The Top 10 Reasons to Start a Police Homeless Outreach Team (and How)

Officer Daniel McDonald, MPA
Tampa (FL) Police Department
Officer Daniel McDonald, MPA
Tampa Police Department
Tampa, Florida

• 26 years of law enforcement and corrections experience
• Founded the TPD Homeless Initiative and Crisis Intervention Team (CIT)
• Recipient of several awards including:
  – Tampa Police Department Officer of the Month, 2013
  – Commendation, Tampa (FL) City Council, 2013
  – Commendation, Hillsborough County (FL) Commission, 2016
Your Presenter

Officer Daniel McDonald, MPA
Tampa Police Department
Tampa, Florida

• Media coverage from People Magazine, Today Show, Inside Edition, BBC, Melbourne (Australia) Herald Sun and Sunrise on Seven (Australia)

• Presenter at:
  – International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Conference, Orlando, FL, 2018
  – CIT International Conference (Chicago 2016; Kansas City 2018)
  – Housing & Ideas Exchange (#HIE2017), Manchester, England
About Today’s Presentation

• Have you considered a police Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) but don’t know where to start? We’ll cover:

  – The top 10 reasons why they are a great idea
  – How you can get started
  – Legal and political issues
  – Q&A / contact information
  – Door prize
About Today’s Presentation

• You cannot arrest away the problem

• You won’t attract homelessness – It’s already here

• It’s time for a plan – one that works!
The Iceberg Effect

Chronic Homeless 15-20%

Non-Chronic Homeless 80-85%
The Homeless Circle of Life

- Homelessness
- Mental Illness
- Jail
- Addictions
- Socioeconomic Variables
“You Don’t Have to Live Like This”

Homeless Theatre
Source: YouTube
“You Don’t Have to Live Like This”
“You Don’t Have to Live Like This”
The Top 10 Reasons to Start a Police Homeless Outreach Team
You Can No Longer ‘Stay in Your Lane’
You Can No Longer ‘Stay in Your Lane’

• Are you ignoring your homeless issues, waiting for them to disappear?

• Pressure from your bosses or elected officials?

• How did homelessness become a police problem?
You Can No Longer ‘Stay in Your Lane’

• Social Conflict Theory addresses the relationship between law enforcement and social services

• Roles are different until they agree to a common goal of helping the homeless

Source: Sgt. Ed Rafailovitc, BSO
You Can No Longer ‘Stay in Your Lane’

Does Your Homelessness Policy Look Like This?
You Can No Longer ‘Stay in Your Lane’

When it Should Look Like This?
The Top 10 Reasons to Start a Police Homeless Outreach Team
Daniel McDonald’s Pyramid of Social Inertia – Where is Your Community?

- Maintain the Status Quo (Do Nothing)
- Managing Homelessness
- Homeless Solutions

Where is Your Community?
The Top 10 Reasons to Start a Police Homeless Outreach Team
Make Exiting Homelessness Quicker, Easier & Cheaper
Flowchart of a Nuclear Reactor
Make Exiting Homelessness Quicker, Easier & Cheaper
Make Exiting Homelessness Quicker, Easier & Cheaper

The Staircase Model of Ending Homelessness (Housing Last)
• ACTUAL REQUIREMENTS for housing readiness
  – Sobriety (with mandatory breath tests)
  – Successful management of mental illness & addictions
  – A completed resume
  – Completion of classes on life skills (such as “Pedestrian Safety”)
• Emergency shelters CAN be an effective response to homelessness
  – Low barrier
  – Housing focused
  – Eliminate unnecessary and expensive programming
  – The goal is to house, not heal

Source: Iain De Jong, OrgCode
Make Exiting Homelessness Quicker, Easier & Cheaper

Housing First Requirements:

- You are homeless
- You are alive
- Shelters are optional
Make Exiting Homelessness Quicker, Easier & Cheaper

START HERE
Outreach (Pre-Housing)
Ask “Where did you stay last night?”

Housing Insecure (couch surfing OR less than 15 days homeless)

70% will self-resolve housing needs (Ask “Can you stay where you are?”)

Yes

No

Literally Homeless (short-term, under one year; no disabilities)

No

Chronically Homeless (over one year OR 4+ episodes in 3 years AND a disability)

Document Ready?

Yes

No

VI/SPDAT Completed? (only once)

Refered to Coordinated Entry?

Yes

No

Refer to Housing Specialist / Case Manager

Rapid Rehousing w/ Short-Term Case Management (VI/SPDAT Score 4-7)

Permanent Supportive Housing w/ Wrap-Around Services (VI/SPDAT Score 8+)

STOP

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The Top 10 Reasons to Start a Police Homeless Outreach Team
You Can Drastically Reduce the High Cost of Homelessness

Tri-Morbidity Within the Homeless Population

- Addictions: 59%
- Chronic Health Conditions: 89%
- Mental Illness: 71%

Co-Occurring Conditions

Tri-Morbid 39%

Source: NIH
The Return on Investment (ROI) is significant

- Cost of street homelessness: $30,000+ per year
- Cost of living in permanent housing: $12,000 per year

Can you afford not to have an effective homeless policy?
You Can Drastically Reduce the High Cost of Homelessness

Housing is the only Known Cure for Homelessness
You Can Drastically Reduce the High Cost of Homelessness

Services Utilized by Numbers of Nights Before and After Residing in Cypress Landing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N=17</th>
<th>Pre-entry</th>
<th>Post-Entry</th>
<th>Decrease</th>
<th>Percent Decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Room</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detox Services</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>146</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jail Bookings</td>
<td>1,140</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>944</td>
<td></td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Shelter</td>
<td>2,125</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2,125</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Nights Used</td>
<td>3,473</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>3,265</td>
<td></td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: University of Tampa
You Can Drastically Reduce the High Cost of Homelessness

Aggregate Costs – Homeless vs. Housed
The Top 10 Reasons to Start a Police Homeless Outreach Team

6
Homeless Outreach Teams (HOT) Are a Proven Model

- The HOT concept is well established
  - Tampa PD
  - Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Office
  - Sarasota PD
  - Broward County Sheriff’s Office
  - San Diego PD
  - Houston PD
Homeless Outreach Teams (HOT) Are a Proven Model

• We know how to solve homelessness

• You can use established, best practices
  – Housing First was established in NYC in the 1990’s
  – Success rate of 85%

• The police are the “none of the above”
  – Think “outside the box”
  – Help clients navigate a rigid, complex system
  – Homeless, hungry, nowhere to go? … call police homeless outreach
Homeless Outreach Teams (HOT) Are a Proven Model

• Electrical lineman can fix a power failure anywhere in the country after a storm
  – They have standardized systems and procedures
  – Your community is unique (but not that unique)
  – Use the same idea for homelessness
Homeless Outreach Teams (HOT) Are a Proven Model

• Seek guidance from other agencies
  – Don’t reinvent the wheel – use their wheel

• Partner with other agencies for a regional approach
  – Start a task force
  – Don’t displace the problem to a neighboring jurisdiction
The Top 10 Reasons to Start a Police Homeless Outreach Team
You Can Leverage Community Collaborations
You Can Leverage Community Collaborations

- If you have a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT), you are halfway there
  - CIT officers are experienced working with those that are homeless, addicted and affected by mental illness
  - You already have relationships with community partners
  - Substance abuse and mental health providers often offer housing for the chronically homeless
• Broward County (FL) Sheriff’s Office offers a 40-hour HOT Specialist Course
  – Follow-up to CIT training
  – Deputies completing CIT and homeless training are designated as Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) specialists
  – 29 of 31 law enforcement agencies participate in the Multi-Agency Homeless Task Force

Source: PERF; Capt. Scott Russell, Sgt. Ed Rafailovitc, BSO
The Top 10 Reasons to Start a Police Homeless Outreach Team
• You cannot arrest away homelessness
  – A study by Portland State University discovered that every dollar invested in reducing homelessness results in $13 in savings in crime and criminal justice system costs
  – Fewer than half of homeless “high-frequency arrestees” have accessed services in Long Beach, CA (Source: PERF)
  – Wet (detox) shelters and mental health receiving facilities offer an excellent alternative to arrest, providing a pathway from homelessness to housing
“Million Dollar Billy”

- He is the most prolific offender in Hillsborough County, FL with over 180 jail bookings since 1995

- There are over 5,000 persons with 20+ bookings (as of July 2018)

- Detentions costs $125 per day

Source: Phil Munioz
It’s a Police Problem (Like it or Not)

Hillsborough County, Florida
Top 64 Jail Utilizers With 50+ Bookings

Source: Phil Munioz
Hillsborough County, Florida
Days in Jail by Homeless Arrestees
22 Year Average: 182,429
Average Annual Cost: $22.8 Million
(Based upon $125 Per Night)

Source: Phil Munioz
Housing for the Homeless  Housing for Criminals
Balancing Homeless Outreach vs. Homeless Enforcement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outreach</th>
<th>Enforcement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing solves homelessness</td>
<td>Reduces appearance of homelessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduces social problems</td>
<td>Reduces symptoms of social problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduces source of nuisance crime</td>
<td>Reduce symptoms of nuisance crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevent calls for service</td>
<td>React to calls for service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divert minor offenders</td>
<td>Incarcerate minor offenders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual cost for housing: $12,000</td>
<td>Annual cost for jail: $45,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Top 10 Reasons to Start a Police Homeless Outreach Team
• Panhandling is a litigation lightning rod
  – Homeless Helping Homeless vs. City of Tampa, 2016
    – Free speech is protected
    – Don’t have exemptions for charitable groups, specific days of the week or specific areas, such as downtown
    – Ordinances should address safety
    – Hillsborough County, Florida prohibits soliciting within four (4) feet of the roadway
To Reduce Litigation (How Not to Get Sued)

• Joel vs City of Orlando, 2000
  – James Joel was arrested by Orlando Police, twice in 1998, for sleeping on the sidewalk
  – Government cannot criminalize homelessness
    – Alternatives to arrest or warnings may be required

• Pottinger vs City of Miami, 1996
  – Life sustaining activity cannot be criminalized
  – Due process is required to remove property
  – DON’T spend millions on a shelter to become “Pottinger Compliant”
• Martin vs City of Boise, 2018
  – The Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals stated “as long as there is no option of sleeping indoors, the government cannot criminalize indigent, homeless people for sleeping outdoors, on public property, on the false premise they had a choice in the matter”
  – A bed must be available and practically accessible

• Developing a homeless outreach team using a housing-first strategy to end homelessness will reduce your risk of litigation
The Top 10 Reasons to Start a Police Homeless Outreach Team
Teams are scalable
- Start small and think big
- TPD and HCSO receive zero taxpayer funding
- We rely on donations
Jump-Start Your Community Oriented Policing (COP) Program

Source: Tampa Bay Times
• Influence your community’s perception of the police
  – You will receive positive media coverage
  – Offer answers not questions
  – Solve problems…permanently
Jump-Start Your Community Oriented Policing (COP) Program

8,007,449 Views

Homeless man discovers forgotten bank account

John Heliemski was once homeless with memories of sleeping on a cardboard box by a bus stop. But now his life is changed, thanks to help from some strangers.
Jump-Start Your Community Oriented Policing (COP) Program

Source TBO.com
Jump-Start Your Community Oriented Policing (COP) Program
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The Top 10 Reasons to Start a Police Homeless Outreach Team
Familiar face near University of Tampa finally finds a home off the streets

After 30 years of living on the street in several states, Jerry Bodiford has landed at the Tadlik Oaks apartments, 1262 E. 113th Ave. in Tampa. "I call him the Mount Everest of homelessness because he was the most difficult client, resistant to change," Officer Daniel McDonald said. Bodiford said, "Officer McDonald was totally different. He's just a good friend." (DIRK SHADD | Times)
You are Committed to Real Solutions (You are Awesome)
You are Committed to Real Solutions (You are Awesome)
• Every homeless person is someone’s mother, father, son or daughter
  – Those in need are asking for help when they need it the most
  – Ending homelessness is effective public policy and use of public resources

• “Remember, Hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things, and no good thing ever dies”
  – Source: Stephen King
How to Get Started
If Not Now, When?

• If your current approach to homelessness is not working, why not try a different approach?

• Is your agency an innovator or lost in the pack?

Source: Iain De Jong, OrgCode
Select the Right Officers

- Homeless outreach officers must possess a unique combination of skills and attributes:
  - Patience
  - Determination
  - Compassion
  - Communications skills
  - Effective Networker
  - Problem solving skills

Source: PERF
Select the Right Officers

• Dedicate officers exclusively to homeless outreach (if possible)
  – It can take 15 to 20 contacts or more to overcome service resistance
  – Ending homelessness is time consuming

• Maintain trust and credibility by not making arrests
  – Call other officers to make an arrest (if needed)

• Wear a uniform to identify you as law enforcement
  – Transitioning from enforcement to outreach won’t take that long!

Source: PERF
Street Engagement Works (We Come to You)

• Serve the chronically homeless (15-20%)
  – They are the high-utilizers

• Apply a trauma-informed approach

• Use motivational interviewing and assertive engagement
Street Engagement Works (We Come to You)

• Use progressive engagement and rapid resolution to solve problems quickly with minimal resources
Use a Co-Responder Model

• Homeless Outreach Teams (HOT) can include other disciplines:
  – Social worker
  – Mental health worker
  – Street medicine
  – Case managers
  – Housing specialists
Use a Co-Responder Model

• Pursue grant funding opportunities for your team:
  – Bureau of Justice Administration (BJA)
  – Byrne Justice Assistance Grant
  – Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)
  – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
Start a Homeless Court

- Established in 1989 in San Diego
- Now operating in over 30 jurisdictions nationwide
- Established in Tampa, FL in 2013
- Goal of breaking the cycle of arrests and incarceration
- Homeless Outreach Team officers are also in attendance

Source: PERF; Tampa Bay Times
Develop a Panhandling Plan

• The “first cousin” of homelessness
  – About 65% of panhandlers are homeless
  – Up to 70% have chronic health conditions
  – Approximately 74% consumed alcohol during past year
  – They earn money for food, tobacco, alcohol and/or illicit drugs

Source: Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ)
Develop a Panhandling Plan

• Few escape homelessness or poverty by soliciting
• Offer solutions through outreach or homeless court
  – Solve the problem, not the symptoms
• Beware of “ownership” of corners or locations

Source: Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ)
Develop a Panhandling Plan

Source: Google Maps
Develop a Panhandling Plan
Develop a Panhandling Plan

HANDOUTS DON’T HELP
HELP LOCAL AGENCIES PROVIDE SERVICES
Text HelpCOS to 667873
When You Arrive at Your Destination

PANHANDLING
SAY NO TO PANHANDLING
CONTRIBUTE TO THE SOLUTION
GIVE TO LOCAL CHARITIES

YOUR GENEROSITY COULD LEAD TO A FATALITY
PLEASE DONATE TO A LOCAL CHARITY

• NEW HORIZONS for NH
  199 Manchester St (603)668-1877
• CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES
  464 Chestnut St (603)668-1920
• FAMILIES IN TRANSITION (FIT)
  122 Market St (603)641-9441

Visit any Fire Station to get connected to recovery services
NH Homeless Hotline DIAL 2-1-1
Small Baby Steps: Start an ID Card Program

• Identification is a barrier to jobs, housing, medical care and other services

• Many states offers free homeless ID’s

• Get donations for Birth certificates
Hold an Outreach Event

• Serves as a one-stop shop
  – Contact service providers with a date, time and place

• Giveaways (clothing, bicycles, etc.) are the hook

• Housing, housing and more housing is the goal
Use Effective Policing Models

- Homeless Outreach Teams (HOT) use elements of
  - Community-oriented policing
  - Problem-oriented Policing
  - Intelligence-led policing

Source: ZDNet
Use Effective Policing Models
Tampa Police Department
Homeless Field Interviews
2012-2017
Join Your Continuum of Care (CoC)

• Each community has a Continuum of Care (CoC) which serves as the lead homelessness agency
  – Is required under HUD guidelines
  – They serve as “conductor of the local orchestra”
    – Work with, not against, other community stakeholders
  – Coordinates funding to develop and maintain housing programs
  – Conducts Point-in-Time (PIT) counts at least every two years
  – Maintains Coordinated Entry waitlists
  – Operates Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS)
Law enforcement can access Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS)
- Client database accessible by social service agencies
- Enter data and place clients onto coordinated entry housing lists
- Update client information in real-time to ensure accurate data
- Cannot be used for criminal justice purposes
Study the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) Report

• PERF is a police think tank

• This report was published in 2018

• Highlights eleven steps you can take to respond to homelessness
In Summary (the Elevator Pitch)

• You should start a Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) if you want to:
  
  – Save tax dollars while reducing demands upon public services
  – Decrease police calls for service
  – Decrease homeless arrests and incarceration rates
  – Enhance your community relationships
  – Avoid expensive and unnecessary litigation
  – Offer solutions not explanations
  – Make homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring
Door Prize:

Question: How many agencies are members of the Broward County Multi-Agency Homeless Task Force?
Door Prize:

Question: How many agencies are members of the Broward County Multi-Agency Homeless Task Force?

Answer: 29
The Top 10 Reasons to Start a Police Homeless Outreach Team (and How)

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