



# Effective Outreach Strategies

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Thursday, June 11th | 1:00 - 4:00 pm ET

**RH**TTAC

Runaway and Homeless Youth Training,  
Technical Assistance, and Capacity Building Center

# Welcome

NOW



## Effective Outreach Strategies

*90 Minute Training*

2:30 PM ET



## Transition

*15 Minute Break*

2:45 PM ET



## Program-Specific Sessions

*Join your program track: BCP, SOP, TLP, MGH*

3:55 PM ET



## Closing

*We'll share the CEU and evaluation form*

# Meet the Presenters

- Amanda Persad, FYSB-RHY
- Jerry Tracy, Gray Matters Technology Services

# Learning Objectives

1. Understanding the history and purpose of outreach
  - a. Intensive Street Outreach Requirements
2. Street outreach vs. community education: What is the difference?
3. How to conduct effective street outreach vs. community education

# Agenda

**What we'll cover in this 90-minute training on outreach modalities:**

**Part 1**

Understanding the history and purpose of outreach

**Part 2**

Street Outreach vs. Community Education: What is the difference?

**Part 3**

How to conduct effective street outreach vs community education

# Why is Outreach Required?

The FY25 NOFO indicates that grantees "must seek out youth from your target populations who might not be aware of your program. You must provide information about your services and their benefits."



# Current Requirements for Intensive Street Outreach Components

- Required of TLP and MGH programs funded in 2025, and BCPs that committed to providing intensive street outreach.
- Street Outreach Programs promote street-based services to youth who have been subjected to or are at risk of being subjected to:
  - *Abuse (including, but not limited to, sexual, emotional, and physical abuse)*
  - *Sexual or labor exploitation*
  - *Human trafficking*

# Requirement

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Develop and implement comprehensive street outreach plans that include access to shelter, crisis stabilization, and connection to community service partners.



## How is your agency developing and implementing a street outreach plan?

The Street Outreach Plan is the documentation of how your agency intends to identify and serve youth living on the street.

If you are operating a BCP funded in FY25 and opted to implement intensive street outreach, document how your agency will partner with the following service providers:

- Law enforcement
- Healthcare and behavioral health services
- Mental health services
- Social services
- The public school system
- Child Welfare

# Requirement

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Develop and implement comprehensive street outreach plans that include access to shelter, crisis stabilization, and connection to community service partners.



**How does your program connect youth to a shelter that is available 24/7?**

**Scenario 1:** If you included Intensive Outreach as part of your BCP grant in FY25, then your own BCP shelter can implement this requirement. Or you can have an MOU through a community partner.

**Scenario 2:** If you are operating a TLP funded in FY25, then you may fulfill the requirement through your BCP program, if you have one, or through an MOU with a community partner.

Please Note:

\*all shelters must be age appropriate to youth in need

\*fulfilling requirements internally are subject to availability of beds

# Requirement

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Develop and implement comprehensive street outreach plans that include access to shelter, crisis stabilization, and connection to community service partners.



**How will the program help youth and young adults with stabilization?**

Crisis stabilization is urgent/emergency services to youth in need that require immediate support/services.

Examples include provision of gateway services such as clothing, food, medical (mental/physical health) services/referrals, safety (trafficking, physical threats of violence, abuse).

# Requirement

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Develop youth-focused engagement strategies tailored to individual needs.



**What engagement strategies has the program developed?**

Example: creating office or drop-in hours at local schools, parks, or other locations homeless youth frequent. Maintaining a presence on social media.

**How is engagement tailored to fit the needs of individual youth?**

Example: When engaging with youth who are potentially being trafficked, are you providing service information in a less conspicuous form (e.g., QR codes, instead of items with program names or labels).

**How are staff trained to carry out these strategies?**

Example: Providing shadowing opportunities for new staff prior to conducting outreach independently can help new staff develop safe and appropriate methods for engaging with youth and building rapport.

# Requirement

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Create schedules and frequency for face-to-face outreach with youth in locations where they gather.



**How is *'prime time'* for outreach determined for various sites within your community?**

Some agencies partner with local police departments, schools, or other agencies, to identify when and where youth gather, by looking at frequency of noise complaints, truancy, trespassing, etc.

Creating a consistent schedule for outreach at a given location, can help youth easily find your outreach workers, as needed.

# Requirement

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Identify key locations where youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness gather.



## How have you identified and prioritized outreach locations?

Some agencies provide outreach collaboratively working in multi-agency teams with other community outreach providers, who have already identified locations youth typically frequent.

Outreach workers can also monitor social media to identify events where youth will be gathering.

# Requirement

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Develop safety plans for staff and youth during outreach activities, including back-up staff for those staff working on the street.



**What is the safety plan for youth to support their well-being while living on the street and while engaging with staff?**

- Your agency should have policies about approaching youth living on the street, particularly if they may be in the company of gang members or traffickers, or another adult that may put the youth at risk.
- Distributing 'safety kits' that contain essentials for gateway needs (e.g., food, socks, clothing, water, basic first aid supplies)

# Requirement

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Develop safety plans for staff and youth during outreach activities, including back-up staff for those staff working on the street.



**What is your safety plan for staff to assure their well-being while on the street?**

- Having guidelines for when and where to approach youth
- Ensuring that outreach is never conducted alone (with multiple outreach partners, if possible)
- Scheduled check-ins via telephone with agency management or law enforcement partners

## In addition, grant recipients will have to:

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Develop safety plans with these youth addressed needs identified in those assessments.



- **What information should be included in a safety plan?** Safety plans should be tailored to the individual youth's needs. Example: if a youth is experiencing abusive behavior at the hands of an adult, you want to discuss specific situations, topics, or actions that have been linked to abusive behavior generally, or in the youth's specific experience.
- **Are there specific staff at your agency who are trained to handle specific needs?** For instance, the outreach worker who has established a rapport with the youth can create the safety plan. However, if your agency has a trafficking specialist, it may be appropriate to do a warm handoff. This responsibility is often dictated by your agency's resources.
- **How is follow-up conducted?** Staff should arrange to follow-up with the youth and agencies to whom the youth has been referred, to confirm the referral was completed, and whether services are being provided.

# Requirement

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Coordinate with the National Communication System for Runaway and Homeless Youth (National Runaway Safeline) to provide information on available resources.



## How do you utilize the Safeline as a resource?

The National Runaway Safeline is a national resource hotline that can be accessed via phone or internet.

Staff and youth can access the Safeline to identify available services for RHY, in locations where the youth is intending to travel or move.

## In addition, grant recipients will have to:

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Develop (or provide links to existing) emergency services.



### **What emergency services are you going to provide directly?**

Some outreach efforts may have a clinician at a drop-in center or have outreach teams who are equipped to provide emergency counseling. Other outreach teams may have a mobile medical van equipped to do general first-aid services for street youth.

### **What emergency services are you going to provide through referral?**

If your agency is unable to provide emergency services directly, referrals are pivotal. For example, most agencies cannot provide medical services directly. However, given your community partnerships, you could provide a referral and transportation to a local clinic.

## In addition, grant recipients will have to:

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Assess the needs of street youth they reach out to / engage with.



### **How have you adopted or adapted screening and assessment tools for use on the street?**

A full human trafficking assessment is too lengthy to conduct in the field. However, outreach workers can adapt/simplify/shorten tools for use during outreach. They can also monitor for tag-words during cursory screenings that imply the presence of force, fraud, or coercion.

### **When and how do you use specific types of tools with youth?**

Full assessments (psychological, family, etc.) should be used once staff have established an ongoing relationship with youth. Screening tools should be used to address immediate needs on the street and can be as simple as 1-2 questions.

# Street Outreach vs. Community Education

**Street Outreach** targets youth directly or with the help of a community partner – this involves staff going to youth in multiple settings (the street, schools, etc.) and providing gateway services, support, and referrals.

**Community Education** typically targets other service providers and professionals (teachers, law enforcement, etc.), as well as the community, providing information on available services.



# Street Outreach vs. Community Education

## *Relationships with schools*

- **Education:** During the summer, an intern sent letters to various school counselors and McKinney-Vento liaisons, providing information about the agency and the services. School staff who responded to the letters were engaged in educational conversations about agency services, youth, and needs.
- **Outreach:** RHY staff conduct regular onsite 'drop-in' hours at schools.

# Community Education Examples

## *Relationships with law enforcement*

- **Education:** Attend a 'roll-call' to make presentations to police officers regarding agency services
- **Outreach:** RHY staff attend a ride-along with law enforcement to let youth know about available services.

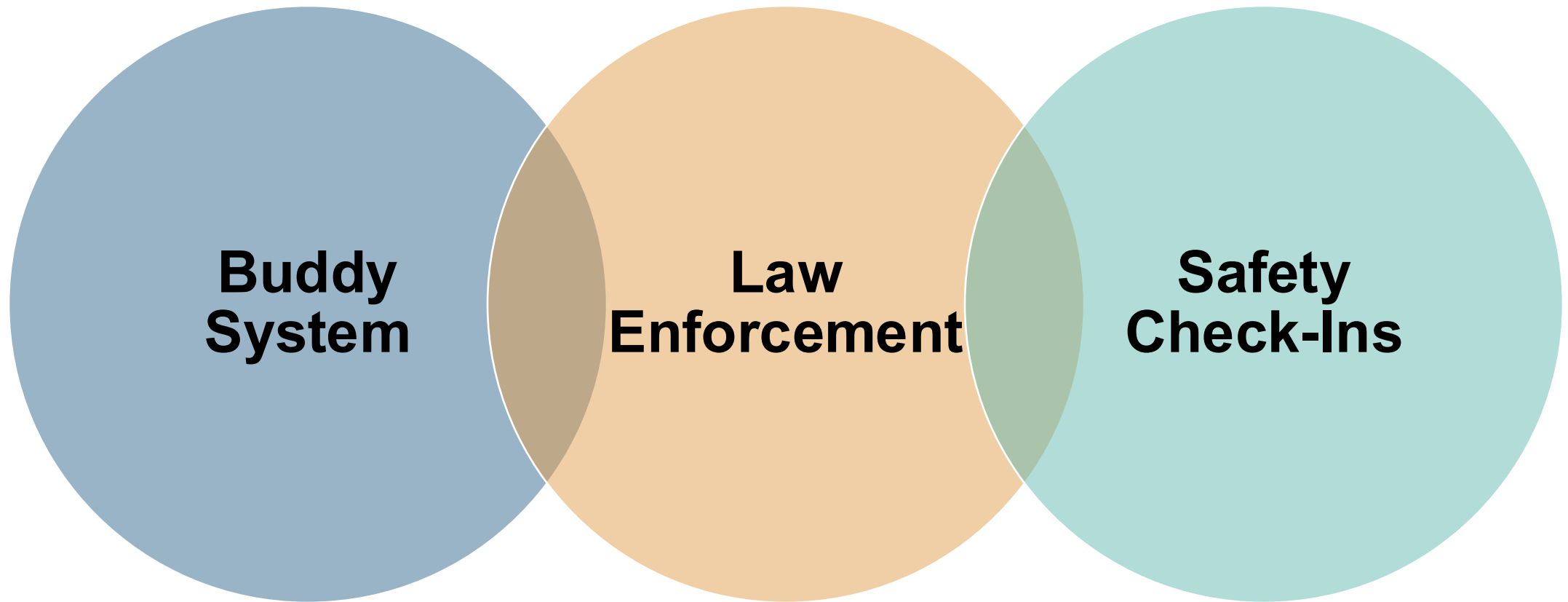
# What You Can Control vs. What You Cannot Control

<b>What Are You Able to Do?</b>	<b>What Are You Not Able to Do?</b>
Develop and implement an outreach plan	Create community policies that affect how and where youth gather
Determine level of outreach effort (number of hours, staff, days per week dedicated to outreach)	Decide if individual youth enrolls or participates in the program
Provide timely and accurate reporting of outreach activities	Realize impact beyond your targeted outreach area
Ensure outreach efforts are appropriate to reflect the needs of the community	Respond to every cultural and/or linguistic need in the community
Develop and maintain partnerships with community organizations	Control legal constraints
Establish staff training and capacity, including the use of volunteers	Improve local job market/pool of qualified staff

# Effective Program Practices: Components of a Strong Outreach Model

- An outreach schedule based on reliable data about where and when youth can be found.
- Adequate staffing, corresponding with or exceeding the approved grant.
- Staff/volunteers with required skills.
- Responding to holistic needs of youth, including for safety, permanency, and self-sufficiency goals.
- Engaging community partnerships to conduct outreach effectively.
- Ongoing evaluation and adaptation of outreach approach, as needed.

# Effective Program Practices: Youth and Staff Safety



# Effective Program Practices: Peer Integrated Approaches

- Employing former RHY participants and/or bringing them on as volunteers.
- Peer specialists embedded in outreach teams and in other key roles.
- Engaging youth voice through opportunities for program leadership and partnership with local youth advisory boards.

# Effective Program Practices: Access Service Oriented Models

## *Q. HOW DO WE REDUCE BARRIERS TO SERVICES FOR RHY?*

- **Provide for basic needs**, such as laundry, showers, food, and first aid.
- **Create safe havens**, for example, have drop-in centers with expanded hours.
- **Integrate services into outreach that are difficult for youth to access**, for example, health, legal, and behavioral health services.
- **Develop one-stop drop-in centers** that bring difficult-to-access services to the youth.

# Effective Program Practices: High Collaboration Practice Models



# Effective Program Practices: Operational and Innovative Practices

- QR-code-based outreach materials
- Emergency and gateway items in backpacks
- SOPs for telephone/responding systems
- Awareness of appropriate materials for your neighborhood or community.

# Effective Program Practices: Innovative Administrative Practices

- Data entry & tracking improvements
- Enhanced background check protocols
- Unique training models (“A–Z”)

# Breakout Discussion 1

What is the most challenging element or barrier to achieving effective outreach? Consider the nature of the barrier or challenge, and how it limits your outreach activities or the impact of those activities.

Here are a few examples of barriers your agency might encounter:

- The outreach schedule
- Knowledge of areas youth congregate
- Identifying staff/volunteers with appropriate skills
- Tools for staff and volunteers to use, to respond to youth needs in culturally or linguistically appropriate ways
- An absence of community partnerships

# Breakout Discussion 2

How have you responded to the barriers discussed?

Elements to consider when answering the question:

- To what degree was the issue resolved?
- What methods were more effective than others?
- Have you considered why some methods were more effective?
- Consider location (rural, urban, or suburban), population served, access to resources when responding.