



Successful Practices & Strategies

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Salt Lake City Police Department

Salt Lake City, Utah

<http://slcpd.com/>

Community policing element

Problem solving

Problem/issue

Homelessness

Problem description

While Salt Lake County covers less than one percent of Utah's area, it represented more than 68 percent of Utah's annualized estimate of persons experiencing homelessness in Utah in 2014 (Comprehensive Report on Homelessness, State of Utah 2014).

Community policing strategies implemented

With the assistance of its CHP grant, the police department has worked to implement community partnerships, effective problem solving, and organizational transformation into its overall strategies. The creation of the HOST team and the Metro Support Bureau are examples of the transformation that has enabled the department to align its management, structure, and personnel to increase the police department's community policing capacity. With the creation of the new Metro Support Bureau, the police department opened a Homeless Resource Center across the street from the homeless shelter in downtown Salt Lake City. This center was created to (a) enhance partnerships with homeless service providers in the shelter area and (b) provide the HOST team and its partners and clients with a space that enables collaboration for effective problem solving.

In response to the concerns of several homeless women regarding personal safety, employment challenges, and housing issues, the bureau commander worked with the HOST team to help the women start a weekly support group to discuss specific challenges and potential solutions facing the homeless population in the area. The HOST officers also offered a self-defense class, teaching the women basic skills and building trust between the homeless community and the HOST officers. A separate weekly support group for men was started as well.

One challenge facing the homeless population is the need for employment. The HOST team worked with a staffing agency, local employers, and other community partners to establish the Job A Day program, connecting employers with homeless individuals willing and able to work. The program has had



tremendous success but has created a need for additional resources to assist with ongoing case management; the HOST officers cannot maintain their regular police work and provide case management for more than 300 HOST participants. To meet this need, Salt Lake City has agreed to hire eight full-time case workers in the fall of 2015 to provide ongoing case management and follow-up to assist participants. This will enable the HOST officers to spend more time in the community building new partnerships.

Change and/or impact as a result of these community policing efforts

The police department has seen many changes and impacts as a result of this community policing effort. These include (1) new partnerships with business and community leaders in the downtown area, (2) an increased trust between the homeless population and the police department, and (3) increased collaboration between the homeless population, service providers, businesses, community groups, and the police department.

Lessons learned through program implementation

The police department has learned many important lessons through the implementation of its program. These include the following:

- It is important to establish personal relationships with clients to increase trust and establish accountability expectations.
- Since the police department created the HOST team in 2012, the community has looked to the department to fill gaps where specific needs are not being met by existing homeless service providers. This has led the police department to hire eight social workers to provide case management to tie services together and address all of the needs of the homeless population.
- The HOST team has had great success with providing opportunities for clients that they must earn, instead of receiving them as handouts. This has helped provide direction for our clients and keeps them engaged in their efforts to transition out of homelessness.
- There are many groups and individuals that want to end homelessness, but it takes an organized effort and specific roles to get groups, organizations, and individuals to participate. You must be specific about implementation activities and coordinate with project partners to develop a comprehensive strategy.

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