

## Homeless Encampment Best Practices

[Subchapter 6.6 Prohousing Designation Program](#) requires applicants to confirm that it's treatment of encampments on public property complies with and will continue to comply with the constitutional rights of persons experiencing homelessness. An application must include a one-page summary demonstrating how the applicant has enacted best practices in their jurisdiction related to the treatment of unhoused individuals camping on public property, consistent with the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness' "7 Principles for Addressing Encampments (June 17, 2022). The following template and certification are included to help jurisdictions meet this threshold.

- **Principle 1: Establish a Cross-Agency, Multi-Sector Response to Encampments** – Describe how system partners (name partners) work together to prioritize health and safety both for residents and unsheltered individuals. (350 characters max)

The Lake County Continuum of Care (LCCoC) is a coalition of cross-sectional partnerships and shared resources made up of dedicated organizations and individuals who have the goal to end homelessness in Lake County. An aspect of that goal is to address homeless encampments in the community through the planning done with the Encampment Resolution Grant.

- **Principle 2: Engage Encampment Residents to Develop Solutions** – Describe street outreach efforts to engage with encampment residents to find alternative shelter, housing, and service options using the housing first approach before an existing encampment is closed. (350 characters max)

One of the workgroups of the CoC is the Lived Experience Workgroup, made up of individuals with lived experience of insecure housing – including from encampments - ensuring that their perspectives can guide necessary community change and shape the solutions that meet real needs. Their input is essential in all what the LCCoC does, including addressing encampments. The use of shelter referrals and counseling are used in lieu of arrest for non-violent offenses when appropriate. Outreach and notice occur prior to encampment closures.

- **Principle 3: Conduct Comprehensive and Coordinated Outreach** – Describe multidisciplinary connection strategies and linkages to resources and permanent housing solutions that are customized to individual needs. If applicable, describe how the jurisdiction uses the coordinated entry system to connect individuals to resources and permanent housing. (350 characters max)

Prioritization of coordination with social service organizations and the Coordinated Entry system through maintenance of resource lists to connect individuals to housing, mental health, and supportive services through County and regional programs. The LCCoC has dedicated funding for outreach efforts. Both in putting on community awareness events as well as direct street outreach to those who lack secure housing in the community, particularly encampments. Encampments are identified through PIT Counts and discovery from community agencies such as law enforcement. Outreach efforts are primarily done to link people with supportive services such as housing via the LCCoC's Coordinated Entry System, behavioral health, and other supportive services in the community.

• **Principle 4: Address Basic Needs and Provide Storage** – Describe efforts to meet basic needs, health, safety, and access to storage (timeframes) for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness while creating clear pathways to permanent housing. (350 characters max)

Outreach efforts, particularly during PIT Counts, distribute material assistance with hygiene kits, clothing, water, weather protection, and other materials. The last PIT count distributed backpacks designed for those experiencing homelessness to allow for storage of personal effects. As people are moved from encampments, they are given assistance with their personal belongings to prevent the destruction of personal property.

**Principle 5: Ensure Access to Shelter or Housing Options** – Describe how low barrier resources to housing and supportive services are communicated to encampment residents. Include how strategies involve alternative measures to criminalization, focusing on service engagement and harm reduction. (350 characters max)

Homelessness is not a crime and shall not be used as a sole basis for detention. The LCCoC funds an emergency shelter and there are other limited resources in the community such as Rapid Rehousing and transitional housing. The LCCoC is using the Encampment Resolution Grant to fund a safe parking project and sleeping bus that are particularly designed to address the abatement of encampments.

• **Principle 6: Develop Pathways to Permanent Housing and Supports** – Describe Housing First strategies emphasizing low barriers, a harm-reduction model, and services to support people obtaining permanent housing more efficiently. Identify efforts to align federal, state, and local funding/programs to provide clear pathways to permanent housing. (350 characters max)

Through coordination with County staff and service providers referrals are made to permanent housing, behavioral health, and assistance programs consistent with

Housing First principles whenever possible. The LCCoC follows Housing First principles, particularly with its interim sheltering and its low barrier approach. The same principles will be used for safe parking and the sleeper bus. The LCCoC continually strives to align federal, state, and local funding/programs to provide clear pathways to permanent housing. The Coordinated Entry System is the pathway/tool for this process to assist those in need.

• **Principle 7: Create a Plan for What Will Happen to Encampment Sites After Closure** – Describe plans for former encampment spaces (long-term solutions to prevent encampments from recurring). Include efforts to emphasize safety, accessibility, and inclusivity that improve infrastructure. Example: Communities can include curb cuts to increase mobility access and enhanced lighting to encourage safety. (350 characters max)

The LCCoC will cooperate with local agencies – law enforcement, code enforcement – to ensure sites are cleaned up after individuals have been moved to more secure housing.

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#### **Certification and Authorization:**

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Signature of Authorized Representative

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Date