

Lessons Learned : Collaborating on Homelessness Solutions in Peoria

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Introduction

Social problems are not just the job for nonprofits to solve. They are also not the cities to solve alone either.

...And I can assure you - you would not want them (the city) to be the sole solution maker.

... BUT

...they **CAN** help!!

Show of Hands - Who is in the Room?

- Municipal Employee
- Director/Program Manager
- Direct Service Professional
- Person with Lived Experience
- City leader or Councilmember
- Committee Member
- Employed by a nonprofit

Agenda

- City of Peoria Case Study
 - Position of Intentionality
 - Participating in Existing Structure/Networks
 - Communication
 - Collaboration
 - Program Creation
- Key Takeaways
- Other Examples
- Questions

Presenter Bio

- Spirit Animal: Leslie Knope
- Degree in Social Work
 - Focus on macro level work and civic engagement
- Prior Experience
 - Peoria Housing Authority
 - Phoenix Community Development Services
 - CoC Housing Navigator



Housing Coordinator Role

- Housing Coordinator bridges the gaps between the City and local nonprofits by directly networking with nonprofits
- Attends weekly meetings with homeless street outreach providers
- Refers cases to nonprofits
- Collaborates with Police Co-response for housing assistance
- Code Enforcement Rehousing Program

Existing Structure to Build Relationship

- Continuum of Care
 - Governing Board and Committees
- 100 Day Challenge Unsheltered Homelessness
 - Hosted by ReInstitute
 - Create partners and pathways to housing
- Neighborhood Enhancement Coordinator
 - Position within Community Development Department that oversees community outreach

Communication is Key

- Ongoing Communication between providers & City staff
 - Established Meetings
 - CoC General Membership
 - HOPE Network
 - Neighborhood Associations
 - Individual Outreach
 - Specific points of contact at direct service providers to handle urgent matters
- Communication with City Council
 - Reports to City Council on data and updates
 - PIT Count
 - Encampment Enforcement
 - Creation of No Camping Ordinance
 - Incorporated direct input from providers on best implementation

Collaboration Examples

- 100 Day Challenge goals
- Meeting expenditure deadlines
- ESG priorities and funding
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding
- Business Corridor Outreach
 - Provided process for reporting issues
- Creation of Flexible Rental Program

Creation of Flexible Rental Program

- Use CoC Coordinated Entry list to pull eligible participants
- Focus on households not eligible for other housing programs
- Developed in collaboration with CoC and Peoria City/County Health Department
- Three-year program from Fall 2023 to Fall 2026 with total budget of \$1 million in ARPA funds

Creation of Flexible Rental Program (Cont.)

- Provides first month rent, deposit, and a household move in package
- Flexible funds per household to remove barriers such as utility arrears, double deposit, and landlord bonus
- Eligible households must have income to sustain housing
- Housing navigation includes private market and income-based providers depending on each household

Successes

- Prevented 11 evictions through mediation and rent payments
- Removed additional barriers for 39 of 106 households spending around \$66,000 of \$1 million budget
- Only 6 out of 106 households returned to homelessness (5.7% return rate)

Flexible Funds- Making the Name Work

- Post Eviction Payments to landlords
 - \$15,230 for 6 households
- Rent and Emergency Stabilization
 - \$33,707 across all 106 households
- Past Due Electric/Gas
 - \$30,183 for 29 households

Flexible Funds- Making the Name Work (Cont.)

- Make Right Funds
 - \$1,455 for 2 households
- Double Deposit
 - \$66,346 for 39 households (37% of households)
- Eviction/Homeless Prevention
 - \$20,425 for 11 households
 - Average of \$1,800 per household
 - Largest payment for household of 8 was \$4,800

Key Takeaways

- Meet with City Council Members and City staff
 - Important for them to hear challenges & barriers
- Offer to be a resource to solve problems
 - Public library was experiencing increase in individuals experiencing homelessness at the library
 - Nonprofit organizations provided training to library staff and contact information for outreach team and other services

Key Takeaways (Cont.)

- Participate in existing City opportunities
- Create allies in the work by finding common goals and solutions
 - While goals may not be framed the same, both parties can agree on the goal of reducing homelessness.

Other Examples

- What ways do you wish your government could and would show up for you?
- Examples of collaboration with your local government?

Questions?

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