HOMELESSNESS IN SALEM

A Collaborative for Hope

City of Salem | Salem Police Department | Lifebridge | North Shore Community Health | North Shore Community Action Program | North Shore Workforce Investment Board
Tonight’s Conversation

• Existing Statistics & Practices

• New Strategies:
  1. Added Patrols & Police Training
  2. Alternative Giving & Day Employment
  3. Housing First
  4. Hub Model
  5. Outreach Caseworkers

• What you can do

• Open Q&A and Discussion
Existing Statistics & Practices

• Two types of homeless populations:
  1. Chronic homeless: 13 individuals constituted 1,000 calls for service in a one-year period.
  2. Larger group of transient individuals, often new to area or recently homeless, couch-surfers, often more responsive to treatment and services.

• Each require a different response.
Existing Statistics & Practices

• Salem Police homeless-related calls for service 2016 vs. 2017
  • January: 116% increase
  • February: 43% increase
  • March: 275% increase
  • April: 85% increase
  • May: 118% increase
  • June: 168% increase
  • July: 215% increase
  • Monthly average – 2016: 51 vs. 2017: 124 (+143%)
  • Change in coding may account for some of the increase.
Existing Statistics & Practices

• 2017 Survey of Homeless Individuals by Lifebridge & SSU School of Social Work
  • Interviewed 26 homeless or transient individuals.
  • 24 self-identified as homeless, 1 week up to 9 years (1 all their life)
  • 20 male, 6 female
  • Ages: 19-56, average 34.5
  • How long in Salem? 1 day up to 9 years.
  • Hometown? 12-Salem or North Shore.
  • 6-other MA town. 8-Out of state.
Existing Statistics & Practices

• 2017 Survey of Homeless Individuals by Lifebridge & SSU School of Social Work
  • Where do you sleep? 3-car. 4-Lifebridge. 6-couch surf. 11-outdoors or elsewhere.
  • 13 say they’re in Salem for good.
  • 8 have some kind of work or job.
  • 5 report pan-handling – none of them work.
  • 2 have engaged in prostitution, 2 in selling drugs.
Existing Statistics & Practices

- 2017 Survey of Homeless Individuals by Lifebridge & SSU School of Social Work
  - Why Salem?
    - Personal or family connection to area: 17
    - Access to services or current job: 6
    - Attracted due to lifestyle, “witchcraft,” etc.: 3
    - Came to find housing: 2
  - Social services received: 15-SNAP, 4-Lifebridge, 1-DMH, 1-MassHealth, 1-Medicaid, 10-none at all.
Existing Statistics & Practices

• 2017 Survey of Homeless Individuals by Lifebridge & SSU School of Social Work
  • What services would be most helpful to you?
    • Housing: 14
    • Mental health counseling: 5
    • Job training or employment program: 3
    • Substance abuse services: 3
    • “A safe place”: 2
    • “There’s nothing that can help me” and “There are no services for people like me.”: 2
    • Doesn’t want any help: 1
Existing Statistics & Practices

- 2017 Survey of Homeless Individuals by Lifebridge & SSU School of Social Work

55 year old father, laid off from his job, he's slept in a truck for the last eight years. In prison briefly a decade ago, can't find work and won't stay at Lifebridge.

“My kids are here.”

26 year old woman originally from Methuen and living on a friend’s couch in Salem. Getting by on food stamps and prostitution.

“There’s nothing that can help me.”

37 year old male bounced around group homes growing up and got out of Bridgewater Hospital yesterday. Getting a meal tonight at Lifebridge, he'll sleep outside and has a court date tomorrow.

“I just need a place to shower and be safe.”
Existing Statistics & Practices

• Practice to Date
  • Cite or arrest, if possible, often returning to the street.
  • Services for high-needs individuals happening by agencies in isolation, when it should be coordination.
  • Differentiation of service needs between chronic homeless and temporarily homeless or transient.
  • Reactive response to calls for service, when a pro-active approach may be more sustainable in long term.
  • No clear alternative for charitable giving makes pan-handling highly profitable.
New Strategies: Patrol Training

- Increased patrols with reserves and new officers/strategic task force/CIU & outreach worker.
- “Homeless Solutions & Resources: A Police Officer’s Guide to Policing the Community”
  - Constitutional rights & relevant court decisions
  - Shelters’ contact information
  - Mental health treatment programs’ contact information
  - Medical programs’ contact information
  - Employment programs’ contact information
  - Housing programs’ contact information
  - Trespass Orders: Public and Private Property
  - Section 35 Commitment
  - Outreach Worker process
  - CIU and Patrol responsibilities
  - Applicable Ordinance & MGL, with fines/arrest info.
New Strategies: Alternative Giving & Day Employment

• Panhandling can be a disincentive to seeking employment.

• Which populations of homeless or transient need or would make use of day employment opportunities?

• Day employment connections: WIB/Career Center, City, private companies.

• Alternative giving campaign: text-to-donate.
New Strategies: Housing First

**Typical “Housing Readiness”**

- Homeless → Shelter → MAGICAL → INCOME LANDLORD RELATIONSHIP → Permanent
- Fail Points:
  - Medical
  - Behavioral
  - Mental

**Housing First**

- Homeless → Permanent → LIFE STABILITY
- Fail Points:
  - Medical
  - Behavioral
  - Mental
  - Income
  - Landlord Relationship
New Strategies: Hub Model

• Monthly check-in meeting of service providers and organizations to coordinate activities.

• Review status of benchmark statistics.

• Review cases of specific high-risk individuals.

• Check in on effectiveness of existing strategies.
New Strategies: Outreach Caseworkers

• Outreach workers on call out of Salem PD.

• Funded through CDBG, in partnership with North Shore Community Health.

• Contact Outreach to report non-emergency transient or homeless issues: hope@salem.com.

• Identify & work to connect those in need with health insurance, primary care, behavioral health, substance abuse treatment, housing, and/or employment.
What you can do

1. Call: Salem Police at 978-744-1212 or Outreach worker at hope@salem.com (number forthcoming).
2. Alternative giving option, not panhandlers.
3. Employers: offer temporary job opportunities and connect with the WIB/Career Center.
4. Keep an open mind about alternatives and options, such as housing first.
5. Share your ideas.
Open Q&A and Discussion