



Transit Homeless Outreach Program (Transit HOP)

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Program History

- ▶ As a result of waiving ridership fees in 2021, CT DOT and CT Transit began to see an increase in both ridership as well as loitering in the various stations. Staff reported individuals may be experiencing housing or behavioral health crises.
- ▶ The CT Department of Transportation reached out to the CT Department of Housing as well as the CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services for support.
- ▶ CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services is directing Substance Abuse Block Grant - COVID 19 Mitigation funding toward this initiative.
- ▶ Contract executed with the Connecticut Harm Reduction Alliance.



What is Harm Reduction?

- ▶ *“The lifeblood of Harm Reduction practice is to meet folks where they are in their time, place, language, and lived experience.”*
- ▶ Harm reduction is critical to keeping people who use drugs alive and as healthy as possible, and is a key pillar in the multi-faceted Health and Human Services' [Overdose Prevention Strategy](#)
- ▶ Harm Reduction is also a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and respect for, the rights of people who use drugs, those that experience homelessness, and sex workers.
- ▶ A long term program goal is to reduce stigma around homelessness, mental health, and substance use with staff who operate CT Rail and CT Fastrak.
- ▶ DOT has expressed interest in training on Naloxone to all interested staff in the months ahead.



Program Design

- ▶ 2.5 FTE Outreach Workers will canvas, provide referrals, and provide education to people at various DOT and CT Transit locations around the state.
- ▶ Outreach has begun in Hartford and New Britain train stations and Fastrak locations
- ▶ Outreach workers are providing educational information, harm reduction supplies, linkages to emergency shelters, and linkages to substance use and mental health treatment programs.
- ▶ State Troopers will have overtime available to be able to serve as on-site support as most interactions are occurring later in the evening and on weekends.



Program Start-Up

- ▶ Outreach workers attended rail safety training, orientation at train stations and Fastrak stations, and a roll-call meeting for Troop H of the State Police.
- ▶ Outreach workers also joined Fastrak community meetings in Parkville and New Britain to meet with various local stakeholders, hear concerns, and share the program goals.
- ▶ Outreach workers will also be participating in ride-alongs with state troopers in order to better understand each others' work, and build a collaborative relationship
- ▶ Outreach workers were given badges that will enable them to ride for no cost on CT Rails and CT Fastrak, even when fares resume. This will allow them to do outreach activities on the busses and trains, in addition to at the stations.



Questions?

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