



Encampment Crisis Response Team Fore-River / Frederic St.

After-Action Report

September 22, 2023

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Executive Summary	3
Emergency Operations Center / NIMS Structure.....	4
Technical Assistance Team Resource	6
Calls for Service for Police & Fire.....	7
Tents.....	8
Homeless Services Center (HSC) Bed Data.....	9
Management Objectives	10
Control Objectives	10
Section 1: Mobile Engagement Center	11
Goal / Objective.....	11
Participants.....	11
Key Findings.....	11
Analysis.....	12
Section 2: By Name List / Case Conferencing	14
Goal / Objective.....	14
Participants.....	14
Key Findings.....	14
Analysis.....	15
Section 3: Housing Matching	16
Goal / Objective.....	16
Analysis.....	16
Section 4: Inventory Management	17
Goal / Objective.....	17
Participants.....	17
Key Findings.....	17
Analysis.....	18
Section 5: Landlord Management	19
Goal / Objective.....	19
Analysis.....	19
Section 6: Performance and Data Management	20
Goal / Objective:.....	20
Participants.....	20
Analysis.....	20
Section 7: Basic Needs and Logistics	21

Goal / Objective..... 21

Participants..... 21

 Key Findings..... 21

 Analysis..... 22

Section 8: Communications..... 23

 Goal / Objective..... 23

 Participants..... 23

 Key Findings..... 23

 Analysis..... 23

Section 9: Encampment Resolution..... 25

 Participants..... 25

 Key Findings..... 25

 Analysis..... 25

Section 10: Finance..... 27

 Goal / Objective..... 27

 City expenses at the Fore River / Frederic St. encampment to September 20, 2023.....27

Annex A: Participating Organizations..... 28

Annex B: Acronyms..... 29

Annex C: Photos of Basic Needs and clean up Provided by the City..... 30

Executive Summary

The Encampment Crisis Response Team (ECRT) was established to help transition unhoused individuals living at encampments into shelter or housing before the scheduled resolution of an encampment. The creation of this team was guided by best practices and technical assistance from staff at the Corporation for Supportive Housing in coordination with the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development.

The ECRT held its first meeting on May 31, 2023, which was attended by representatives from approximately 30 nonprofit social service and housing organizations, and led by City of Portland staff from various departments. Engagement with unhoused individuals at the Fore River encampment began June 7, 2023.

Over the course of the next 14 weeks, the ECRT worked to build trust, meet basic needs, and transition unhoused individuals at Fore River to shelter and housing. Portable restroom facilities, a trash dumpster, and water lines were temporarily installed to address sanitation issues, and meals were regularly delivered. When beds at the Homeless Services Center (HSC) became available, individuals at the encampment were the first to be offered access to those beds. Between the end of June and September 6, a total of 180 shelter beds were offered.

Over the course of the ECRT activation, 18 individuals (or 25% of the population) moved into shelter or housing. While ECRT members are disappointed with that outcome, we believe the process has helped highlight strategic weaknesses for us to address going forward, as well as strengths for us to capitalize on.

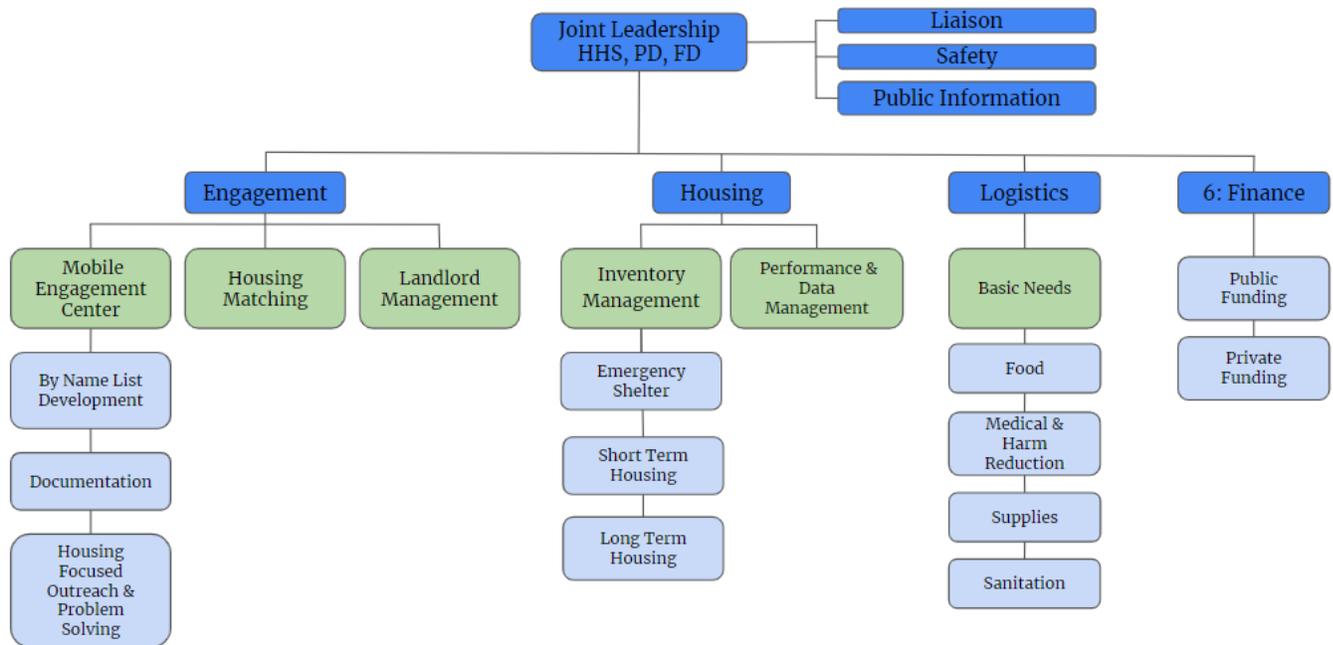
Based on our evaluation of those strengths and weaknesses, the ECRT plans to make deliberate adjustments to its operations at other encampments that have been identified as hazardous. These changes include:

- Introducing new efficiencies to the ECRT structure to streamline communications and focus resources;
- Reducing barriers to individuals' willingness to accept beds at the HSC;
- Improved marketing of HSC, its amenities, and its guidelines to potential guests;
- Employing per diem outreach staff to control quality of outreach to unhoused individuals;
- Improve communications both internally and externally, recommendation to create a communications group for developing; agendas, minutes, public information, council updates, signage and flyers for the encampment, etc.
- Consider consolidating sections or groups to avoid duplication and overlap of responsibilities and will reduce the amount of meetings;
- Setting real expectations around what the resolution process looks like both verbally and written

Emergency Operations Center / NIMS Structure

The City established an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for dealing with this particular encampment very similar to what we did during the Covid pandemic and the asylum seekers at the Expo. This is a best practice model which uses an Incident Command System (ICS) & National Incident Management System (NIMS) approach allowing for all levels of government, nonprofits and the private sector to work together to recover from the effects of an incident. This type of structure ensures that incidents are properly managed and communications are effectively coordinated during an incident. Regular briefings were held three to four times weekly that included an Incident Action Plan (IAP), which we used as our playbook. Please see the organizational chart below.

Encampment Crisis Response Team



The first large group meeting for the ECRT was on May 31, 2023 and several of the smaller groups had their initial meetings on June 7, 2023 and began meeting regularly soon thereafter.

Name of Group	Number of Meetings	Time period
ECRT Leadership	52	5/31/23 - 9/8/23
Mobile Engagement Center (MEC)	7	6/7/23 - 9/8/23
Inventory Management	11	6/7/23 - 9/8/23
BNL / Case Conferencing	19	6/15/23 - 9/8/23
Basic Needs	16	6/7/23 - 9/1/23
Large Group	3	5/31/23 - 8/10/23

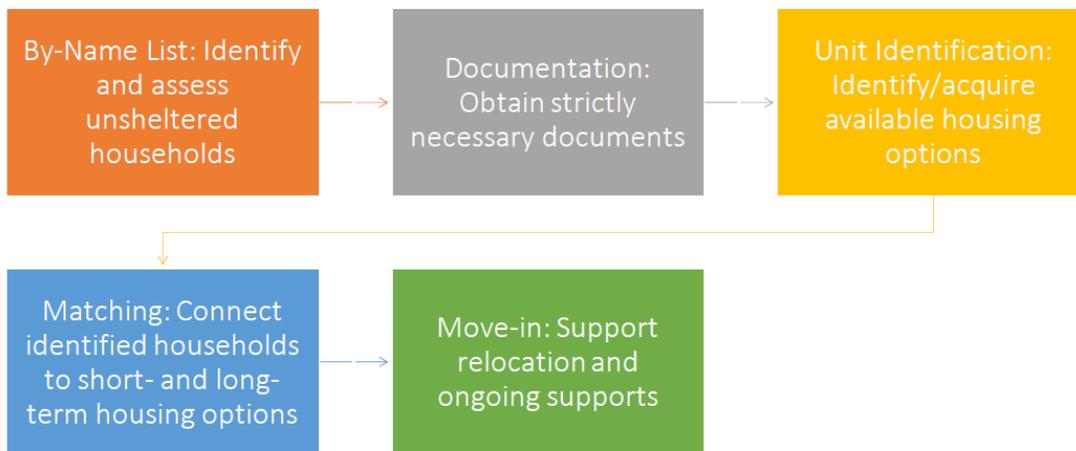
- ECRT Leadership has met weekly with HUD Technical Assistance since July 10, 2023 after and in addition to several other meetings together. HUD Technical Assistance made their first site visit to Portland on May 30, 2023
- The Mobile Engagement Center held a Grounding Session on Authentically Collaborating with People with Lived Experience of Homelessness on July 19th, 2023 that was provided by HUD Technical Assistance
- The Housing Inventory Management group organized four housing fairs that occurred weekly starting on August 10, 2023
- The Performance and Data Management group was a small group that met on an as-needed basis (See: Section 6 for additional information)
- The following groups held debriefing sessions the week of September 11, 2023: ECRT Leadership with HUD Technical Assistance, Mobile Engagement Center, Inventory Management, Basic Needs

Technical Assistance Team Resource

Corporation for Supportive Housing had been assigned by HUD to provide technical assistance to Portland to support the development of housing solutions for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

- Tashmia Bryant, Senior Program Manager
- Hannah Roberts, Senior Program Manager

Creating a Housing-Focused Effort



Calls for Service for Police & Fire

FREDERIC STREET/FORE RIVER PARKWAY ENCAMPMENT **(1/2023-9/6/2023)**

CALLS FOR SERVICE:cas

2022 total CFS: 70

2023 YTD CFS: 158

Police	2022	2023
APR	2	17
MAY	6	37
JUN	6	31
JUL	1	30
AUG	11	39
Fire	2022	2023
Jan. 1-Sept 6	142	258

Notable Calls:

23-002992 Homicide of Nicholas Gardner

23-025050 Weapons Possession (Male chased employee with a crowbar and gas can)

*Important to note that calls for the businesses at 17 Westfield rose significantly during the time of the encampment. There were 9 calls in 2022 from Jan-Sept and 36 for the same period in 2023. Mostly burglaries to the businesses, people refusing to leave, and disturbances directly related to the encampment.

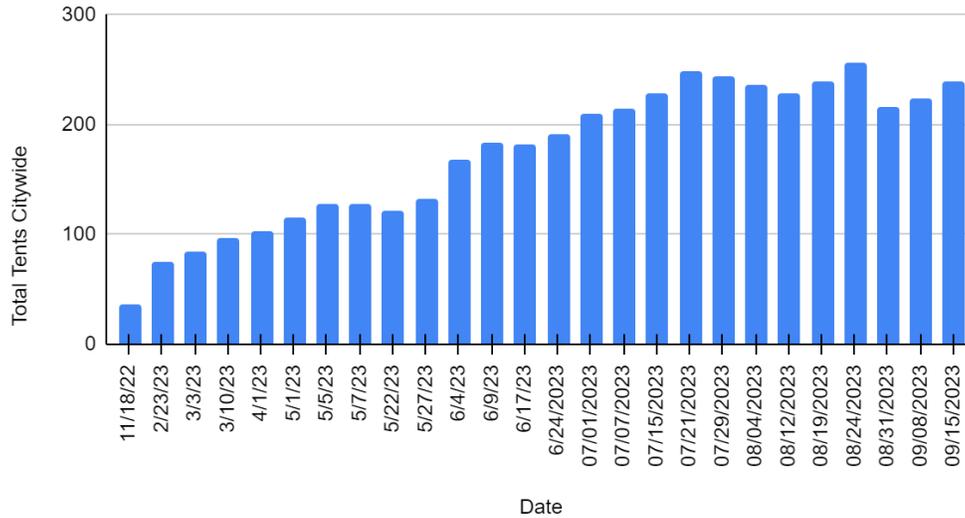
Overdoses:

- 13 Overdoses on trail or in parking lot in 2023
- Zero Overdoses in 2022

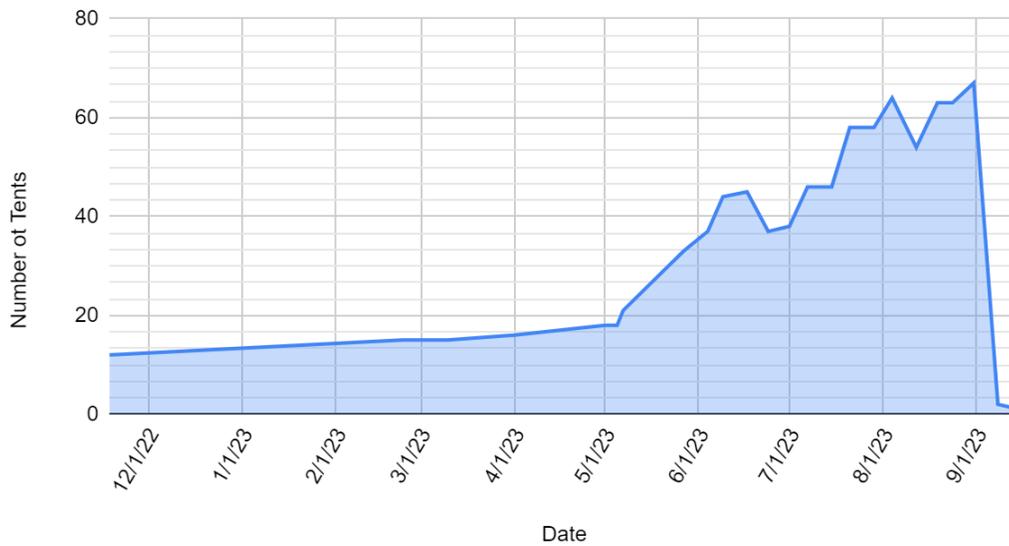
Tents

This data is collected weekly with information observed by Park Rangers

Total Tents Citywide vs. Date



Tents at Frederic St Fore River Parkway vs. Date

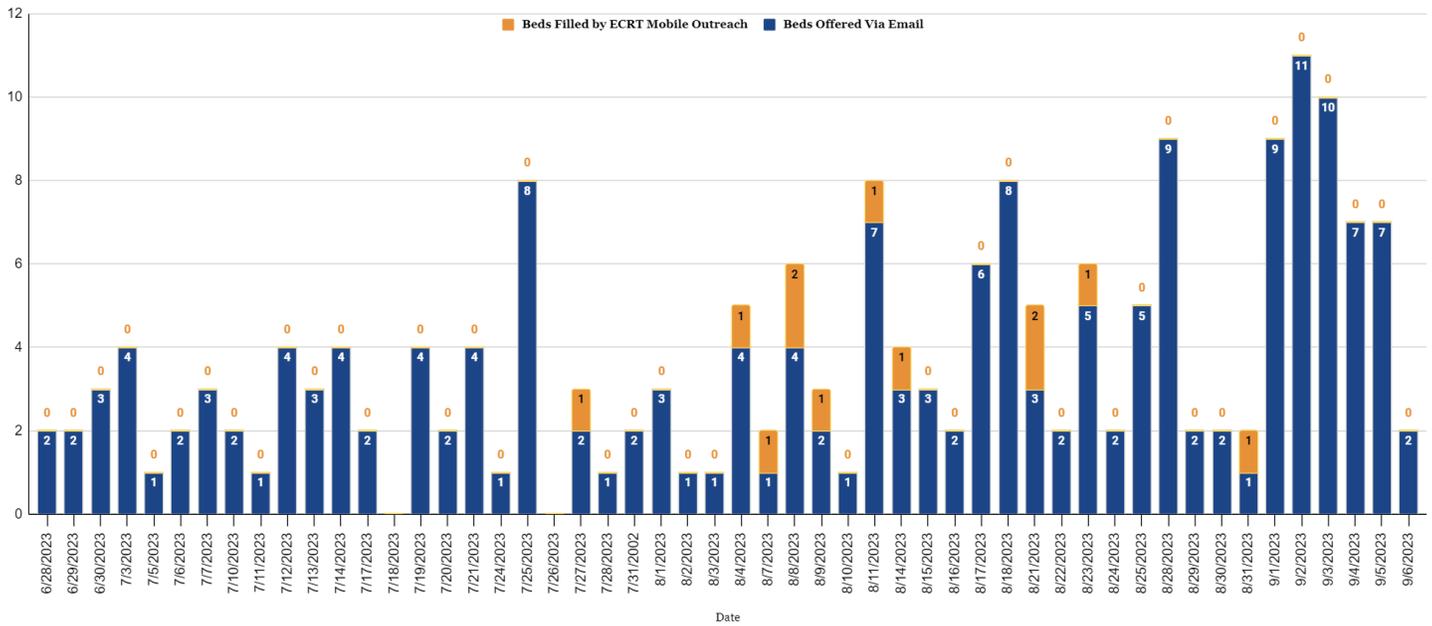


- The maximum number of tents at the Frederic St / Fore River Encampment was 67 tents on August 31, 2023

Homeless Services Center (HSC) Bed Data

From June 28th to Sept 6th, 2023 the HSC served 352 unique individuals (239 men and 113 women). During the same time period, 180 total beds were offered to ECRT mobile outreach as shown on the graph below.

Total HSC Beds Available and Total Beds Offered to ECRT Mobile Outreach (via email)



Management Objectives

- To find temporary or permanent housing for the homeless / unsheltered population at the identified encampment.
- Ensure coordinated, timely and accurate release of public information.
- Foster and maintain communication & relationships with all community partners and stakeholders.
- Maintain public safety and public health throughout the City by mitigating campsites.
- Maintain fiscal accountability and keep costs commensurate with values at risk.

Control Objectives

- The ECRT will meet as a large group for updates and group planning on an as needed basis.
- The ECRT will develop a process for collecting, forecasting, and sharing emergency shelter bed availability.
- The ECRT will install temporary porta potties, dumpster, needle collection box, and potable water near the encampment for the time period that the ECRT is working at the encampment.
- The ECRT will create a schedule of who is providing outreach services to the encampment with the goal of having outreach workers on site when HSC bed availability information is shared.
- The ECRT will create a By Name List (BNL) of the individuals in the encampment that is a living document kept in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to be used by workers who have signed onto a shared data agreement.
- The BNL will be kept up to date and used for case conferencing to address individual housing needs.
- The ECRT will determine a date for resolving the encampment that is based on known shelter availability and balances the needs of City partners and constituencies.
- The ECRT will incorporate people with lived experience into the work of the ECRT after determining the details of providing compensation and hosting a training for ECRT members on authentic collaboration with people with lived experience.
- The ECRT will provide updates to City leadership and City Council.
- The ECRT will convene a Finance Group by the week of July 10, 2023.
- The ECRT will work to address gaps in food delivery by seeking volunteers to assist with food delivery to the encampment.
- The City will resume the enforcement of City Code after a period of intensive outreach offering housing options to people living in the encampment and restore the area to its intended use.

Section 1: Mobile Engagement Center

Goal / Objective

To ensure that the unsheltered households are known and assessed. Develop a By-Name-List (BNL) through engagement, documentation and taking a housing-focused outreach approach for problem solving.

Participants

City of Portland (Fire Department, Health and Human Services (Social Services & Public Health)), Community Housing of Maine, Greater Portland Health, HUD Technical Assistance, Preble Street, The Opportunity Alliance (PATH)

Key Findings

Strength 1: The Mobile Engagement Center (MEC) created an outreach schedule of when seven different teams or individuals provide outreach services to the encampment with the majority of outreach activities on site during the time that HSC bed availability is shared. This outreach schedule was shared among MEC and Basic Needs group members. Outreach provided by MEC members helped build the By Name List (BNL).

Strength 2: The City's Mobile Medical Outreach (MMO) team provided outreach at the encampment and began delivering lunch three days a week. The consistent schedule of when MMO would be at the encampment and the assistance with food delivery were successes. MMO is a group of paramedics that provide medical care to the City's homeless population and connect people with additional resources.

Strength 3: Communication among MEC members and from the Engagement Section Chief to group members was a strength. Meeting agendas and minutes were a strength that should be replicated for all groups of the ECRT. The MEC established daily communication around shelter bed availability and regular emails fostered good group communication.

Identified Gap 1: There are not enough outreach workers in the community to dedicate to the amount of outreach desired by the ECRT. Because the City does not have dedicated outreach workers, City staff relied on non-profit outreach workers to conduct outreach efforts as part of the ECRT process. Asking the current outreach workers to do ECRT work in addition to their regular work was untenable and led to some communication breakdowns. This led to a delay in realizing shelter and housing placements. When HSC staff spent time doing outreach, the team started to see success with shelter placements. The ECRT effort needs more individuals to focus on the ECRT work (outreach workers, case managers, housing navigation).

Identified Gap 2: Some operating procedures act as barriers to unhoused individuals' being willing to accept shelter beds; these are listed below. (Operating changes that City staff have made or plan to make are in blue.) In addition, the ECRT plans to improve shelter marketing efforts to dispel misinformation about the shelter.

- Curfew of 6pm is too early;
- Limited storage available for personal belongings;
- Overnight lighting in HSC is uncomfortable;
- Pets are not permitted (other than service animals);
- Couples cannot sleep together in the same room;
- The timeframe of sharing bed availability to an individual needing to decide to go to the HSC today is too short,
- Requiring the completion of paperwork at 39 Forest prior to intake at HSC creates an uncomfortable waiting period;
- HSC rules and policies are unclear.

Identified Gap 3: Incorporate people with lived experience of homelessness into the work of the ECRT. The ECRT Leadership identified a process and funding to compensate people with lived experience and held a grounding session for ECRT members at the request of the MEC group members on authentically collaborating with people with lived experience of homelessness provided by HUD Technical Assistance held on July 29, 2023. Outreach workers reported knowing people living in the encampment that were interested in attending MEC meetings. The Mobile Engagement Section Chief was ready to hold meetings with an in-person option (as opposed to virtual only). While the goal was not met, the ECRT is set up to do this once people are ready and offered meeting invitations.

Identified Gap 4: The work of the MEC ended up being different from the vision that was initially set. While MEC members helped build the By Name List (BNL), the work of case conferencing on the BNL was more effectively administered in a different group due to limited access and permission levels of members in the MEC. MEC members suggested that the work of the MEC could be combined with Basic Needs and had recommendations to reduce the number of meetings for workers engaged in case conferencing. Gaps from the Basic Needs group were addressed in the MEC group.

Analysis

The work of the Mobile Engagement Center (MEC) ended up being slightly different from the original design of the group within the ECRT. The By Name List (BNL) function of the group became a separate group (see next section) and the MEC group met to troubleshoot issues the BNL and Basic Needs groups were facing and to support outreach workers. This group was successful in helping to create the BNL, creating an outreach schedule, enhancing communication between outreach workers and filling in some gaps. The MEC also discussed barriers that individuals had in wanting to go to the HSC and brought issues to the ECRT Leadership that worked to address some of the barriers such as offering tours and adjusting the curfew. During the debriefing meeting, MEC group members had additional ideas for working on a communication plan for outreach workers to use that explains the process for moving into the HSC so that everyone had the same information to share with people in the encampment about what to expect as they move from the encampment to the HSC.

The ECRT should consider restructuring this group as it has overlap with the BNL / Case Conferencing and Basic Needs groups. It is helpful for partners to meet to schedule outreach, address barriers, and troubleshoot outreach challenges; this work should continue in future ECRT efforts, even if it happens in a different structure. Forecasted bed availability at the HSC in November 2023 with the opening of a new emergency shelter in Portland will be an opportunity to move a large number of people from encampments into the HSC and a forum for outreach workers and the City to work on strategies for marketing the HSC to individuals in the encampment will be important.

Section 2: By Name List / Case Conferencing

Goal / Objective

Identify all people staying in the target encampment, assess basic factors (i.e. interest in shelter), and meet regularly to coordinate services across providers and reduce duplication

Participants

City of Portland (Health & Human Services (Social Services & Public Health)), Greater Portland Health, HUD Technical Assistance, Preble Street, The Opportunity Alliance (PATH),

Key Findings

Strength 1: Creating a By Name List (BNL) and getting a group together regularly to case conference was a success. The BNL includes a field for housing and/or shelter goals and barriers and is used during case conferencing to match individuals to available housing or shelter resources.

Strength 2: The ECRT created a structure for community organizations to connect and collaborate with each other and share caseloads for individuals living in the encampment. The team approach to the ECRT has been helpful to outreach workers.

Strength 3: The BNL for the ECRT is a lower barrier list that is a starting point for outreach workers to discuss the needs of people living in an encampment that did not exist before the work of the ECRT. This process started discussions of the pathway to Coordinated Entry, where individuals are matched with housing resources based on a formal prioritization. While Coordinated Entry requires a more formal assessment, the BNL for the ECRT enables outreach workers to meet individuals where they are at and begin relationship building while also collecting data.

Identified Gap 1: There are not enough housing options available to people living in the encampment. This group needs more housing options to make case conferencing more productive.

Identified Gap 2: There are not enough outreach workers and case managers for current outreach workers to participate on the BNL and Coordinated Entry in addition to the work they have outside of the ECRT. Additional staff dedicated to the work of the ECRT are needed to get to the desired level of housing focused outreach.

Identified Gap 3: There are concerns that people who are living in the encampment have a distrust with the homeless service system that has led to some individuals asking to be removed from the BNL.

Identified Gap 4: Continued improvements are needed to ensure the By Name List and HUB 2 Coordinated Entry list work in partnership to ensure individuals have access to all housing options. Work to modify reports and capture data in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to improve the use of this data to connect people with housing. It took time

to build the BNL and develop the new system. The process requires additional meetings (three per week for some outreach workers - two for ECRT and one for HUB2) and additional time to complete documentation to enter data into HMIS.

Analysis

Having a By Name List (BNL) of individuals living in the encampment and knowing their housing and/or shelter preferences is essential to the work of the ECRT. There was not a process or database for having a BNL prior to the work of the ECRT and it took some time to make high level technical changes and set up the BNL with improvements to the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) - see Section 5: Performance and Data Management for additional information. Once the foundational work was completed, outreach workers were able to begin meeting for case conferencing to work together on housing strategies for individuals on the BNL. Case conferencing for this encampment began on June 30, 2023 with an initial 24 individuals on the BNL. The BNL also provides important data that can be used to inform other work ECRT and provide more information about the unique needs of the population that the ECRT is serving. When the BNL is updated in real time, it can allow for quicker housing or shelter placements for individuals in the encampment and leads to a more efficient process for resource allocation in the community.

The members of the BNL / Case Conferencing group found the process to be helpful for sharing caseloads and getting together to discuss cases. Group members also felt that working on the BNL and attending several more meetings for the ECRT was a lot of additional work on top of what they were already doing prior to the establishment of ECRT. Case conferencing would be more productive if there were additional housing options provided from the Inventory Management group. Additional outreach workers working on the BNL would help make this work more manageable. Re-examining the frequency of case conferencing meetings and seeking additional outreach workers would make future ECRT efforts more successful.

Section 3: Housing Matching

Goal / Objective

Connects households to available housing options (including housing problem solving/diversion, services, shelter, Rapid Rehousing (RRH), Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), etc.) using an agreed upon prioritization process.

Analysis

The Housing Matching group and functions were combined with the Inventory Management and BNL / Case Conferencing groups. A small group of individuals that signed up for the Housing Matching group were also signed up to work on the other groups. As the work of the ECRT developed, the work of matching people to available housing options was happening in the BNL / Case Conferencing meetings.

Section 4: Inventory Management

Goal / Objective

Ensures that all available short and long term housing options are known and available.

Participants

City of Portland (Social Services), Community Housing of Maine, Portland Housing Authority, Preble Street, HUD Technical Assistance, United Way of Southern Maine

Key Findings

Strength 1: Housing fairs at the encampment provided opportunities for individuals to fill out necessary paperwork and applications on site. Weekly fairs started on August 10, 2023 and were attended by a total of 35 people living in the encampment (four housing fairs were held at this encampment). This was a way that several people were able to get reinstated on waitlists and an opportunity for some to quickly have vouchers approved. Funding would help make them more robust. There are ideas for enhancing what is offered at these events to bring more resource options directly into the encampment.

Strength 2: The ECRT created inventory surveys and spreadsheets to forecast emergency shelter availability to be shared with ECRT group members to try to create more advanced notice for outreach workers to use to communicate with individuals in the encampment. This is also an area for improvement because it could be further improved by having data from other shelters.

Strength 3: Engaging with long term housing providers such as Portland Housing Authority (PHA) was a strength of the ECRT. Working closely with PHA and using the By Name List (BNL), the ECRT was able to identify people living in the encampment that were on PHA's waitlist and were able to get the people reinstated and keep their spot on the waitlist. PHA's participation in the housing fairs also provided an opportunity for attendees to take immediate action with the housing provider. Working with additional long term housing providers in this way would make the work of the ECRT even more successful.

Identified Gap 1: Need more housing options for this population. Increase the amount of rental subsidies available. There are not enough subsidies for the population that is eligible and there are even less available for people who are currently without housing. Need state level policy change to create more subsidies and to encourage property management companies to accept vouchers from individuals with complex histories.

Identified Gap 2: Increase housing navigation services specifically for populations who have barriers due to their interactions with the justice system and/or those that have barriers due to homelessness and eviction history. Housing navigation is incredibly complex and challenging for individuals to navigate, especially when they are in crisis. The current system only really provides housing navigation support to people staying at an emergency shelter or in short-term housing (not provided directly from encampments).

Identified Gap 3: There is not a streamlined single application process with management companies that allow individuals to complete one application for multiple properties in a management company's portfolio. People looking for housing frequently need to fill out multiple applications for each property management company.

Identified Gap 4: Not enough emergency shelters. Increase the amount of emergency shelter beds available. Bring the community together and talk more about additional emergency shelter options. Also increase temporary room availability where General Assistance could be available (i.e. motels). This may be a topic for discussion at the policy level with the City Council.

Analysis

The Housing Inventory Management group created a way to forecast and share emergency shelter beds, engaged long term housing providers, and held housing fairs in the encampment. There is a need for more housing inventory options for individuals living in encampments and more workers to help individuals navigate the complex housing system. Many of the improvements needed around housing inventory are beyond the scope of any municipality and need to be addressed at the state level. The City of Portland lacks leverage for many of the issues and barriers related to having more housing options for people living in encampments. Group members felt that this group would be most effective with heavy involvement and leadership from MaineHousing.

Section 5: Landlord Management

Goal / Objective

Develops a landlord engagement strategy and resources and cultivates relationships with landlords.

Analysis

This group did not meet as originally planned. ECRT Leadership met with the Southern Maine Landlord Association about the work of the ECRT. Southern Maine Landlord Association leadership shared that there was very low rental housing inventory and that they are currently engaging with the Quality Housing Coalition's Project HOME. This is certainly an area for improvement moving forward and is directly tied to the lack of inventory mentioned in this report.

Section 6: Performance and Data Management

Goal / Objective:

Develop internal and external dashboards and reports to track progress and outstanding needs.

Participants

City of Portland (Social Services), MaineHousing, HUD Technical Assistance, United Way of Southern Maine (HUB 2)

Analysis

This group was led by the HUD Technical assistance team and focused on high level and technical aspects of improving data collection in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) that would further the goals of the ECRT. Enhancements were made in HMIS to create additional fields in the database related to encampments. The group also established a privacy policy that permitted data collection so that outreach workers were using a shared data platform for the BNL / Case Conferencing group work. The work of this group was essential to advancing the capabilities of the ECRT and should continue to be a part of ECRT efforts.

Section 7: Basic Needs and Logistics

Goal / Objective

Address the safety and immediate needs of unsheltered households. Providing food, medical, harm reduction, sanitation and supplies.

Participants

City of Portland (Parks, Recreation & Facilities, Public Health), CommonSpace, Greater Portland Health, Greater Portland Peer Services, Preble Street, The Opportunity Alliance (PATH), Through These Doors

Key Findings

Strength 1: Providing the basic needs of porta potties, trash removal, water, food, and harm reduction services for the individuals at the encampment (See Annex C for photos of water, dumpster, and sharps container). This would not have been possible without the partnership with Avesta. The City managed this partnership; making several changes throughout the time period (placement of basic needs, water, parking and theft concerns). Although providing water was considered a huge success, it was noted that we should consider ideas for privacy while the people in the encampment utilize the water for washing or bathing. In addition it was noted that handwashing stations would be extremely beneficial for hygiene purposes in the encampment.

Strength 2: Regular meetings with the Basic Needs group greatly improved communications between social service providers in the community and the City. The ECRT has helped bring groups together to work on a complex issue. This was the first time that collaboration with city departments and outreach providers focused on providing basic needs together.

Strength 3: Harm reduction services on site where exchange staff were able to do exchanges at the encampment as well as collect syringes was a strength. People living in the encampment were engaged in picking up syringes. Exchange staff had good success with meeting people who had collected syringes and noted that there were some people returning them with no intention of exchanging. City picked up over 14,000 syringes in 2 months and collected over 3,000 in the large container. Many full sharps containers that people had on Sept 6th probably held 5,000 more.

Identified Gap 1: There was not enough food and not enough staff to deliver the food. The amount of food and timing of delivery was unpredictable for the people depending on it. The City's Mobile Medical Outreach (MMO) transitioned to delivering lunch three days a week starting the week of August 14th, 2023, which was a success. The Outreach Collaborative delivered food for other meals, 11 shifts per week. Having reliable food delivery on a set schedule would be best. If outreach workers were able to spend less time delivering food, they could spend more time on housing-focused outreach. City staff explored options for using volunteers through the United Way of Southern Maine, but the model did not work because it still required more on-site paid staff time than was available.

Identified Gap 2: Communications with people living in the encampment needed to be improved. Communication goals and strategies were not shared well between ECRT Leadership and ECRT group members and that impacted the communication to people living in the encampment. There was no way of city leadership confirming whether accurate or any information was delivered to the people in the encampment. Agencies, non-profits, and community partners working under city leadership in this EOC structure were identified as a challenge especially when delivering accurate and timely information to the encampment.

Identified Gap 3: People living in encampments have unique and complex health needs that are not being met. A health subgroup led by Greater Portland Health began meeting on August 15, 2023 and identified the need for additional prevention strategies and communication to address the risk of Hepatitis A in the encampment. The subgroup should continue meeting a focus on the unique needs of the population living in the encampment.

Analysis

Providing the basic needs of porta potties, trash removal, syringe disposal, drinking water, and food was important for the people living in the encampment. Through a partnership with Avesta Housing who owned property near the entrance to the trail where the encampment was located, the City of Portland was able to provide these services (food was provided by Preble Street) during the work of the ECRT (for costs see: Section 10 - Finance). The City maintained these services throughout the work of the ECRT and managed challenges that arose; the City relied on Basic Needs group members to work with people living in the encampment on issues such as requesting that trash be brought to the provided dumpster. Food was provided by Preble Street. While there were significant efforts to improve food delivery, more work is needed to ensure there is enough food for people living in encampments and that it is delivered regularly, ideally on a set schedule. ECRT members felt that providing basic needs was very important and the efforts of this group should be continued and improved, with a focus on improvements to food delivery.

Section 8: Communications

Goal / Objective

Ensure coordinated, timely and accurate release of public information. Communicate effectively with and among members of the ECRT.

Participants

Communications was a topic discussed at all debriefing meetings by participating organizations listed in previous sections.

Key Findings

Strength 1: The ECRT increased communication between the city and social service agencies and each other around encampments and the homeless population in general.

Strength 2: Daily communication about available beds at HSC; ECRT work got this daily notification out to a group of outreach workers.

Strength 3: The City created a dedicated [page on its website](#) to communicate about the ECRT and provide regular updates on its progress and action. Additionally, City staff provided regular updates via Council Communications during Council meetings in July, August, and September.

Identified Gap 1: Communication in the ECRT can be improved by having a standard practice for communication for each group that includes meeting agendas with action steps and minutes. Enhance communication from ECRT Leadership Team to group members and enhance communication between groups.

Identified Gap 2: There should be more transparent communication to the individuals in the encampment. ECRT Leadership shared messaging with group members, but it was not known if, when, or how information that was intended for people living in the encampment was shared with them (i.e. resolution date). Group members would like to be more involved with decision making around communication to individuals in the encampment and to the public.

Identified Gap 3: Outreach and support (food delivery, housing fairs, etc.) for people in the encampment should be scheduled and communicated to the people living there.

Analysis

The ECRT created new ways for the City to communicate with community partners and facilitate communication amongst partners. Bringing together a large group of stakeholders for the ECRT and having groups focused on specific issues helped create a coordinated effort to work towards moving people out of encampments and into emergency shelter or housing. Communication strategies that worked well for the ECRT Leadership team and the MEC group should be uniformly implemented across all groups. Communication within groups, from leadership to groups, and from the ECRT to people living in the encampment could be improved by adding more structure to group meetings. Recommendations include:

- Agendas and meeting minutes for all groups that are driven by action steps
- Set schedules for meetings for the duration of the ECRT effort
- Set schedules for services provided in the encampment that are communicated to the people living in the encampment
- Shared talking points for outreach workers
- Idea to have a communications group to approve pamphlets and signage
- Idea to use to BNL more as data - how long it took for one person to get a voucher and how that data can be used to communicate with the public

Section 9: Encampment Resolution

Goal / Objective

The City will resume the enforcement of City Code after a period of intensive outreach offering housing options to people living in the encampment and restore the area to its intended use.

Participants

City of Portland Departments: Parks, Recreation & Facilities, Public Works, Police. Avesta Housing

Key Findings

Strength 1: City property and a park trail was restored to its intended public use after engaging with the ECRT model of offering; basic needs, harm reduction strategies, scheduled outreach, shelter and or housing.

Strength 2: The City operations at this encampment on September 6th, 2023 were the same processes as previous resolution efforts and followed City policy. Resolution and site clean up took Parks Recreation & Facilities 1 ½ days and Public Works 3 days to complete, and required equipment rental along with outside contractors. Parks Recreation & Facilities estimates that it will take several weeks of work to remove and replant trees and restore the trails and park.

Strength 3: No arrests were made during this resolution.

Identified Gap 1: ECRT group members shared that they and individuals at encampment would like additional communication about the resolution date. Communication of the date was provided from the beginning of the process, and a specific email to the Basic Needs group on September 1st, 2023 also shared that the dumpster, porta potty, and water would be removed on September 5th and advised that people leave the site prior to the September 6th resolution date so that work with equipment and trucks could proceed safely for all. Communication could be improved by providing additional communication of the schedule, site access details, and expectations for the resolution date to all ECRT group members and individuals at the encampment.

Identified Gap 2: ECRT members shared that they did not feel that the City's work on September 6th, 2023 was a trauma informed sweep. Some work on education and expectations around what resolution looks like is needed.

Identified Gap 3: ECRT members would like to see that the resolution date for the encampment is a data driven decision that incorporates availability for all types of housing preferences that individuals indicated in the data on the BNL.

Analysis

Leading up to a resolution date the ECRT should shift focus from current operations of the ECRT to the resolution date and the plan for that date. The ECRT Leadership should improve communication to ECRT group members about the timing and expectations for the days leading up to and day of the resolution. The leadership should have a plan for the day that is shared with partners so everyone has information about what to expect. If people remain at an encampment as the resolution date approaches, ECRT group members should share the plan and expectations with the people still remaining in the encampment. Also, once a resolution date is determined at the beginning of the process, the date shall remain without continued discussions so that the efforts of the ECRT can focus on housing first.

Section 10: Finance

Goal / Objective

Maintain fiscal accountability and keep costs commensurate with values at risk

City expenses at the Fore River / Frederic St. encampment to September 20, 2023

Description	Cost	Note
Trash removal	\$11,445	daily trash removal beginning on June 28, 2023 and cleanup on September 6th, 2023
Heavy item pickup	\$2,570	weekly heavy item pickup by a contractor was added on July 24, 2023
Septic services	\$2,244	
Potable water	\$4,718	cost of metered water and contractor services
Supplies	\$930	
Equipment rental	\$1,500	for site cleanup on September 6th, 2023
Outside contractor	\$27,856.50	debris removal on and after September 6th, 2023
City staff stipends	\$12,605.25	paid to employees cleaning hazardous areas
Total	\$63,868.75	

Notes:

- Actual invoices from some vendors have not been received as of September 20, 2023
- The above does not include salary costs for all staff involved including, but not limited to, Chief Keith Gautreau, EMA Coordinator Caity Hager, and Division Chief Sean Donaghue who have spent significant amounts of time on the ECRT efforts, as well as many other leadership team and staff members who were taken away from their other day-to-day duties to work with the ECRT.
- Parks, Recreation and Facilities estimates that another \$15,000 may be needed for more cleanup, tree removal, tree replanting, and restoration of the trails/park.

Annex A: Participating Organizations

This list encompasses all of the organizations that participated in the ECRT, while the participants listed in the report reflect the organizations that participated in debriefing meetings and contributed to the After Action Report

Federal Resources
Corporation for Supportive Housing (Technical Assistance Team)
Housing and Urban Development
City Resources
Fire
Health & Human Services (Public Health & Social Services)
Parks, Recreation & Facilities
Police
Public Works Department
Executive Department
Non-Governmental Organizations
Community Housing of Maine
Common Space (Amistad)
Cumberland County Homeless Services HUB
Grace Street Ministry
Greater Portland Health
Greater Portland Peer Services
MaineHousing
Maine Health - Gov Affairs
Maine Medical Center (MMC)
Mercy Hospital
Milestone Recovery
Portland Housing Authority
Preble Street
Southern Maine Landlord Association
Spurwink
The Opportunity Alliance - PATH Program
Through These Doors
United Way of Southern Maine

Annex B: Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
AAR	After Action Report
BNL	By Name List
DPW	Department of Public Works
ECRT	Encampment Crisis Response Team
EEG	Exercise Evaluation Guide
EMA	Emergency Management Agency
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
HMIS	Housing Management Information System
HSC	Homeless Services Center
HUD	Housing and Urban Development
IAP	Incident Action Plan
IC	Incident Command
ICS	Incident Command System
MEC	Mobile Engagement Center
MMC	Maine Medical Center
MYTEP	Multi-Year Training and Exercise Plan
NB	North-bound
NIMS	National Incident Management System
PA	Public Assistance
PIO	Public Information Officer
UC	Unified Command

Annex C: Photos of Basic Needs and clean up Provided by the City



Encampment Crisis Response Team



Large Sharps Container















