

## **POLICING ALTERNATIVES**

*This document was compiled by Haley Spigner and Lindsey Krinks with Open Table Nashville*

### **Houston, TX: Homeless Outreach Team (HOT)**

<http://www.houstoncit.org/test/>

- History: The Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) started as a pilot program in January 2011. It was made a permanent program in the department after a very successful six-month pilot. Sergeant Stephen Wick, the team's current supervisor, developed and implemented the program.
- Program Description: HOT is comprised of one sergeant, two officers, and one mental health professional from The Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD. The team helps the homeless with the following: Housing, Social Security cards, Passports, Birth certificates, Shelter referrals, Medical equipment, Employment, Bus fare, Medical care, Mental health treatment.
- Collaboration: The team works with several organizations. The following are a few: SEARCH Homeless Services, Lord of the Streets, Bread of Life, Palmer Way Station, Star of Hope, Salvation Army, Healthcare for the Homeless, US Vets, DeGeorge Veterans Housing, Main Street Ministries, Goodwill
- Goal: To obtain housing for the chronic homeless.
- See article and video Truly good guys: HPD unit brings hope to the homeless:  
<http://cohemployeenews.com/articles-savvy/featured-savvy/item/1392-truly-good-guys-hpd-unit-brings-hope-to-homeless>

### **Houston, TX: Mental Health Division**

<http://www.houstoncit.org/>

- "It is an honor serving as the commander of the department's first-ever Mental Health Division. The MHD is a unique division and a prime example of community policing. The success of a police department is commensurate to the extent to which it works with the community to identify and solve problems. The success of the MHD is due in large part to the collaboration that exists between the Houston Police Department, mental health professionals in Houston/Harris County, and advocacy groups, such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Working with its community partners, Houston has developed a division overseeing a multi-faceted strategy for responding to individuals in serious mental health crises that is the leader in the state and one of the national models. Responding to individuals in serious mental health crises is a significant issue facing law enforcement today. Elevating the Mental Health Unit to a division underscores the Houston Police Department's commitment to responding to individuals with mental illness as professionally, safely, and humanely as possible. To our knowledge, Houston is the only police department in the nation to have a Mental Health Division and the resultant manpower and resources a division encompasses." - Wendy Baimbridge, Captain, Mental Health Division

### **Napa, CA: Homeless Outreach Department**

<http://www.napapolice.com/homeless-outreach.html>

- "Napa PD Outreach works to build a rapport with clients while introducing them to the many services available here in Napa County. We work as advocates, case managers and housing counselors to help our clients find the services that will lead to long term stable housing. This effort strengthens the community by giving those in need a hand up while working to reduce non-emergency calls to vital law enforcement and fire services in Napa County."

### **Pasadena, CA: Homeless Outreach & Psychiatric Evaluation (HOPE) Team**

<http://www.ci.pasadena.ca.us/police/HOPE/>

- Started 2002
- Partners with Department of Mental Health
- Police officer-civilian clinician team-approach
- HOPE Team Officers are specially trained in crisis communications, Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA), Suicide-Homicide Bomber Terrorist response, and are graduates of Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training Academies throughout the state
- “Homeless Outreach-Psychiatric Evaluation (HOPE) team is to provide effective, collaborative, and compassionate mental health and law enforcement emergency response to those in need of mental health, housing, and related social services. The HOPE Team will utilize proven, creative, and innovative methods of street-level, residential, commercial, and public mental health crisis response, while entering into mission-oriented, problem-solving partnerships with mental health and social service provider agencies.”
- “A partnership with the Pasadena Police Department and the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health to provide those in need with mental health services and reducing the duties of patrol officers to arrest. Each team consists of a police officer and licensed clinician (officers may or may not be in uniform and teams respond to calls in unmarked vehicles). They provide referrals and services as part of a long-term approach to assist the homeless, preventing unnecessary incarceration or hospitalization of the homeless. The minimum training for H.O.P.E. officers includes 40 hours post “Crisis Intervention” training, 40 hours „Crisis Negotiation“ training, 8 hour post class on “Effective Enforcement Contacts with the Homeless or Mentally Ill,” “Drug and Alcohol Recognition“ class, and monthly, quarterly, and annual update training.”

### **Colorado Springs, CO: Homeless Outreach Team**

<http://www.calea.org/calea-update-magazine/issue-107/colorado-springs-police-department-hot-program-providing-outreach->

- “In June 2009...assigned officers to survey homeless individuals, find out why that particular person was on the streets, and what they needed to get off the streets.”
- The H.O.T. began to realize small successes. It started matching individuals with providers who could best meet an individual’s needs. They made appointments for and even provided transportation to doctors or housing appointments to assist some off the streets
- “...began working on an ordinance that would prohibit camping on public lands...If there was not sufficient housing available, no enforcement would take place”

### **San Diego, CA: Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT)**

<https://211sandiego.communityos.org/zf/profile/service/id/654206>

- “City police officers team with a County social worker and a Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT) clinician to assess the problems of homeless persons and identify how to help them from a range of solutions. One H.O.T team focuses on downtown and another on the beach area. H.O.T provides field assessments for eligibility to public entitlements, crisis intervention, comprehensive case management, drug/alcohol rehabilitation placement, and psychiatric/medical treatment placement.”

### **Milwaukee, WI: Homeless Outreach Team**

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/milwaukee/specially-trained-milwaukee-officers-work-to-help-homeless-b99167574z1-237110131.html>

- Six officers on the department's Homeless Outreach Team
- A part-time assignment added to regular duties
- The team will expand next year, with 30 additional officers receiving training in January and taking the concept citywide.
- Outreach officers carry basic supplies
- Build relationships with homeless people and the agencies that serve them
- Lt. Karen Dubis, who created the team with Capt. Stephen Basting in 2010.
- Nearly all officers have crisis intervention training
- A 40-hour course that teaches officers to recognize signs of mental illness and to interact with those individuals.
- It was after participating in a national Problem-Oriented Policing Conference that Dubis brought back new ideas to address the city's homeless population.

### **THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES WERE FOUND AT THIS LINK AND COPIED VERBATIM:**

[http://www.egovlink.com/public\\_documents300/sarasota/published\\_documents/Police%20Advisory%20Panel/Public%20Documents%20Folder/Homelessness%20Documents/PoliceHomelessOutreachPrograms1.pdf](http://www.egovlink.com/public_documents300/sarasota/published_documents/Police%20Advisory%20Panel/Public%20Documents%20Folder/Homelessness%20Documents/PoliceHomelessOutreachPrograms1.pdf)

### **Albuquerque, NM Police Department: Homeless Strategic Outreach**

The HSO is composed of police officers, health care outreach workers, job counselors from Goodwill Industries, and a psychiatrist. The team goes out for two hours at a time, three times a week to areas in the city with large concentrations of homeless people. The team discusses with the homeless to hopefully discover an effective means to help them. Another aspect of HSO is the Crisis Outreach and Support Team (COAST) which is a 24-hour on-call civilian staffed support of the APD. (Homeless Court, Drug and Mental Health Courts, Family Advocacy Courts)

### **Reno, NV: Homeless Evaluation Liaison Program (H.E.L.P.)**

H.E.L.P. was created to serve as an alternative to traditional policing methods. The overall goal of the program is to reunite homeless population with family and friends so that they have support to help them re-establish their lives. The program is stationed in the Greyhound Bus terminal where two police officers patrol the area. After intensive interviews, some are referred to local services such as shelters, rehabilitation programs, or job referrals. The Reno Police Department implemented this program to assist homeless or potential homeless persons in reconnecting to family and or critical support system. H.E.L.P. recently received a grant to purchase bus tickets for individuals wanting a fresh start or wanting to return home. The goal of the program is not to send anyone in a present homeless situation to another community to suffer the same condition; it hopes to reconnect people with their support systems.

### **Washington, DC: Homeless Outreach Team (HOT)**

The team consists of one sergeant and six officers and select volunteers from the Second District with essential skills required for this area of work. The team was responsible for enforcing "quality-of-life" crimes and handling issues that dealt with the homeless population. These crimes in-

clude aggressive panhandling, drinking in public, possession of open containers of alcohol and urinating in public. Mental health workers and doctors provided additional training and resources for the HOT unit.

### **Ft. Lauderdale, FL: Police Homeless Outreach Team**

The Police Homeless Outreach Team is composed of a police officer and a volunteer from the Broward Coalition for the Homeless who seek to build relationships and bonds with the homeless in hopes of informing the homeless of various resources and assistance that is available to help them become self-sufficient again. The volunteer is a formerly homeless person which allows the volunteer to identify with the struggles many face now but also to offer personal anecdotes. The police officer wears the uniform because it conveys authority and safety once the relationships are established. Also, the homeless were more receptive of this approach as opposed to the officer and volunteer without any visible identification. In addition to these program, the Police Department hopes to break the "cycle of homelessness" once individuals are arrested for breaking crimes are discharged so they are not simply released to the streets again. When an individual is booked, police ask certain questions. if the police believe that the person is homeless, then they require him/her to fill out a homeless referral form which goes to the Broward County Social Service Outreach Team. The homeless are contacted by social workers with the goal of placement in appropriate social service upon release from jail.

### **Clearwater, FL: Clearwater Homeless Intervention Project (CHIP)**

The CHIP program has a community policing substation which is housed in the shelter and which also serves as home to the Clearwater Police Department's Downtown Bicycle Team. In line with Clearwater's tradition of proactive community policing, officers on bicycles are patrolling the downtown area and getting to know the residents, business owners, and also the homeless population. The Bike Team is taking a very active role in referring clients to CHIP, as well as enforcing the "Rules of Conduct" at the shelter. The shelter provides homeless citizens with opportunities to become self sufficient as well as a day service that serves single individuals, giving them somewhere to stay during the day hours.

### **New Orleans, LA: Homeless Assistance Collaborative**

This initiative began in the fall of 2004 to effectively handle homeless persons and to establish an alternative to arrest for minor offenses. They collaborate with UNITY to move homeless people into permanent housing. Officers are trained to call for a marked NOPD "mobile assistance unit" when approaching a homeless person. The unity helped homeless people with their immediate concerns and provided referrals and assistance to a shelter, hospital, or substance abuse program.

### **Santa Monica, CA: Homeless Liaison Program (H.L.P)**

The H.L.P was established as a partnership between law enforcement and homeless service providers to focus attention on the law enforcement and assistance problems concerning the homeless. The program composed of six-officer unit aims to provide the homeless population with becoming self-sufficient again and improving the quality of life for the residents, property, and business owners in the community. The officers are trained to handle non-emergency situations and linked with a variety of outreach services

### **San Francisco, CA: Operation Outreach**

Operation Outreach addresses the quality of life for homeless individuals. It consists of a team of 32 officers whose duties include contact homeless individuals and connecting them with people in the appropriate city social services as well as enforcing infractions and misdemeanors. The police officers work in partnership with a several agencies to address the issue of homelessness in San Francisco.

### **Los Angeles County (West Hollywood), CA: Operation Outreach**

Operation Outreach is composed of social workers from West Hollywood Homeless Organization (WHHO), City Environmental Services staff, “shopping cart retrieval service,” and police deputies. The deputies are present to enforce the law and provide an authoritative presence however, if there is no crime then individuals are informed of outreach services by social workers (if desired, the deputy will escort the homeless individual to the shelter).

### **Laguna Beach, CA: Community Outreach Officer**

The Laguna Beach Police Department is partnering with community services to find solutions to community problems including homelessness. The department has created the position of Community Outreach Officer in conjunction with the Laguna Beach City Council to directly respond to homeless-related issues in the community. The duties of the officer include working with social service agencies in the area to help homeless individuals get help in shelters. The overarching goals of the new position focus on improving the quality of life for everyone in the community.

### **Redding, CA: Homeless Outreach and Assistance Program**

The Redding Police Department began this program in response to concern of a growing homeless population and a lack of services available to those individuals. The team consists of a doctor, nurse, psychologist, mental health case worker, and a services coordinator from the local Rescue Mission. The team reached out to people suffering from homelessness providing them with medical exams and treatment as well as psychological exams and treatment. The team also referred homeless individuals to services in the area to assist them and the team provided transportation to various appointments and to food and clothing warehouses.

### **San Mateo, CA: Homeless Outreach Team**

HOT consists of members of the San Mateo County Human Services agency, San Mateo Police Department, and non-profit organizations. The team began under San Mateo initiative to rid the area of homelessness by 2015 by assisting homeless individuals secure long-term housing. The program focuses on housing first standard of assistance, under the notion that people are more likely to get clean and sober if they have steady shelter. HOT is also working to help people find supportive housing, such as shelters.

### **Ramsey County, MN: The Police-Homelessness Outreach Program**

The St. Paul Police Department and South Metro Human Services developed a liaison and a relationship through the P-HOP worker. The P-HOP worker and police officers work together to respond effectively to situations involving homeless persons. The PHOP worker is stationed in a police sub-station to work closely with law enforcement to improve the outcomes for individuals with multiple police encounters. This collaboration involved intense training between South Met-

ro Human Services and the police officers. The initiative helps to provide secure treatment and housing opportunities for individuals who are victims of chronic homelessness as well as to enhance police and community dialogue and awareness of homeless issues through “police-provider forums” and monthly breakfast meetings between police officers and other members of the criminal justice system. The team also diligently works with landlords to improve housing access. It has also served to improve the fields of communication between the police and the homeless.

#### **Boston, MA: Area A1 Homeless Task Force**

A team of Boston police officers meet with homeless advocates and service providers to determine productive and effective ways to work with the homeless. The task force works in collaboration with other organizations to find ways to decriminalize law enforcement interventions while building stronger foundational relationships with the homeless and other homeless outreach organizations. The Homeless Task Force hopes to prevent death and injury to homeless people by referring them to valuable resources in the surrounding area.

#### **Atlanta, GA: Homeless Outreach and Proactive Enforcement (H.O.P.E. Program)**

The program targeted towards the high levels of homeless individuals at the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. The officers assigned to the Airport precinct and selected to be H.O.P.E. program liaisons receive training through the crisis intervention training from licensed psychologists. The officers are equipped with ways to assist homeless people and are trained to become a referral system to various local social service agencies.

#### **Fayetteville, NC: Homeless Project Officer**

This officer is responsible for the identification and classification of homeless persons. The officer serves as a resource to homeless people in the area assisting them with identification, meals, shelters, and other basic necessities. In addition to these duties, the officer also has to initiate and maintain trespass agreements for vacant homes, lots and businesses after operating hours to reduce criminal activities in the area.

#### **Richmond, VA: Homeless Outreach Partnership Enforcement (HOPE) Unit**

The duties of this unit include policing, serving, and protecting the homeless population in the Richmond area. The unit consists of a sergeant, three officers, and City Department of Social Services social work specialist dedicated to homeless services. The unit patrols areas usually populated by homeless individuals and assisting these people by providing them with referrals for homeless services.

#### **Birmingham, AL: Street Outreach Program (STOP)**

This initiative is funded by HUD and provides two CDM social workers to work with the City Action Partnership, which is Birmingham’s Business Improvement District.