before being closed out, so as to ensure all possible attempts at continued engagement.

[Client Log Sheet](#)

Outreach tracks information on individuals served during each outing. The client log sheet tracks client names, what material goods were provided (food, water, blankets, etc.), and any referrals made (housing, medical, substance abuse, and mental health services). Additionally, this form is used to document the locations and camps where clients were served.

Outreach Contacts

The number of contacts with homeless persons by outreach is recorded to provide information on the number of contacts required to engage the client. This information is collected at project entry, project exit and each contact between entry and exit on all adults. The date and location of each contact with a client should be recorded. A contact is defined as an interaction between a worker and a client. Contacts may range from simple a verbal conversation between the street outreach worker and the client about the client's well-being or needs or may be a referral to service. Contact with each client open in the project is attempted monthly, at a minimum.

[Trainings](#)

MACCH Outreach Team Leaders will conduct trainings for any new members of the team. To sign up for a new member training, contact Gary Hankins at 402-740-1542. New team members will also review the manual, watch a video, and review a Power Point at the training. After this is completed they will shadow outreach prior to being added to the monthly schedule. Training thereafter consists of an annual review that occurs at MACCH Street Outreach meetings.

Client Safety Plan

Step 1: Warning signs (thoughts, images, mood, situation, behavior) that a crisis may be developing:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Step 2: Coping strategies – Things I can do to take my mind off my problems. (Relaxation technique, physical activity):

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Step 3: People and social settings that provide distraction/help me calm down:

- 1. Name _____
Phone _____
- 2. Name _____
Phone _____
- 3. Name _____
Phone _____

Step 4: Professionals or agencies I can contact during a crisis:

- 1. Clinician Name/Agency _____
Phone _____
- 2. Clinician Name/Agency _____
Phone _____

Step 5: Where I can go for emergency medical care:

Local Urgent Care _____
Address _____
Phone _____

Step 6: What can I do to make the environment safe:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Suicide Prevention Hotline Phone: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

The one thing that is most important to me and worth living for is:

Safety Tips for Outreach Team Members

1. Your supervisor needs to know when you are on outreach.
2. Keep your team lead(s) informed of any unusual developments.
3. Outreach is conducted in two-person teams or more. No MACCH team member should conduct outreach activities alone.
4. Learn as much as possible about the situation before setting out to do outreach and avoid dangerous areas.
5. The only people approved to enter into abandoned buildings without the presence of police or city officials are the team members designated for abandoned building outreach. They are to review the Outreach Policies for Abandoned Buildings (separate document).
6. Introduce yourself and inform people of what you are doing and why. Always ask for permission before entering an encampment.
7. If a team member is engaging with a client, one of the other team members should be alert and watching the surrounding area for safety.
8. If at all possible, do not carry valuables or other personal possessions such as jewelry, large amounts of money, laptops, etc.
9. Always carry business cards and identification with you.
10. Do not linger with a person who you know is holding illicit drugs.
11. Do not accept or hold any type of controlled substance.
12. Do not accept gifts, food or buy any merchandise from clients.
13. Do not give or lend money to clients.
14. Do not stand and argue with someone who does not agree with what you are doing.
15. Do not be critical of your team members or other agencies in public while conducting outreach; always present yourselves as a team.
16. Maintain confidentiality with all clients you meet.
17. Dress for the weather. Wear comfortable clothes and shoes, and do not overdress. Team members need to be wearing athletic shoes or boots, no sandals are to be worn. It is also important to wear pants and shirts with sleeves whenever possible.
18. Tell clients approximately when you will be back and where you can be reached.
Provide clients with a business card and/or MACCH Outreach flyer.
19. In case of an emergency, call or have another person call 911.
20. Every outreach member must have an active and working phone with them during Outreach.

Critical Incident Reporting Form

Date of Critical Incident: _____

Time of Critical Incident: _____

Location of Incident: _____

Staff Person Involved: _____

Description of Incident:

Immediate Action:

Follow-Up Action taken:

Street Outreach Staff: _____

Date _____

Street Outreach Coordinator: _____

Date _____

Consent to Participate

I have a strong understanding of how the program functions and the activities that I am agreeing to participate in as part of the program. _____ **(initials)**

I acknowledge that I have read the MACCH Street Outreach Procedures and completed the required trainings (power point, videos, Coordinated Entry). _____ **(initials)**

MACCH Street Outreach Member Date

MACCH Street Outreach Date
Co-Lead Witness

MACCH Street Outreach Member Emergency Contact Sheet

Member Name: _____

Member Birth Date: _____

Known Medical Conditions: _____

Known Allergies: _____

Emergency Contact Name and phone number: _____