Unsheltered Homelessness -

Metro Transit Police Homeless Action Team  
Sgt. Brooke Blakey
Connection between Chronic Health Conditions and Homelessness

“Bermuda Triangle”
Twin Cities’ Largest Homeless Camp
Light Rail Trains after Midnight
Working Toward Solutions
Metro Transit Police Department
Homeless Action Team (HAT)

- Ultimately, transit agencies should not be a refuge for the homeless, rather a provider of means for them to connect to available resources. “Destination Travelers”

- Data suggests that an average of five months of intense contact is what is needed to move someone into transitional housing and then into permanent housing. This needs to be a community effort.

- HAT contacts—5291 unduplicated individuals since the teams inception Sept 2018. Offering access to shelter referrals, medical care, mental health treatment, crisis intervention, survival gear, food and benefits.
HAT Training Topics

- Crisis Intervention and De-escalation
- Outreach Worker Certification
- HMIS Assessor Training
- Trauma-Informed Interviewing
- Understanding Addiction
  - Narcan Training
- Building Community Trust
Outreach Certification

Street Outreach Worker Certification
HAT Next Steps

- Hired housing navigators teamed with HAT officers and current street outreach workers
- Utilized College interns to conduct data
- Creating education plans for employees and riders
Housing Partnership

- Awarded 89 HUD housing vouchers-Successful Housing Connections
  - Provides federal rent assistance to homeless transit riders with disabilities to date houses 42 families (over 123 people)
  - Families housed still housed 6 months later

- Winter “Safe Space” shelter placed of 4912 unduplicated individuals into “low barrier shelter”

- Coordinated efforts and update service partners regularly in collaboration with MN State Office of Homelessness

- Developed a registry of homeless using transit as a shelter to target services

- Eliminate duplication of efforts

- HRA outreach team does Pre & Post-move housing stability counseling
Housing Challenges

- Homeless transit riders come with high barriers
- Criminal backgrounds, mental health issues, poor housing history
- Not all riders are housing ready for independent living with a voucher
- Integration funds needed for success
- 10 Families housed
- 36 additional referrals in process
Improving Outreach Solutions

- Overnight drop-in shelters
- Manage unintended incentives
- Frequent Faces Pilot
Frequent Faces Pilot Program

- **Partners**
  - Guild
  - Outside-In Consultants
  - Catholic Charities
  - East Metro Crisis Alliance
  - Dept Human Services
  - SPPD & SPFD

- **Vision**
  - Identify Top 30 Resource Users
  - Many use Metro Transit
  - Focus social, legal and medical services. Close endless cycle.
  - Create Permanent Solutions
Transit Homeless Action Team

- Healthcare for Homeless
- IBIS ID System (modeled after Houston)
Ongoing Challenge