

The Homeless Engagement Alternatives Resources and Treatment (HEART)

Program Description

The HEART program is a multi-track deflection and diversion program designed to address livability and low-level criminal issues commonly experienced by the homeless community.

Participants and Partners

The participants and partners have been tasked with developing a program to define and address the growing livability and low-level criminal issues that result from homelessness. The work is being coordinated amongst the Multnomah County District Attorney, Portland Police Bureau, Multnomah County, A Home for Everyone, the City of Portland, and the Mayor's Office. Advocates, community and neighborhood associations, and service providers will be included at critical junctions of the program development process to develop a sustainable, equitable, and robust program to support the existing strong community work that currently exists across the city of Portland.

Core Principles

- Philosophies of **harm reduction**
- Principles of **non-displacement**
- Community **transparency and accountability**
- **Recognizing the needs** of the homeless community

Goals

- Reduce the use of law enforcement and judicial processes for people experiencing homelessness
- Ensure cost savings by deflecting and diverting low-level criminal offenses into programs that are service provision oriented
- Provide multiple levels of service to meet the different needs of each participant
- Engage individuals that are forced into certain types of behavior due to homelessness
- Enforce and divert individuals participating in low-level criminal offenses

Track 1 – Deflection

- Programmatically guided by the Safe Sleep Guidelines and designed to enforce the adherence to the guidelines set in place
- Engage with the homeless community and connect them to available services
- A resource center for people to be referred or transferred to meet with a HEART caseworker to **assess the service needs** of participants and **assist them in connecting to services**
- **Familiarize and educate participants** with the guidelines for safe sleeping and the shelter options in the community

Track 2 – Diversion

- Programmatically guided by enforcement of low-level criminal offenses that are better served by treatment and enhanced service provision
- Prevent a revolving door of entry and release on low-level offenses
- An opportunity to replace engagement with the formal judicial process and **provide direct service to historically service-resistant communities**
- **Enrollment in services** and intensive counseling as an **alternative to jail time**