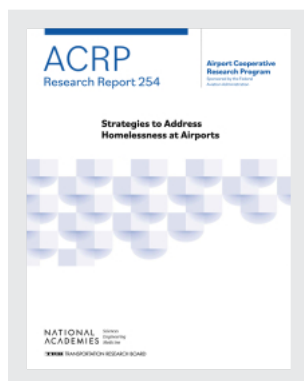


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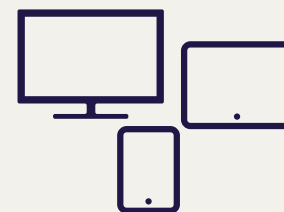
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AIRPORT COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM

ACRP RESEARCH REPORT 254

**Strategies to Address  
Homelessness at Airports**

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## FOREWORD

**By Joseph D. Navarrete**

Staff Officer

Transportation Research Board

*ACRP Research Report 254* provides airports and stakeholders with resources and suggested practices to respond to people experiencing homelessness on airport property. The report will be of particular interest to not only airport industry practitioners but also local governmental agencies and service organizations that want to respond to this challenge in a comprehensive and humane manner.

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There has been an increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness at airports in recent years. There are many reasons for this, including an increase in people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the United States and the attractiveness of airports for this population due to their relative safety, transit accessibility, climate-controlled shelter, and access to food and amenities. Responses by airports have been varied as they wrestle with how to balance their primary function of serving the traveling public with dealing respectfully with people experiencing homelessness. Research was needed to help airports partner with local community-based resources for developing and implementing strategies to address homelessness at airport facilities.

The research, led by The Cadmus Group, began with a review of foundational and contextual factors; this review also helped identify a broad range of stakeholders to be interviewed. This was followed by a comprehensive outreach plan that included airport and governmental institutions, homelessness organizations, and one-on-one interviews with people experiencing homelessness to ensure that these groups could contribute to the research. The research team then identified effective practices airports could consider implementing at their facility.

The guide's two main sections are a primer and a strategic action plan. The primer provides an overview of homelessness in the United States, describes homelessness in an airport setting, and offers guiding principles for developing airport response strategies. The strategic action plan provides a step-by-step process for airports and stakeholders to develop a plan that is unique to their situation. The key steps include assessing current conditions, identifying and working with partners, planning a response, developing and implementing a training program, and tracking progress.

The appendix provides numerous tools and resources, including checklists, sample memorandums of understanding to formalize partnerships, and sample training materials.

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Note: Photographs, figures, and tables in this report may have been converted from color to grayscale for printing. The electronic version of the report (posted on the web at [nap.nationalacademies.org](http://nap.nationalacademies.org)) retains the color versions.





## SUMMARY

# Strategies to Address Homelessness at Airports

## Background

In recent years, there has been an increase in the use of airports by people experiencing homelessness. There are many reasons for this, including a significant overall increase in people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the United States since 2015 and the attractiveness of airports due to their relative safety, transit accessibility, climate-controlled shelter, and access to food and amenities. Airport responses have varied. Many airports wrestle with how to balance their primary function of serving the traveling public and respectfully responding to people experiencing homelessness. Consequently, airport practitioners need information to assist them in developing and implementing strategies to address homelessness on airport property.

## Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to help airport operators understand and respond to people experiencing homelessness on airport property (i.e., at their built facilities and on surrounding airport-owned land). The guide provides airport operators with the fundamental knowledge needed to understand homelessness and its intersection with airports, an understanding of the contextual factors that influence the prevalence of homelessness in airport contexts, and detailed actions that airport practitioners can consider to develop and implement a program to address homelessness.

## Audience

The primary audience for the guide is staff at U.S. airports responsible for implementing practices to address homelessness. This audience includes the following, who may play key roles in implementing an airport's program to address homelessness:

- Airport executives
- Department leads and managers
- Operations and security personnel
- Law enforcement and aircraft rescue and firefighting or emergency medical services
- Legal staff
- Communications and dispatch
- Other public-facing employees

Other potential audiences include:

- All other stakeholders at airports, including airline staff, tenant/concessionaire/contractor staff, and law enforcement and security staff not employed by the airport

## 2 Strategies to Address Homelessness at Airports

- Federal agency personnel, including from the FAA, TSA, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection
- Aviation industry organizations, since they regularly coordinate with airports on guidance and resources
- Homeless service organizations working with airports

### Contents

This guide comprises two main parts—the Primer and the Strategic Action Plan, as shown in Figure 1.

The main body of the guide is the strategic action plan, which is designed as an easy-to-use, logical, stepwise guide organized around eight strategies that airport practitioners can work through to initiate or enhance a program to address homelessness. Each strategy is structured the same way and contains the following sections:

- Background and Need
- Actions to Consider
- Airport Stakeholders Involved
- How to Leverage External Partners
- Tools and Resources

Airport practitioners can undertake some or all of the strategies, depending on the scope of their existing or proposed program as well as their unique needs, access to resources and funding, size/type of airport, amenities, governance structures, availability of potential partners, political environments, and other contextual factors. The strategies are roughly sequential, although they are likely to overlap, be undertaken concurrently, or be revisited over time as the program evolves.

### Methodology

All materials were developed as part of ACRP Project 03-59, “Strategies to Address Homelessness at Airports.” The structure, organization, content, and terminology in each part of the guide are informed by research conducted primarily between June 2021 and August 2022. This research included a comprehensive resource review as well as extensive stakeholder engagement, including 16 virtual interviews with homeless service organizations; five virtual focus groups conducted with airport and airport tenant staff representing nine airports; and, to ensure that the guide incorporates lived experiences that in turn will provide airports with

Primer	Strategic Action Plan	
Overview of Homelessness in the United States	① Learning the Fundamentals	⑤ Outlining Staff and Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities
Homelessness in an Airport Setting	② Assessing Current Conditions	⑥ Developing and Implementing a Training Program
Guiding Principles for Airport Response Strategies	③ Identifying and Working with Partners	⑦ Developing an Engagement Protocol
	④ Planning a Response	⑧ Tracking Progress

**Figure 1. The two parts of the guide: Primer and Strategic Action Plan.**

effective, workable strategies, six one-on-one telephone interviews with individuals experiencing homelessness. Following the stakeholder engagement, the research team conducted site visits at four airports to observe firsthand conditions of people experiencing homelessness at airports and to engage, in person, with airport personnel working on the issue. The site visits were generally scheduled for 2-hour timeframes and included tours of the airport property and facilities, airport police patrols, and conversations on the impact of homelessness at the airport. The final guide was written in September and October 2022 and went through a review, revision, and production process in late 2022 and early 2023.





## PART I

# Primer



## PART I

# Primer

For people experiencing homelessness, meeting basic needs is their top priority. In the absence of affordable, permanent housing and safe and accessible shelters, many people look for safe spaces where they can access amenities such as public restrooms, climate control, food and water, Internet connectivity, and electricity. Generally, people experience homelessness because of the lack of affordable and attainable housing in their communities. This may be due to a disconnect between the wages they earn and the ability to find even modest accommodation, or they may have experienced job loss, unexpected medical bills, incidents of domestic violence, or other traumatic life events. While people who are experiencing homelessness may be living with mental health or substance use disorders at higher rates than stably housed individuals, the majority of people experiencing homelessness are not living with one of these conditions.

Airports may be attractive locations for those seeking shelter because the facilities are relatively safe, buildings are climate controlled, there is often easy access to public transit, and a variety of needed amenities are available. However, airport practitioners generally do not have the necessary expertise and resources to adequately respond to the recent increases in the number of people who experience homelessness on their property. The solution to ending homelessness—expanding access to affordable housing—is a broad societal challenge and not something that airports can enact. What airport practitioners can do is to develop thoughtful programs that support balanced and humane responses, resulting in safe facilities and preventing unintended harm. This may require enacting new training programs, revisiting policies and protocols, hiring dedicated personnel, or enacting long-term partnerships with service providers.

This primer provides fundamental information about homelessness at airports and is intended as a stand-alone synopsis of the issue. The following sections are included:

- Overview of Homelessness in the United States
  - What Causes Homelessness?
  - Who Experiences Homelessness?
  - How Do People Experience Homelessness?
  - How Do We End Homelessness?
- Homelessness in an Airport Setting
  - Demographics of People Experiencing Homelessness at Airports
  - Use of Airports by People Experiencing Homelessness
    - Airport Facilities (Airside and Landside Terminals and Other Facilities)
    - Fence-Line Areas and Surrounding Airport-Owned Land

## Preferred Terminology

Person-centered language that puts the person first rather than their housing status is generally accepted as the preferred way to describe someone experiencing homelessness. Therefore, this guide generally uses terms such as “people experiencing homelessness” and avoids other terms and acronyms that may be derogatory or dehumanizing or may perpetuate negative stereotypes. People experiencing homelessness may live in shelters (emergency or transitional), or they may live in unsheltered locations.



## 8 Strategies to Address Homelessness at Airports

- Adjacent Property Owned by Non-Airport Entities
- Transit Connections
- Contextual Factors Affecting Homelessness at Airports

The primer also serves as an introduction to the accompanying strategic action plan that airport practitioners can use to initiate or enhance a program to address homelessness. Together, the primer and strategic action plan form a comprehensive guide to developing and implementing strategies to address homelessness at airports.

### Overview of Homelessness in the United States

Homelessness in the United States has become an increasingly visible representation of the country's challenges with income inequality and unaffordable housing. On a single night in 2020, over 580,000 individuals across the United States experienced homelessness, including those living in emergency and transitional shelters and those living in unsheltered locations. About four out of every 10 individuals who experienced homelessness lived in unsheltered locations, meaning they slept outside, in cars, in abandoned buildings, or in other places not meant for human habitation, which includes transit systems and airports (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2021a).

While the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness had been declining for nearly a decade, it has increased sharply since 2015 (Batko et al. 2020), with over 50,000 more people sleeping in unsheltered locations on a single night in 2020 than in 2015 (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2021a). Further, the increase in overall homelessness between 2019 and 2020 is entirely attributable to the rise in those enduring unsheltered homelessness. Increases in unsheltered homelessness have mainly been concentrated in West Coast cities but have been observed in rural, suburban, and urban jurisdictions across the country.

#### The Impact of Affordability

Over 5 million people in the United States rely on federal Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI) (Social Security Administration 2022). Someone receiving the maximum federal SSI amount of \$841 monthly would need to have a monthly housing cost of \$252 to be considered affordable—a price deeply inconsistent with the average fair market rate of \$1,105 for a one-bedroom home (National Low Income Housing Coalition 2022).

#### What Causes Homelessness?

At its root, homelessness is a result of a lack of access to affordable housing. Those earning a minimum wage and working 40 hours per week cannot afford—meaning paying 30% or less of their income toward housing—a modest two-bedroom apartment in any state in the country (National Low Income Housing Coalition 2022). And, while some low-income households may be eligible for subsidized housing such as Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8), there are significantly fewer vouchers available than the number of households that qualify: only one in four eligible households receives them (Fischer et al. 2021). Housing costs and homelessness are inextricably linked; increased housing costs have been found to be associated with increased rates of homelessness, with a median rent increase of \$100 associated with a 9% increase in homelessness (U.S. Government Accountability Office 2020).

Other factors that may contribute to homelessness are closely linked with housing affordability, including employment and health (Tsai and Rosenheck 2015). Job loss or a reduction in hours can quickly lead to housing becoming unaffordable for many (Tsai 2021). In addition, health-related costs, including unexpected medical bills and the cost of life-saving medication, may create barriers to housing affordability. Interpersonal conflict, including domestic violence, interpersonal violence, or being kicked out of home with no alternative arrangements, may also lead to episodes of homelessness (Baker et al. 2003).

There are far fewer shelter beds available than are needed. While a few cities and municipalities, such as New York City, have a legal requirement to provide single adults with a shelter bed,

most locations lack these requirements. For example, in West Coast states such as California, Washington, and Oregon, the number of available shelter beds is less than 50% of the number of adults experiencing homelessness (National Alliance to End Homelessness 2019). Further, there are multiple reasons why people may choose to sleep unsheltered even when a shelter bed is available (Wusinich et al. 2019). Most shelters do not offer single or private rooms for individuals, and concerns around safety and privacy in congregate (shared) shelters are prevalent, with many people having reported feeling unsafe and having their belongings stolen while in shared shelter situations. Consequently, individuals may feel safer sleeping in public areas, including airports, where there are more people around, including visible security or public safety officers. People who stay in locations such as airports, train stations, or other public hubs also may choose to do so due to access to important, and often necessary, amenities such as public restrooms, climate control, food and water, Internet connectivity, and electricity.

Finally, in addition to a lack of shelter options for people experiencing homelessness, the need for other resources and assistance far exceeds the resources available through homeless assistance systems, including permanent supportive housing, affordable housing, and long-term supportive services. It is estimated that there are over a million households in the United States that could benefit from supportive housing, while national inventories put the number of supportive housing units at less than half of that (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2021b). Similarly, it is estimated that there is a shortage of 7 million homes available to low- and extremely low-income renters across the United States (National Low Income Housing Coalition 2022).

### **Homelessness, Mental Illness, and Substance Use Disorders**

Behavioral health challenges related to mental health or substance use are not a primary reason for homelessness. While people who are homeless may be living with mental health or substance use disorders at higher rates than stably housed individuals (Lebrun-Harris et al. 2013), the majority of people experiencing homelessness are not living with one of these conditions. Stereotypes and preconceived notions that conflate homelessness with mental illness and substance use disorders are harmful and have been shown to be false by many studies. In fact, the relationship between homelessness, mental illness, and substance use disorder is nuanced and bidirectional.

The primary cause of homelessness is lack of affordable housing. However, an individual's mental health condition or substance use disorder may make it harder to do the activities necessary to obtain or maintain stable housing, leading to homelessness (Nilsson et al. 2019). Conversely, the trauma of homelessness may exacerbate a person's mental health conditions or lead to unmanaged substance use disorder.

### **Who Experiences Homelessness?**

Black, Indigenous, and other people of color are at the greatest risk of homelessness. This is due to a long history of past and present systemic and structural racism embedded in housing and employment markets, such as exclusionary zoning, redlining, and other forms of segregation and discrimination in the rental and ownership markets, which have made it harder for Black and Indigenous households not only to secure safe and affordable housing but to maintain it

(Rothstein 2017; Paul et al. 2020). Further, systemic and structural racism is present throughout other systems that affect the ability to obtain and maintain housing, including involvement in criminal legal and child welfare systems (Paul et al. 2020). As a result, people of color are drastically overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness. Black or African American individuals represent nearly 40% of individuals experiencing homelessness, and American Indians, Native Hawaiians, Alaska Natives, and Pacific Islanders represent 5%, despite only accounting for about 12% and 1% of the U.S. population, respectively (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2021a).

Families, couples, and individuals may experience homelessness. People experiencing homelessness as part of a household with only adults (i.e., individuals or adult couples) are more likely to live in unsheltered locations—including airports—than in sheltered locations (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2021a). In addition, while nearly 90% of families with children experiencing homelessness stayed in sheltered locations, the number that experienced unsheltered homelessness increased 13% between 2019 and 2020 (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2021a).

### **Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic made it difficult to obtain accurate estimates of the number of people experiencing homelessness (particularly unsheltered homelessness). For example, nearly 40% of communities did not conduct a point-in-time (PIT) count of unsheltered individuals in 2021 (United States Interagency Council on Homelessness 2022). Although eviction moratoriums staved off the concerns of immediate evictions and potential increases in homelessness early in the COVID-19 pandemic (Community Solutions 2020), results from a complete PIT count have not been available since early 2020, and the full impact of the expiration of the moratoriums—and the pandemic as a whole—on the number of people experiencing homelessness is not yet known (Tsai 2021). What is known about those who have experienced homelessness since early 2020 is that the pandemic shifted the availability of shelters (with some reducing capacity in order to adjust for social distancing) and caused some individuals to remain unsheltered due to concerns about the safety of indoor locations.

### **How Do People Experience Homelessness?**

Homelessness can include sheltered and unsheltered experiences. Adults who are living unsheltered can differ from those living in shelters in multiple ways. Research has found that people experiencing unsheltered homelessness experience higher rates of physical and behavioral health needs as well as higher rates of trauma and violence than those who are sheltered. In addition, unsheltered individuals report more frequent interactions with police and more visits to emergency rooms (Roundtree et al. 2019).

Most people experiencing homelessness do so for a relatively short period of time, meaning less than 12 months. Approximately 20% of people experience chronic homelessness, which is homelessness for 12 months or more, or repeatedly, over the previous 3 years (Kuhn and Culhane 1998). However, the number of people experiencing long or repeated episodes of homelessness has been increasing; between 2019 and 2020, there was an increase of nearly 15% in the

number of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, and nearly one in three people living unsheltered experienced chronic homelessness (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2021a).

## How Do We End Homelessness?

Numerous strategies for addressing homelessness exist. As described previously, the primary cause of homelessness is the lack of affordable housing. Accordingly, the most effective way to both end and prevent homelessness is to expand the number of affordable housing units. One strategy for doing so is the use of housing vouchers, which are a type of rental subsidy in which voucher holders pay 30% of their income toward rent in private market units. Housing vouchers have been shown to be effective at increasing housing stability and increasing the overall well-being of household members (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2016). For people experiencing chronic homelessness, vouchers combined with supportive services—known as permanent supportive housing—are another evidence-based solution to decreasing time spent homeless, increasing housing stability, and improving quality of life (Aubry et al. 2015; Collins et al. 2013; Tsemberis and Eisenberg 2000). Although strategies to prevent homelessness are not part of an airport’s mission, there are opportunities for airports to have a positive impact on people experiencing homelessness.

## Homelessness in an Airport Setting

In the United States, homelessness in an airport setting has persisted since the 1980s, with an increasing number of individuals seeking shelter in airports documented since 2018 (Bednarek 2021). Broadly, people experiencing homelessness seek shelter in airports because the facilities are relatively safe due to the presence of other people and security personnel, buildings are climate controlled, there is often easy access to public transit, and a variety of amenities such as public restrooms, Internet connectivity, electricity, and food and water are available. However, homelessness does not uniformly present across airports because of regional and local trends, including disparities in the availability and accessibility of community resources. Consequently, airport practitioners can observe differences in the way individuals seek shelter in an airport’s facilities (e.g., terminals, parking garages) or on surrounding airport-owned land (e.g., via encampments), presenting differing challenges to airport operations.

Airport staff have needed to address homelessness at their airports despite a lack of expertise and adequate resources. The implementation of airport policies and measures in response to homelessness (e.g., connection to services and overnight-hour restrictions) has resulted in varying degrees of success; however, punitive measures (e.g., arrests, barring, citations) have been identified as futile in addressing homelessness. More recently, airports have recognized that to implement effective change, multiple constructive solutions—such as hiring dedicated personnel and engaging long-term partnerships with service providers—must be considered. Yet, without broader societal solutions to address homelessness, it remains likely that people experiencing homelessness will continue to seek shelter in airports.

### Defining Airport Property

This guide relates to the use of airport property by people experiencing homelessness. Airport property is generally defined as including built facilities and surrounding airport-owned land. Built facilities may include structures such as terminals, parking structures, car rental facilities, and ground transportation areas.

## Demographics of People Experiencing Homelessness at Airports

People seeking shelter in airports may vary across racial and ethnic groups, gender identities, and relationship/familial status [e.g., single individuals, couples, parent(s) with young or adolescent

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children]. These dynamics typically reflect broader regional homelessness trends. Some examples of people using airports for shelter are:

- Individuals experiencing chronic or episodic homelessness.
- Individuals employed at either the airport or nearby businesses who are unable or unwilling to access affordable housing within the community.
- Stranded travelers or travelers with connections that require overnight or multiday stays. It is important to note that stranded travelers may not necessarily be experiencing homelessness, although they might still be using the airport in a similar way.

### Use of Airports by People Experiencing Homelessness

Airport facilities and surrounding airport-owned land, as well as transit connections and adjacent property owned by others, can be accessed by people experiencing homelessness. However, there is variability in how and when individuals experiencing homelessness use these locations. Airports most commonly report that individuals spend some portion of the day or night inside airport facilities, and they observe an increase in individuals seeking indoor shelter in extreme weather conditions. Some individuals may seek shelter in an airport more frequently than others, and some have at times established rapport with airport employees such as law enforcement and other first responders who are most typically called to respond to homelessness. While there often are unique reasons that lead an individual experiencing homelessness to use airport facilities, generally individuals are searching for respite and shelter from potential severe and unsafe conditions (Kushel 2022).

#### Varying Situations of Homelessness in Airport Settings

The non-uniformity of homelessness in an airport setting presents several challenges, including how to respond most appropriately and effectively. For instance, in extreme winter conditions, Fairbanks International Airport (FAI) observes fewer than 10 persons experiencing homelessness a day/night seeking shelter. On the other hand, Mineta San Jose International Airport (SJC) has been addressing an encampment of approximately 200 people on undeveloped airport-owned land near the airport since 2021.

#### *Airport Facilities (Airside and Landside Terminals and Other Facilities)*

Landside terminals offer access to free amenities (e.g., Internet connectivity, electricity, climate control) and can include spaces such as public restrooms and seating areas, which makes them attractive to individuals who often do not have access to basic services needed for survival. In addition, most landside terminal spaces tend to be heavily frequented during the day, allowing for individuals to more easily blend in with the traveling public. Conversely, at night there are several spaces within landside terminals that can often be secluded and quiet, such as tucked-away seating and corners that may permit people experiencing homelessness to spend the night in relative privacy and safety.

By comparison, the airside terminals are restricted and consequently difficult for the general population to access without an airline boarding pass as part of normal airport security operations. However, airport employees experiencing homelessness with access to restricted areas may also sleep in airside terminals and other restricted-access areas. Similarly, stranded travelers could remain within the restricted side of an airport and may remain for several days or weeks. This is particularly challenging because FAA regulations and grant assurances prohibit human habitation in airport facilities and properties because of incompatible land uses.

Outside of the main airport terminals, people experiencing homelessness may also sleep or stay at other facilities, such as parking structures, car rental facilities, and ground transportation areas (e.g., bus stops, light-rail stations). While these facilities may not provide the same comfort found in terminals, people experiencing homelessness may stay in these areas since they are often easy to

access and can include more secluded areas (e.g., parking garage stairwells), which provide fewer possibilities for detection and consequently potential removal.

### *Fence-Line Areas and Surrounding Airport-Owned Land*

Fence-line areas and airport-owned land remote from main airport operations can offer expansive spaces for people experiencing homelessness to establish encampments while still providing ready access to airport amenities and transit connections. Encampments may include cars, recreational vehicles, tents, and makeshift shelters. Depending on the size of the fence-line areas and airport-owned land, some encampments can become large (i.e., more than 200 individuals). Encampments are complicated because they are often where people feel safest, and removing them can have severe negative consequences for the residents. However, encampments are also problematic for airports because federal and local regulations typically require that fence-line areas and surrounding airport-owned land remain vacant to preserve public safety and ensure safe airport operations.

### *Adjacent Property Owned by Non-Airport Entities*

Airport-adjacent properties owned by non-airport entities can be affected by people experiencing homelessness seeking shelter. In urban areas, properties neighboring airports can contain key transportation access, commercial businesses, parking structures, public parks, and vacant lots. Use of these properties is beneficial for people experiencing homelessness because it presents increased mobility and opportunities to seek employment, access to food, or services. For instance, individuals that shelter overnight in an airport terminal may frequent nearby properties during the day and return later to the airport. Regardless of how people experiencing homelessness use an airport, owners of adjacent properties may have negative perceptions of homelessness at or near the airport. These perceptions may result in strained relationships between airport authorities and neighboring property owners and local communities.

### *Transit Connections*




In urban areas, mass transit connectivity plays a crucial role in accessibility for people experiencing homelessness. They may use public transportation to reach destinations such as workplaces, temporary housing or shelter, and community service centers (Ding et al. 2022), in much the same way as housed riders use the system. People experiencing unsheltered homelessness may also use transit as shelter—including transit stations and vehicles. Airports are often a last stop, either on a bus or light-rail system, with individuals being able to gain convenient access to an airport late into the evening. Individuals that arrive at the airport via public transport to shelter at night may subsequently use the same method of transportation to leave the airport during the day, going back and forth between the airport and other destinations. Several transit agencies around the country have developed comprehensive responses to homelessness, with a focus on unsheltered homelessness. This work ranges from basic training about homelessness to sophisticated, multi-partner programs with outreach workers, crisis response staff, and, in some cases, service provision in the transit system.





## **Contextual Factors Affecting Homelessness at Airports**

People experiencing homelessness use airports for a wide variety of reasons, although generally they are seeking safe and sheltered refuge from external, often unsafe conditions. Some individuals may even be employed by one of the many entities that conduct business at the airport. Regardless, awareness of contextual factors that have an impact on homelessness in an airport setting can serve as a basis for evaluating why airports observe different volumes or types of homelessness on their property. Table 1 highlights the contextual factors, in rough order of importance, that may influence the prevalence of homelessness at airports.



Table 1. Contextual factors of homelessness in an airport setting.




Contextual Factor	Description and Importance	Airport Examples
 <b>Airport Size/Type</b>	<p>Airports are divided into several categories by the FAA, primarily based on size, passenger service, and volume of scheduled service. Larger airports often have multiple terminals and own adjacent properties, creating a larger footprint that offers shelter in a variety of places (e.g., terminals, transit stations, stairwells, parking lots/garages, nearby encampments). By comparison, smaller airports have less traffic, fewer services, and may shut down overnight. Additionally, the larger an airport is, the easier it is for individuals to blend into crowds and not be identified, which may be attractive for individuals that want a safe shelter without confrontation.</p>	<p>Several major airports have reported dozens or hundreds of individuals per night seeking shelter, while smaller airports can observe as few as one or two persons every week, such as in the case of Daytona Beach International Airport (DAB).*</p>
 <b>Accessibility from Mass Transit Systems</b>	<p>Mass transit systems, including light rail and buses, are predominantly used in densely populated areas to facilitate the movement of people within the area. Many large airports in the United States are located on or adjacent to these systems due to their importance in the communities and the volume of passengers they serve. People experiencing homelessness often rely on mass transit systems for affordable movement throughout an urban area or for temporary shelter. When airports are on mass transit lines or easily accessible from them, there are fewer barriers impeding unsheltered individuals from reaching, and potentially staying in or on, airport property.</p>	<p>Despite Denver International Airport (DEN) being located about 25 miles from Denver’s urban core, the airport is on the city’s mass transit light rail, allowing for easy accessibility to DEN’s expansive facilities.**</p>
 <b>Feasibility of Shelter in Airport Facilities or Adjacent to Airport Property</b>	<p>Airport facilities provide, among other functions, space for employees and ticketed passengers to conduct their airport business in a safe and efficient manner. Most airports have multiple spaces, including terminals, parking structures, and related facilities, that include nonrestricted areas that generally can be accessed by the public. Larger spaces at airports may include secluded areas that are likely to attract people experiencing homelessness seeking a safe and quiet space. Although airport terminals offer comfortable seating arrangements that could be accessed by people experiencing homelessness, many airports report that individuals will sit or lay down on floors, baggage claim carousels, or within tents or makeshift furniture that individuals have with them. Outside of the airport property boundaries, people experiencing homelessness may also establish encampments along public roadways and on adjacent property owned by others. Typically, these encampments are not easily accessible through transit connections and are not in proximity to adjacent services or amenities.</p>	<p>Since 2016, Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) has been addressing homelessness in airport facilities and on airport property. In 2019, up to 130 people experiencing homelessness were seeking shelter in LAX’s terminals. Nearby, a large encampment of 350 people experiencing homelessness was located on airport-owned property in the Manchester Square neighborhood (Los Angeles World Airports 2019).</p>

	<b>Extent of Publicly Accessible Services and Amenities at the Airport</b>	<p>Airports typically have publicly accessible services and amenities such as public restrooms, climate control, Internet connectivity, food and water, and electricity. These services and amenities are often located in restricted areas, but particularly in large airports, it is common for these amenities to be available in nonrestricted spaces (e.g., ticketing, baggage claim). People experiencing homelessness often rely on these amenities to shelter from unsafe conditions and maintain personal hygiene. Consequently, airports with a broader array of amenities in nonrestricted spaces may be more attractive to unsheltered individuals.</p>	<p>As one of the largest airports in the United States, Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport (DFW) has extensive publicly accessible areas in five terminals. In early 2020, the number of people experiencing homelessness on a single night grew to more than 100 (Yeomans 2020).</p>
	<b>Extent of Unsheltered Homelessness in the Community</b>	<p>The extent of unsheltered homelessness in communities across the United States varies greatly based on many factors. Some regions experience high rates of unsheltered homelessness, while others have lower rates. The extent of unsheltered homelessness in an area will likely directly correlate to the number of people experiencing homelessness seeking shelter at an airport (e.g., higher rates in a region).</p>	<p>Since 2019, San Francisco International Airport (SFO) has been working to address a growing number of people experiencing homelessness seeking overnight shelter. San Francisco has one of the highest rates of unsheltered homelessness in the United States (ABC 7 News 2019).</p>
	<b>Dominant Climate</b>	<p>The United States has many climates and weather patterns that vary drastically based on geography. When airports are in areas that experience distinct seasonal climates (e.g., frigid winters, very hot summers), unsheltered individuals may rely more on airport facilities for shelter from the elements. Many airports located in areas that experience extreme climate fluctuations observe a noticeable increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness seeking shelter as seasonal weather patterns become more inhospitable.</p>	<p>Since outside conditions can often be unsafe during Alaskan winters, Fairbanks International Airport (FAI) staff will not remove people experiencing homelessness from airport facilities.*</p>
	<b>Existence of Outreach Programs That Have Dedicated Service Areas That Include Airports</b>	<p>Particularly in large metropolitan areas, programs designed to assist people experiencing homelessness are common, although the range and depth of services offered may vary greatly. Some programs include airports in their designated service areas, meaning that there are staff or resources available to assist unsheltered individuals at airport facilities. In regions with substantial services and programs available to support people experiencing homelessness, and particularly in those where airports are within their service area, airports are generally less likely to observe people experiencing homelessness. In these cases, individuals are often either redirected to homeless services prior to reaching an airport, or are more easily transitioned to services and programs once they arrive at an airport. When this is not the case, people experiencing homelessness are more reliant on seeking shelter and amenities at places like airports.</p>	<p>In response to homelessness in the airport, Boston Logan International Airport (BOS) operations staff work with two homelessness liaisons from the Massachusetts State Police. The liaisons collaborate with the city of Boston to give assistance to individuals in the terminal. Additionally, BOS is included in the annual city-wide survey of homelessness.*</p>

(continued on next page)



Table 1. (Continued).

Contextual Factor	Description and Importance	Airport Examples
 <b>Airport Ownership and Governance</b>	<p>Most U.S. airports are operated as not-for-profit entities, usually as a public agency within a state, county, or city government structure. The ownership and governance structure of airports can have significant implications on how they handle homelessness issues. Airports that are owned and operated by cities or counties typically report to the chief executive of the jurisdiction, such as a mayor. Since these officials are elected, public opinion often influences what policies they enact and the approaches they take to social issues such as homelessness. Conversely, airports that are operated by an airport authority typically report to a board, which makes decisions in a more insulated manner and will likely approach the challenge of homelessness through a different lens.</p>	<p>St. Louis Lambert International Airport (STL) is in a county 20 miles from the city but is city owned and operated. Consequently, STL can be caught in the middle of various county and city policies and rules that can have an impact on STL's response to homelessness.*</p>
 <b>Public Space Definition</b>	<p>Airport spaces are generally divided into restricted areas, which are accessible through controlled points, and nonrestricted, landside areas, which are not subject to movement or access restrictions. Airports that have large nonrestricted public areas can have larger populations of people experiencing homelessness. In large nonrestricted spaces, particularly those with many food and retail businesses, people experiencing homelessness may be able to go unnoticed and have easier access to services and shelter.</p>	<p>Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA) underwent renovations in 2021 that resulted in a substantial reduction of nonrestricted areas and amenities (e.g., seating, restrooms, restaurants), including areas where people experiencing homelessness can congregate.*</p>
 <b>Airport Business Restrictions</b>	<p>Often, airports implement policies to limit access to nonrestricted areas (e.g., lobbies, baggage claims) to only individuals with official airport business (e.g., ticketed passengers, employees). These policies can include stipulations that permit airports to issue trespassing citations or warnings to individuals. Some airports always restrict access regardless of the time of day or night. Other airports only close the nonrestricted areas during overnight hours. Airport policies and practices such as preventing access to open areas and issuing citations may be punitive to people experiencing homelessness.</p>	<p>As of mid-2021, Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) sought to pass a city ordinance restricting overnight access as a means of reducing the number of people experiencing homelessness that seek shelter in ATL. Since 2018, ATL has implemented a policy restricting access; however, law enforcement believes that passing a city ordinance would provide greater public clarity (Yamanouchi 2021).</p>

Notes: \*Information obtained from 2021 focus groups with airport staff for this project. \*\*Information obtained from 2022 airport site visit to Denver International Airport.

These factors were identified and validated through an extensive review of resources and engagement with stakeholders, including people with lived experience, airport staff (e.g., operations, legal affairs, first responders, and community engagement/services managers), and homeless service organizations. They have been reviewed by homelessness and aviation experts. The information related for each of these factors should not be taken as universal because the factors vary depending on the specific situation. They can also vary by region because of socioeconomic, physical, weather, policy, and other drivers, so the factors will need to be tailored to reflect local conditions and evaluated in that context. The factors are not meant to minimize considerations that are unique to individuals but rather highlight broader contextual issues that contribute to people experiencing homelessness seeking shelter in an airport setting.

Additional factors beyond those included in Table 1 that were initially considered include location of airport within a metropolitan area, neighboring community size, regional socioeconomic factors, and availability of airport funding and resources. These factors were not included because research and stakeholder engagement verified that they were not critical in determining the prevalence of homelessness in an airport setting. For instance, proximity to an urban center is not a dominant factor if easily accessible transit exists.

## **Guiding Principles for Airport Response Strategies**

Many airports are struggling to respond to homelessness. Meeting the needs of unhoused individuals is not core to the mission of airports, and airport operations and public safety departments often do not have specialized expertise to address these needs. Establishing a set of guiding principles is key to ensuring that the right messages are communicated from the top in setting up and implementing a program to address homelessness that humanizes an approach, sets the tone and intent for all airport staff, and helps generate buy-in from staff and tenants. In addition, guiding principles are helpful in situations where staff are using their judgment or making subjective determinations in gray areas between defined airport policies and protocols.

Some suggested guiding principles for airport response strategies are discussed in the following subsections.

### **Safety for All**

Creating safe places and an overall airport environment to ensure the safety of all individuals at airports is paramount. Safety needs to be prioritized across all groups—travelers, employees, operators, tenants, and the public, including people who experience homelessness. In many cases, people experiencing homelessness use airport facilities because few better options exist, and airport facilities can be safer than alternatives (e.g., sleeping outside). Providing a safe environment and experience for all individuals using the airport can be accomplished through comprehensive, human-centered training, including training related to crisis intervention and outreach and engagement.

### **Do No Harm**

By adopting the principles of harm reduction, an airport can improve the efficacy of staff that are engaging with people who are experiencing homelessness. Airports can engage in practices to make individuals in their facilities feel safer through compassionate engagement and non-punitive response. Airports should invest in crisis management and harm reduction training for public safety officers, first responders, operations staff, and other outreach and engagement

employees. Training needs to be human-centered and should address how bias can affect people's treatment of individuals experiencing homelessness.

### **A Balanced and Appropriate Response**

#### **LAX's Balanced Approach to Addressing Homelessness**

LAX has determined that its responsibility is to "balance public safety, airport community needs, and the civil rights of those experiencing homelessness" (Los Angeles World Airports 2019). Airports implementing strategies to address homelessness should consider how a balance of several considerations would best suit their needs to achieve successful and sustainable outcomes.

Punitive measures, such as criminal trespassing citations, are not always effective at addressing homelessness and do not address systemic problems related to homelessness (Diamond et al. 2021). Although measures such as closing the airport during late hours of the night, preventing access to certain areas, closing amenities, and enacting loitering ordinances can be effective at reducing the number of people experiencing homelessness at airports in some situations and locations, they might also affect the traveling public's customer experience. These actions may also harm people experiencing homelessness by forcing them to shelter in a less safe place. Prioritizing the safety and long-term outcomes of individuals experiencing homelessness by working with partners to connect people to housing (whether shelter, transitional, or permanent), case management, and behavioral health and crisis services can achieve successful and more sustainable outcomes for the airport. Airports should focus on effective, sustainable strategies that produce co-benefits (e.g., improved customer experience, tenant and staff morale, and airport safety) and use resources efficiently, such as procedures for engagement, nonpunitive measures, and connection to services.

### **Partnerships Are Key**

Airports cannot solve homelessness, nor are they social service providers, but they can be active participants in connecting individuals in need to aid and resources, and they can act as regional advocates for truly sustainable solutions, such as access to affordable housing and provision of services. Airports can collaborate with community-based organizations, social service providers, and government agencies to coordinate service provision, contribute to oversight of airport strategies, identify and address barriers to sustainable solutions, and identify potential funding sources. Partnerships can be in the form of contracted social service support, working with public safety departments (e.g., transit, police), and working with community-based social service organizations to support the provision of housing and shelter.



## PART II

# Strategic Action Plan



## PART II

# Strategic Action Plan

## Introduction

This strategic action plan contains eight strategies airports can take to initiate or enhance a program to address homelessness. These strategies were designed to be as broadly applicable as possible because airports are at different points on the spectrum of program development, including those airports that have not yet addressed homelessness and are looking for a place to start. Each strategy is structured the same way and contains the following sections:

- **Background and Need.** Contextual information about why the strategy is important for airports addressing homelessness.
- **Actions to Consider.** List of specific actions for airports to consider implementing. Actions are generally not listed in sequential order, and airports are encouraged to select actions suited to their circumstances.
- **Airport Stakeholders Involved.** These sections contain tables indicating which airport stakeholders are likely to be involved in implementation of the strategy and providing a description of their roles. Important parties for a particular airport may not be included in the stakeholder table, depending on each airport's circumstances.
- **How to Leverage External Partners.** Description of ways airports can engage with external partners to help them carry out the strategy. External partners are entities that can help airports develop their programs and include local or regional community-based social service organizations and homeless advocates, training providers, and public and government agencies. Local service providers and homeless advocates are key external partners for program development because they have unique insights for building a program that is human-centered. Human-centered approaches cultivate deep empathy that considers the needs, interests, and lived experiences of affected stakeholders.
- **Tools and Resources.** These sections contain summary tables of available resources that can be used to help airports carry out the strategies. Additional tools and resources for each strategy are provided in the appendix to the report.

The outcome from using the strategic action plan is intended to be flexible and based on what is most useful to the airport. Some airports may want to generate a list of specific strategies to focus on first when getting a program off the ground, while others may wish to develop a stand-alone document that encompasses all aspects of the existing program and a strategy for evolving the program further. No matter how airports choose to use the strategic action plan, it is important to remember that homelessness is an evolving and complex issue. Best practices and available resources in response to homelessness can change over time. Therefore, airports should build flexibility into their programs so they do not remain static and can adapt to regional and local context-specific conditions.

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At the end of the report are references, a list of acronyms, and an appendix containing tools and resources for each strategy in the strategic action plan.

Strategy 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Learning the Fundamentals	Assessing Current Conditions	Identifying and Working with Partners	Planning a Response	Outlining Staff and Stakeholder Responsibilities	Developing and Implementing a Training Program	Developing an Engagement Protocol	Tracking Progress

### Strategy 1: Learning the Fundamentals

#### Background and Need

Homelessness is a broad and complex issue that is often polarizing because of misrepresentations and lack of understanding of root causes and how to solve the issue. Airports have historically responded to homelessness within their own space, yet addressing homelessness is not an airport's core mission. Airports should consider how to build informed awareness among employees and build relationships with local service providers and nonprofits that can provide localized expertise and a human-centered focus when responding to homelessness in airports. Equipping airport stakeholders with knowledge can facilitate appropriate framing of the issue and result in meaningful, effective strategies. At a minimum, airport stakeholders should understand homelessness as a human rights issue.

#### Actions to Consider

Actions to consider are discussed in the following bullet points.

- **Be informed about the complexities of homelessness.** Understanding homelessness and its accompanying complexities is an important first step for airports to take in order to create an effective response program. Homelessness is a systemic challenge with diverse drivers and consequences. These drivers of homelessness (e.g., housing affordability and availability, stagnant wages) tend to change slowly but can have lasting and substantial impacts on the size of the homeless population, resources available to aid unhoused individuals, and the conditions that cause a person to experience homelessness. Potential actions include:
  - Understand the causes of homelessness and who experiences homelessness.
  - Keep abreast of regional and local prevalence.
  - Recognize that unsheltered individuals are facing numerous challenges.
  - Determine regulatory, legal, and policy drivers.
- **Consult with local service providers and nonprofit organizations.** Local homeless service providers and other related community-based organizations can provide a plethora of knowledge of regional and local homelessness trends, programs, and resources. Airports should establish relationships and partnerships with local organizations for several reasons, including to share information and knowledge of homelessness as it relates to the regional context and within the airport setting.
- **Understand and eliminate bias, stereotypes, and discrimination.** Homelessness is stigmatized and may be addressed with criminalization and hostile policies that may violate, rather than safeguard, the rights of the people involved. Negative stereotypes and misinformed preconceived notions can increase discrimination, violence, and hate crimes against people experiencing homelessness. When people objectify or dehumanize individuals experiencing homelessness, it can make it easier to treat people poorly. Understanding and working to eliminate biases associated with homelessness help to humanize those individuals and

promote effective change through empathy. Airports should also consider how eliminating bias and stereotypes can be helpful in other situations outside of homelessness, such as when responding to an individual experiencing a mental health crisis or drug overdose.

- **Keep up-to-date with best practices.** When addressing homelessness in airports, it is to know what works, why it works, and for whom it works. There is extensive research that examines causes and current conditions of homelessness but little literature that can describe effective airport interventions in a practical way. Sharing solutions is needed to avoid reinventing the wheel at each airport. While there are few one-size-fits-all solutions to homelessness in an airport setting, with the right tools and information, airports can learn from each other and adapt initiatives to local or regional contexts.

## Airport Stakeholders Involved

Table 2 shows the stakeholders involved in Strategy 1.

## How to Leverage External Partners

Airports should engage with external organizations that are familiar with the local socio-economic context of homelessness as well as its regional and local trends. Local social service

**Table 2. Airport stakeholders involved for Strategy 1: Learning the Fundamentals.**

Stakeholder Function	Responsible or Accountable	Consulted or Informed	Role
Airport management	☑		Endorse the importance of making the airport community more knowledgeable of the issue; determine how and where learning materials will be shared.
Airport homelessness program lead	☑		Primarily responsible for education efforts; ensure maintenance of materials; bring awareness of materials to airport staff and other stakeholders.
Airport homelessness outreach lead	☑		Coordinate with external partners to select and maintain up-to-date materials to be used to educate airport staff and other stakeholders.
Airport operations and security		☑	Public-facing operations and security staff should review materials and ensure continuous learning; can help assess which materials are most helpful.
Airport law enforcement and ARFF/EMS		☑	Review materials and ensure continuous learning; can help assess which materials are most helpful.
Airport communications and dispatch		☑	Be aware of materials and the importance of considering them when engaging with people experiencing homelessness.
Tenants, concessionaires, and contractors		☑	Be aware of materials and the importance of considering them when engaging with people experiencing homelessness.
External partners		☑	Help airport determine learning materials used to educate airport staff.

Note: ARFF = aircraft rescue and firefighting; EMS = emergency medical services.



providers, as well as community-based organizations and government agencies familiar with homelessness, can help airports determine appropriate learning materials that should be used to educate the airport workforce.

Tools and Resources

Table 3 shows tools and resources for Strategy 1.

1	Strategy 2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Learning the Fundamentals	Assessing Current Conditions	Identifying and Working with Partners	Planning a Response	Outlining Staff and Stakeholder Responsibilities	Developing and Implementing a Training Program	Developing an Engagement Protocol	Tracking Progress

Strategy 2: Assessing Current Conditions

Background and Need

The conditions under which homelessness can exist and be responded to at an airport vary depending on broader regional socioeconomic factors, availability of resources, connectivity to transit, and other factors. Having a comprehensive and accurate understanding of context-specific conditions regarding homelessness at an airport will inform numerous aspects of an airport’s program to pointedly respond to homelessness. This context will also empower airport stakeholders to make informed decisions about response and engagement strategies to address homelessness.

Actions to Consider

Actions to consider are discussed in the following bullet points.

- **Assess current data-collection efforts and future needs.** Airports should initially examine what data related to homelessness are currently being collected and assess if the metrics are appropriate for program development and evaluation. Airports should also determine any additional data they may need and can feasibly collect, including data related to activities outside the boundaries of the airport. Later, airports should regularly evaluate these data by assessing reports and other metrics and should consider what other trends might be emerging. Airports should avoid relying on certain data, such as number of arrests made of people experiencing homelessness, as this serves to further perpetuate bias and stereotypes and criminalization of homelessness. Airports are encouraged to use the metrics included in Strategy 8: Tracking Progress. Some potential metrics to consider include:
  - Those related to outreach:
    - Number of people engaged
    - Number of referrals made to homeless services
  - Those related to training:
    - Number of staff members trained
    - Type of training received by staff category
    - Hours of staff training

Field Interviews as Data at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA)

Strategy 2: Assessing Current Conditions

Airports may be able to use existing data-collection efforts as a basis for future assessments. For instance, at DCA, Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority police officers conduct ad hoc field interviews of people experiencing homelessness and keep a record of how many times they have encountered an individual.

(Information obtained from a 2022 site visit to DCA)

**Table 3. Tools and resources for Strategy 1: Learning the Fundamentals.**

Source	Resource Name	Type	Description	URL
Appendix to this report	Strategies to Address Homelessness at Airports: List of Terms	Communication product	This one-page resource (included in the appendix to this guide) includes a graphic with a list of terms applicable to homelessness. It is the list of recommended terms for airports to use when educating airport staff on homelessness.	
Bureau of Justice Assistance	Homelessness, Justice Involvement, and the Critical Role of Housing in Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration	Website	This website provides a background of the relationship between homelessness and incarceration, including contributing factors such as unmet behavioral health needs and racial and ethnic disparities.	<a href="https://bja.ojp.gov/program/pmhc/responding-homelessness#homelessness-justice-involvement-and-the-critical-role-of-housing">https://bja.ojp.gov/program/pmhc/responding-homelessness#homelessness-justice-involvement-and-the-critical-role-of-housing</a>
Canadian Observatory on Homelessness	Myths and Questions About Homelessness	Website	This website deconstructs six myths or generalizations about homelessness. Facts, explanations, and additional resources are provided for each myth.	<a href="https://www.homelesshub.ca/about-homelessness/homelessness-101/myths-and-questions-about-homelessness">https://www.homelesshub.ca/about-homelessness/homelessness-101/myths-and-questions-about-homelessness</a>
National Alliance to End Homelessness	Homelessness Statistics	Interactive report	This website provides an interactive version of the annual <i>State of Homelessness</i> report and includes data on homelessness trends and demographics by U.S. state.	<a href="https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/">https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/</a>
National Alliance to End Homelessness	Racial Equity Resources	Website	These resources are available for further learning about racial disparities in homelessness. The resources include data, tools, trainings, and advocacy summaries.	<a href="https://endhomelessness.org/resource/racial-equity-resources/">https://endhomelessness.org/resource/racial-equity-resources/</a>
National Alliance to End Homelessness	What Causes Homelessness?	Website	This website provides general summaries of several causes of homelessness (e.g., housing availability, domestic violence).	<a href="https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/what-causes-homelessness/">https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/what-causes-homelessness/</a>
United States Interagency Council on Homelessness	People Experience Homelessness, They Aren't Defined by It	Website	This short article provides a discussion on the impact of using respectful language about homelessness.	<a href="https://www.usich.gov/news/people-experience-homelessness-they-arent-defined-by-it/">https://www.usich.gov/news/people-experience-homelessness-they-arent-defined-by-it/</a>
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	Homelessness Assistance Programs	Website	This interactive website provides specific programs and reports and data on the populations affected by homelessness by U.S. state.	<a href="https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/">https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/</a>

- **Identify current response mechanisms employed at the airport.** All airport stakeholders who interact with people experiencing homelessness have response mechanisms, whether formal or informal (e.g., requesting a response from operations and security or law enforcement, ignoring the individual, providing resources or instructions). A strong strategy to address homelessness will build on this foundation by seeking to accurately understand what response mechanisms airport stakeholders currently use. Airports can document the response mechanisms and corresponding internal and external coordination to determine which response elements (if any) have yielded effective changes to homelessness (e.g., individuals referred to services). The response mechanisms can be evaluated against evidence-based best practices in addressing homelessness.
- **Create a prioritization checklist based on contextual factors.** The incidence of homelessness at airports is influenced by many factors, such as adjacency to public transportation, access to amenities, and frequency of severe weather. Airports are encouraged to use the contextual factors in the primer to identify underlying factors that can be prioritized for action while creating a response program. For instance, if most individuals experiencing homelessness are arriving to the airport via light rail, the airport should consider formalizing partnerships with the transit agency to respond to homelessness. Airports may wish to work with local service providers and other experts to tailor the checklist.
- **Undertake a homelessness assessment.** Programmatic evaluations are used to systemically identify strengths, weaknesses, gaps, and resources necessary to implement effective, sustainable strategies. When applied to an airport program to address homelessness, a homelessness assessment is a dedicated effort to gather information and conduct evaluations to determine response weaknesses or opportunities for enhancement through human-centered approaches.
  - *Identify scope and goals.* Before an airport undertakes a homelessness assessment, it must define the assessment’s scope and goals. Airports should generate a series of questions they want answered to identify the objectives of the assessment. Some potential questions to consider include:

### Following Policing Assessment, Port of Seattle Shifts Homelessness Response

#### Strategy 2: Assessing Current Conditions

A 2021 assessment by the Port of Seattle’s Task Force on Port Policing and Civil Rights recommended that the Port of Seattle, which owns and operates the Seattle–Tacoma International Airport (SEA), examine opportunities for moving away from a traditional police response on homelessness as a key strategy for reducing external disparities around the use of force (Port of Seattle 2022).

- What airport property is being used by people experiencing homelessness and what are the impacts in terms of maintenance, cleaning, and so forth?
- How much money is being spent on homelessness response(s) and what are resource implications?
- Are people experiencing homelessness removed from the airport? If so, why and how?
- Are people experiencing homelessness connected to services or provided with any additional resources?
- Which airport stakeholders are involved in responding to homelessness?
- *Integrate into other assessments.* Airports can look for opportunities to integrate a homelessness assessment into periodic assessments that are already being conducted. As part of a maintenance assessment, for example, an airport could specify impacts associated with people experiencing homelessness in terms of facility or property maintenance to generate strategies to mitigate them.
- *Evaluate resource needs.* As gaps are identified through the homelessness assessment, airports should consider the financial resources and staff necessary to fill them. Quantifying anticipated resource demands can help airports prioritize which gaps they can realistically fill in the short term and the necessary funding to pursue.

- Conduct point-in-time (PIT) counts of people experiencing homelessness in connection to and with cooperation from homeless service providers. One of the primary ways the number of people experiencing homelessness is estimated is through PIT counts. PIT counts detail the number of individuals experiencing homelessness on one night in a specific area, including those living unsheltered or staying in sheltered locations (e.g., emergency shelter, transitional housing). The PIT count also provides an overview of demographics such as age, race and ethnicity, gender identity, and household composition of those counted. PIT counts should be conducted in airports to obtain and contribute to important data on populations and subpopulations experiencing homelessness in an airport setting. PIT counts can subsequently be used in effective planning and response measures. Airports should coordinate any efforts related to PIT counts through continuums of care (CoCs; local systems that identify and develop community-level plans to ensure organization and delivery of housing and services) to ensure that homeless populations in the airport are included within the local or regional counts.

## Airport Stakeholders Involved

Table 4 shows the airport stakeholders involved in Strategy 2.

## How to Leverage External Partners

Local social service providers, as well as community-based organizations and government agencies familiar with homelessness, can help airports determine the prevalence of homelessness and assess the critical policy drivers that may affect airport decisions regarding homelessness.

**Table 4. Airport stakeholders involved for Strategy 2: Assessing Current Conditions.**

Stakeholder Function	Responsible or Accountable	Consulted or Informed	Role
Airport management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Secure leadership support; assign staff or working group to assessment efforts; commit resources.
Airport homelessness program lead	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Establish focus of the current conditions assessment; identify existing assessments where homelessness assessments can be integrated into other existing assessments.
Airport homelessness outreach lead	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Lead assessment efforts and data collection; coordinate with external partners.
Airport operations and security		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Inform assessments based on experience with actual events and interactions.
Airport law enforcement and ARFF/EMS		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Inform assessments based on experience with actual events and interactions.
Airport communications and dispatch		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Be aware of assessments and the importance of current conditions.
Tenants, concessionaires, and contractors		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Inform assessments based on experience with actual interactions.
External partners	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Conduct PIT counts with support from airport staff.

Note: ARFF = aircraft rescue and firefighting; EMS = emergency medical services.

**Table 5. Tools and resources for Strategy 2: Assessing Current Conditions.**

Source	Resource Name	Type	Description	URL
Appendix to this report	Strategies to Address Homelessness at Airports: Contextual Factors Checklist	Decision-support tool	This checklist (included in the appendix to this guide) helps airports identify the contextual factors influencing the size and type of homelessness at their facilities or properties. It provides airports with a way to document the prioritization of response strategies.	
Appendix to this report	Strategies to Address Homelessness at Airports: Program Status Worksheet	Decision-support tool	This worksheet (included in the appendix to this guide) helps airports document and track progress on the evolution of their programs to respond to homelessness. It provides a table that airports can use to track activities and document next steps, estimated progress, and notes, by action step.	

In addition, airports will need to leverage the expertise and resources of CoCs and other service providers to conduct PIT counts in an accurate, respectful, and human-centered manner.

## Tools and Resources

Table 5 shows the tools and resources involved in Strategy 2.

1	2	Strategy 3	4	5	6	7	8
Learning the Fundamentals	Assessing Current Conditions	Identifying and Working with Partners	Planning a Response	Outlining Staff and Stakeholder Responsibilities	Developing and Implementing a Training Program	Developing an Engagement Protocol	Tracking Progress

## Strategy 3: Identifying and Working with Partners

### Background and Need

Partnerships are critical to airports' efforts related to homelessness, especially as addressing homelessness is not part of their core mission. Given the complexity of the issues, effective action requires coordination across multiple jurisdictions and organizations. Airport personnel will probably lack crucial knowledge and skills related to the topic, and partnering is an effective way of accessing information, tools, and other resources. Collaboration with partners improves airports' capacity to address homelessness, for example, by making it easier to connect people experiencing homelessness with needed services. Given the likelihood that people experiencing homelessness will continue to see airports as desirable locations to shelter and spend time in, airports can help facilitate beneficial outreach and engagement opportunities with service providers.

However, it can sometimes be challenging to engage a partner because there can be a disconnect in how airports and service providers see each other's roles, missions, and regulatory

context. For example, service providers might believe that airports should offer unused hangars or land to create affordable housing, which would typically be in violation of the airport's federal grant assurance obligations. Conversely, airport staff may not fully understand the constrained resources that service providers have and their need to prioritize where and how to provide services. The actions to consider that follow encourage each party to gain an understanding of each other's contexts and formalize roles through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or a contract.

## Actions to Consider

Actions to consider are discussed in the following bullet points.

- **Identify staffing, training, and resource needs.** Airports should identify the types of expertise and services needed to undertake actions to address homelessness and compare these against the staffing and resources they have available. Airports should also assess any partnering needs for providing what the airports are not equipped to handle themselves.
- **Identify potential partner organizations and entities.** A range of community-based organizations, social service providers, and government organizations can be valuable partners in airports' efforts to address homelessness. Partners can provide training and information about the resources available in the community. Airports can also collaborate with providers to help connect people experiencing homelessness with services. Possible partners include:
  - *Social services providers.* Smaller, community-based organizations focused narrowly on people experiencing homelessness, as well as larger umbrella organizations (e.g., behavioral health providers), are possible partners. Staff from these organizations can provide services such as outreach, behavioral health interventions, assistance accessing emergency shelter and other housing, tangible supports such as transportation vouchers and phone cards, and referrals to counseling and other services, to people experiencing homelessness. They can work hand-in-hand with airports to ensure that programs reflect best practices and are trauma-informed (based on knowledge and understanding of how trauma affects people's lives, their service needs, and service use). These organizations might also be able to provide training on homelessness-related topics for airport staff.
  - *City- or county-run agencies.* Public health, county mental health, and city housing departments are examples of government agencies that have partnered with airports in their efforts to address homelessness. These agencies can provide training or consulting services to airports, although there are typically associated costs. Government agencies can also be an important source of information about local resources for people experiencing homelessness and how to access them.
  - *Continuums of Care.* CoCs are regional or local entities that coordinate housing and related services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, including through guiding the application for competitive federal homelessness resources and operating the coordinated entry system and homeless management information system. CoCs are required to have a governance board comprised of members of the homeless services sector and connected systems and partners, which could include local police and other first responders that also operate at airports. As a result, CoCs may be helpful to airports' attempts to identify potential local partners. CoCs are also tasked with coordinating PIT counts, which provide an estimate of the number of people experiencing homelessness on a given night; airports

### Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) Implements Multiple Partnerships to Respond to Homelessness

#### Strategy 3: Identifying and Working with Partners

LAX implemented partnerships between PATH, a homeless services provider, and local law enforcement to engage with people experiencing homelessness at the airport. The partnership includes the participation of several specialized professionals, including a mental health professional and a city prosecutor, to prevent impediments to service engagement or access. When the collaboration began in early 2020, there were about 120 people experiencing homelessness at LAX. By late 2021, there were fewer than 10 individuals.

(Information obtained from 2021 interviews with homeless service providers)



can contact their CoCs to ask for support in ensuring that people experiencing homelessness at airports are counted.

- *Police, sheriffs, and other law enforcement.* Law enforcement can be an important component of a robust response to people in need; however, particularly where homelessness and mental illness intersect, policing risks making situations worse. For that reason, airports should work to develop and support alternative police responses. For example, several airports have instituted programs whereby law enforcement collaborates with outreach or behavioral health services to respond to people experiencing homelessness. Others have worked with local criminal justice and law enforcement entities to develop alternatives to citations or arrests for people sheltering on airport property. In addition to airport law enforcement, local police and sheriffs are potential partners and are often charged with responding to people experiencing homelessness. Airports should make sure that law enforcement staff receive training that supports appropriate and effective interactions with people experiencing homelessness; the training should include trauma-informed communication, de-escalation techniques, and an awareness of local resources.
- *Local transit agencies.* Local transit agencies can be important partners, in part because people sometimes decide to seek shelter at airports that serve as the end of the line of bus or light-rail routes. In addition, some transit authorities have implemented strategies to address homelessness at light-rail platforms and bus stations located at airport facilities, such as by providing transit fare or transportation to shelters and designating transit ambassadors at stations and on vehicles. Airports, transit agencies, service providers, and other stakeholders should work together to coordinate their activities.

- *Travelers Aid.* Travelers Aid is a nonprofit organization that provides crisis intervention and other direct services as well as referrals to people in distress in airports and at train stations. It has information booths in 17 airports worldwide. Where present, Travelers Aid can be a useful partner because it provides a network of social services to connect individuals with emergency transportation assistance and social casework.

- **Finalize partnership logistics.** Airports should coordinate with each partner organization to finalize the logistics of their partnership, taking steps such as the following:

- Airports and their partners should discuss the purpose and intended outcome of the partnership, as well as work to clearly define roles, responsibilities, goals, timelines, and accountability mechanisms. There may be costs associated with establishing partnerships or in the ongoing implementation of partner services. For example, the total costs at Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) for 3 years of homelessness outreach and referral services by Travelers Aid Metro HOPE Atlanta was \$870,000.
- Airports and partners should specify an agreed-upon mode of communication, such as emails, phone calls, or weekly meetings.
- Airports can consider formalizing partnerships. This can be done through an MOU or a contract. Items included in MOUs or contracts may include information/data sharing, jurisdictional questions, the use of intellectual property, and interactions with people experiencing homelessness. An example MOU is provided in the appendix to this report [in the appendix, see Resource: Example Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to Formalize Partnerships].

### Support from Travelers Aid at Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD)

#### Strategy 3: Identifying and Working with Partners

At IAD, Travelers Aid staff often connect persons experiencing homelessness with services, typically via specific agencies tailored to individual needs (e.g., agencies offering services for veterans, families, housing options, and food assistance). Travelers Aid will alert IAD law enforcement if it is concerned for a person's well-being (e.g., if a person appears in distress) or if a situation has escalated and requires an emergency response.

(Information obtained from a 2022 IAD site visit)

- **Involve airport leadership.** Airport leadership at the executive or board level can play an instrumental role in the formation of effective partnerships. Executive leaders can distribute resources and otherwise encourage engagement with outside entities in ways that help to strengthen partnerships. Executives can show support by announcing partnerships publicly through press releases, social media, emails, and newsletters. Executives and board members can help identify and recruit partners by drawing on their networks. Board members can also promote collaboration by participating in meetings with external partners.
- **Seek out local, regional, or state task forces.** Local or regional homelessness task forces can help airports become informed about relevant resources and organizations. Airports might also be able to join the task forces and, in this way, help inform regional efforts to combat homelessness. Participation can also help airport staff develop relationships with potential partners.

## Airport Stakeholders Involved

Table 6 shows the airport stakeholders involved in Strategy 3.

## How to Leverage External Partners

Relevant content on leveraging external partners is detailed in the “Actions to Consider” section.

**Table 6. Airport stakeholders involved for Strategy 3: Identifying and Working with Partners.**

Stakeholder Function	Responsible or Accountable	Consulted or Informed	Role
Airport management	☑		Formalize partnerships with external groups; assign team members to focus on partnerships; commit resources.
Airport homelessness program lead	☑		Primarily responsible for coordinating with local service providers, local agencies, and other partners.
Airport homelessness outreach lead	☑		Coordinate with local service providers, local agencies, and other partners.
Airport operations and security	☑		Coordinate with partners as directed by airport management and homelessness program or outreach lead.
Airport law enforcement and ARFF/EMS	☑		Coordinate with partners as directed by airport management and homelessness program or outreach lead.
Airport communications and dispatch		☑	Engage in external partnerships as needed.
Tenants, concessionaires, and contractors		☑	Cooperate with airport management and program lead so that tenants, concessionaires, and contractors are appropriately engaged in external partnerships as needed.
External partners	☑		Coordinate with airport management and homelessness program or outreach lead; commit resources.

Note: ARFF = aircraft rescue and firefighting; EMS = emergency medical services.



**Table 7. Tools and resources for Strategy 3: Identifying and Working with Partners.**

Source	Resource Name	Type	Description	URL
Appendix to this report	Strategies to Address Homelessness at Airports: Example Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to Formalize Partnerships	Written document	This example MOU (included in the appendix to this guide) includes a scope of work from an agreement between an airport and homeless service provider. Airports can use this resource if an MOU is needed to formalize partnerships for addressing homelessness.	
Bureau of Justice Assistance	Building Leadership-Level Partnerships	Website	This website from the Bureau of Justice Assistance provides a summary of best practices for building strong, holistic partnerships to address homelessness.	<a href="https://bja.ojp.gov/program/pmhc/responding-homelessness#building-leadership-level-partnerships">https://bja.ojp.gov/program/pmhc/responding-homelessness#building-leadership-level-partnerships</a>
United States Interagency Council on Homelessness	Strengthening Partnerships Between Law Enforcement and Homelessness Services Systems	Written document	This briefing report outlines strategies to support collaborative efforts between law enforcement and homeless service providers to address homelessness. Airports can use this resource when finalizing partnership logistics between law enforcement agencies and service providers.	<a href="https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Law-Enforcement-and-Homelessness-Service-Partnership-2019.pdf">https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Law-Enforcement-and-Homelessness-Service-Partnership-2019.pdf</a>
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	Need Homeless Assistance?	Decision-support tool	This tool is a comprehensive contact database of homeless service providers (by U.S. state) and their respective corresponding CoCs. Airports can use this database to identify and contact potential service providers to establish a partnership with them.	<a href="https://www.hudexchange.info/housing-and-homeless-assistance/homeless-help/">https://www.hudexchange.info/housing-and-homeless-assistance/homeless-help/</a>

## Tools and Resources

Table 7 shows the tools and resources for Strategy 3.

1	2	3	Strategy 4	5	6	7	8
Learning the Fundamentals	Assessing Current Conditions	Identifying and Working with Partners	Planning a Response	Outlining Staff and Stakeholder Responsibilities	Developing and Implementing a Training Program	Developing an Engagement Protocol	Tracking Progress

## Strategy 4: Planning a Response

### Background and Need

Airport response to homelessness will vary greatly depending on factors such as the scale of homelessness, nature of situations or incidents involving people experiencing homelessness, partnerships with homeless service providers, and funding availability. A response plan

identifies specific actions and procedures and assigns responsibility for implementing them to airport stakeholders and external partners in a structured, programmatic manner. A response plan with a flexible approach can enable airports to take highly effective initial actions while also planning for additional responses in the future. To do this, airports need to first determine and focus on what they can address on their own (e.g., using available staffing resources, existing partners). Any response plan should be appropriate and compassionate and should adequately address the needs of all airport users, including those experiencing homelessness.

## Actions to Consider

Actions to consider are discussed in the following bullet points.

- **Identify funding and resources.** Airports generally fund initiatives responding to homelessness out of their own operating budgets because there are currently no known dedicated aviation funding sources to support airport efforts in responding to homelessness. Consequently, airport leadership must devote funding and resource support so that constraints such as limited staff time or skill sets will not hamper the ability to develop and implement comprehensive and effective responses to homelessness.
  - *Consider how external partnerships may reduce spending on response.* External sources of funding to address homelessness at airports are limited; however, airports should determine whether they can access external funding and resources to address homelessness by participating in CoCs and partnering with state, regional, or local service providers or nonprofit organizations.
- **Designate a process for developing the response plan.** Airports must determine a process for developing a response plan. They may incorporate the drafting process into an individual program staff person's job, or they may pull in a variety of staff from airport departments such as communications, customer experience, or airport law enforcement and security to assist with writing. The response plan should be reviewed by relevant departments and airport leadership. Airports should consider engaging other stakeholders, including external partners, for consultations when developing their plans. These partners may include airlines, tenants and concessionaires, local law enforcement agencies, service providers, and homeless advocates.
- **Develop a response plan.** Developing and drafting a response plan for addressing homelessness can be effective for targeting resources and prioritizing effective first steps. When developing a response plan, airports should consider the current conditions of homelessness (e.g., people sheltering in the terminals versus encampments on airport property). Table 1 in the primer can be used as a basis for developing a response plan. For instance, airports that are well connected to public transportation may want to establish partnerships with transit agencies to ensure coordinated efforts. A response plan may also include future measures that the airport would like to take but that may not be feasible or as effective as the initial steps.
- **Determine the response plan's contents.** The response plan may include some or all the following sections:
  - *Policy statement.* Any airport policy on addressing or responding to homelessness should be included in the plan to ensure that objectives are well defined.
  - *Description of homelessness (regionally, locally, and within an airport setting).* A description of homelessness and any specific regional or local considerations should be included in the response plan. Airport-specific conditions as they relate to homelessness will provide contextual clues on how to best address it. This section should go beyond a description of people experiencing homelessness and instead focus on broader observed trends (e.g., seasonal/climate drivers, frequently used spaces, local shelter availability, regional and local resources). The description can be derived from data obtained and analyzed in Strategy 2: Assessing Current Conditions but should be updated periodically.

### The Roles of Stakeholders in Responding to Homelessness at Philadelphia International Airport (PHL)

#### Strategy 4: Planning a Response

In May 2020, PHL led efforts to relocate approximately 150 people experiencing homelessness from the airport baggage claim areas to local shelters. Given concerns regarding the potential spread of COVID-19, PHL security staff coordinated a response with outreach workers and city employees, including uniformed, plainclothes, and specialized unit law enforcement personnel, to screen individuals for COVID-19 and offer access to housing services (Associated Press 2020).

### A Range of Support Services Offered at Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD)

#### Strategy 4: Planning a Response

Since 1990, the O'Hare Outreach Program of Haymarket Center has assisted people experiencing homelessness who have sought shelter in ORD. The center provides connection to services, transportation, referrals for medical or psychiatric treatment, and assistance with identification needs (Haymarket Center n.d.).

- *Response based on scenarios/situations.* Airports will need to define appropriate responses based on several scenarios and situations. For instance, varying response measures should be taken in a public safety situation involving a person experiencing homelessness versus an individual experiencing a mental health crisis. Airports should identify a broad range of scenarios, with an emphasis on developing detailed responses for those most likely to occur or most frequently occurring.
- *Employee and partner responsibilities.* The response plan should describe the roles and responsibilities of all airport stakeholders involved in addressing homelessness. Airport employee and partner responsibilities will vary based on the scenario because different stakeholders may serve as a first point of contact for the response, depending on the situation at hand. For instance, airport law enforcement, aircraft rescue and firefighting (ARFF), and emergency medical services (EMS) should serve as primary responders when responding to emergency calls (i.e., immediate safety and health concerns) versus the homelessness outreach lead, who would serve as primary responder when engaging people experiencing homelessness in a non-emergency situation (e.g., providing referral to services). Airports should consider creating a response protocol and responsibility matrix or other visuals to explain stakeholder responsibilities.
- *Partner engagement.* One section in the response plan should specify which partners to engage and describe how and why they will be engaged. These may include community-based service providers, city- or county-run agencies, CoCs, law enforcement agencies, local transit agencies, and Travelers Aid.
- *Engagement protocol.* A clear engagement protocol, as defined in Strategy 7: Developing an Engagement Protocol, should be included in the response plan.
- *Employee training.* This section should describe the airport's approach to training various types of airport employees and other personnel working at the airport. Varying approaches may be taken for badged versus unbadged employees, customer-facing versus behind-the-scenes staff, airport employees versus staff of tenants or concessionaires, and so forth.
- *Data collection.* Airports can include a statement in their plans about data collection, data sharing, and data analysis procedures.
- *Support services.* This section of the plan can outline how employees and external partners can provide support to people experiencing homelessness. It can include contact information for regional and local service providers, shelters, and other related community-based organizations.
- *Future planned actions.* This section should describe the actions planned by the airport to address homelessness.

## Airport Stakeholders Involved

Table 8 shows the airport stakeholders involved in Strategy 4.

## How to Leverage External Partners

External partners can help an airport ensure that its response plan is informed by multiple perspectives and covers as many bases as possible. Comprehensive plans are stronger and can

**Table 8. Airport stakeholders involved for Strategy 4: Planning a Response.**

Stakeholder Function	Responsible or Accountable	Consulted or Informed	Role
Airport management	☑		Institutionalize airport response efforts on addressing homelessness; designate funding and resources.
Airport homelessness program lead	☑		Develop airport response plan in consultation with other airport stakeholders.
Airport homelessness outreach lead		☑	Provide input to response plan development.
Airport operations and security		☑	Provide input to response plan development.
Airport law enforcement and ARFF/EMS		☑	Provide input to response plan development.
Airport communications and dispatch	☑		Communicate airport response plans to airport staff and other stakeholders; articulate support for efforts to address homelessness; issue supporting statement or press release.
Tenants, concessionaires, and contractors		☑	Provide input to response plan development.
External partners		☑	Provide input and response to response plan development.

help direct the airport to the resources available to them. Once response plans are developed, airports can engage other peer airports or executives within the aviation industry during policy discussions to generate awareness and best practices for addressing homelessness.

## Tools and Resources

Table 9 shows tools and resources for Strategy 4.

1	2	3	4	Strategy 5	6	7	8
Learning the Fundamentals	Assessing Current Conditions	Identifying and Working with Partners	Planning a Response	Outlining Staff and Stakeholder Responsibilities	Developing and Implementing a Training Program	Developing an Engagement Protocol	Tracking Progress

## Strategy 5: Outlining Staff and Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities

### Background and Need

Defining the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders involved in an airport's efforts to address homelessness helps give structure, organization, and clarity to the response, particularly as staff from various departments may be involved in responding to homelessness in addition to their other, unrelated responsibilities. While first responders (e.g., law enforcement officers and ARFF/EMS) and airport operations staff are often the first stakeholders to engage with homeless populations, other staff are also likely to interact with people experiencing homelessness or may have a role in various aspects of an airport's program to address homelessness, such as

**Table 9. Tools and resources for Strategy 4: Planning a Response.**

Source	Resource Name	Type	Description	URL
Appendix to this report	Strategies to Address Homelessness at Airports: Program Status Worksheet	Decision-support tool	This worksheet (included in the appendix to this guide) helps airports document and track progress on the evolution of their programs to respond to homelessness. It provides a table that airports can use to track activities and document next steps, estimated progress, and notes, by action step.	
Bureau of Justice Assistance	Implementing an Effective Homeless Outreach Approach in Your Community	Website	This resource provides strategies for implementing effective homeless outreach to divert people experiencing homelessness from the justice system when feasible.	<a href="https://bja.ojp.gov/program/pmhc/responding-homelessness#implementing-an-effective-homeless-outreach-approach-in-your-com">https://bja.ojp.gov/program/pmhc/responding-homelessness#implementing-an-effective-homeless-outreach-approach-in-your-com</a>
University of California Los Angeles Institute of Transportation Studies	Homelessness in Transit Environments Volume II: Transit Agency Strategies and Responses	Written document	The document provides detailed case studies of strategies (e.g., hub of services, mobile outreach, discounted fares, and transportation to shelters) taken by agencies in response to homelessness in transit systems.	<a href="https://escholarship.org/uc/item/87b0v8cr">https://escholarship.org/uc/item/87b0v8cr</a>

### Port of Portland Seeks Qualified Candidate to Serve as Homelessness Lead

#### Strategy 5: Outlining Staff and Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities

Recognizing the need for an experienced individual to lead efforts to address the impacts of homelessness, the Port of Portland—which owns and operates Portland International Airport (PDX)—has created a position for an Impact Reduction and Resource Manager. The individual will act as the port’s policy and technical expert and primary point of contact regarding the port’s response to homelessness and issues related to public safety.

(Information obtained from a 2022 PDX site visit)

coordinating with partners. To maintain an efficient and effective program and associated response measures, it is important to clarify who leads and who supports which activities.

### Actions to Consider

Actions to consider are discussed in the following bullet points.

- **Assign a program lead.** A single person should be assigned to be responsible for and manage the strategic response and should be identified as the airport homelessness program lead. The program lead should be in an airport management role and should have the ability and authority to guide direction of the program, recruit support, and connect with more senior decision makers. If more comprehensive response measures are undertaken, the program lead should engage with others to secure additional support and to delegate tasks. In addition, a homelessness outreach lead could be identified to provide strategic support to compassionately connect people who are experiencing homelessness to local or regional services. The program lead and homelessness outreach lead can be two separate positions, as deemed appropriate when identifying staffing gaps. When assigning the program lead, the following should be considered:
  - *Identify an experienced candidate.* Airport management should identify the airport staff member who is best positioned to lead the strategic response. This person should ideally have extensive experience with previous airport strategies to address homelessness and should have proper training as outlined in Strategy 6: Developing and Implementing a Training Program.



- *Ensure adequate time availability.* The program lead should identify estimated time requirements needed to lead the program and ensure that the additional workload can be accommodated. The level of effort required will depend on how many strategies the airport wants to develop and implement.
- *Get supervisor approval.* The program lead should secure their supervisor's approval, and any other approvals necessary, to dedicate a portion of their job responsibilities to the strategic response.
- *Ensure the role is known to other airport staff.* The program lead should make sure their role is known to other staff at the airport, including through meet-and-greets, as feasible. Staff will be more inclined to engage with strategies if they know who the main point of contact is and have an established rapport.
- **Establish a formal committee.** While early airport efforts to address homelessness may be ad hoc or done through an informal group, airports are encouraged to establish a committee comprised of staff across key departments to bring formality and raise the profile of a strategic response. The committee should establish a regular meeting schedule and set goals and expectations for progress to be made at each meeting. Airports can consider including staff from the following functional areas: management, operations and security, law enforcement and ARFF/EMS, and communications and dispatch, as well as tenants, concessionaires, and contractors. Airports can also invite airlines and other tenants to coordinate on program efforts, as appropriate. External stakeholders, such as service providers or local governing authorities, may be highly valuable to include in the committee if engagement of outside partners is appropriate. County or local government authorities may be part of an airport's governance structure or may have regional or local plans to address homelessness already in place.
- **Identify staff gaps.** Airports must determine the knowledge gaps in which they need additional support. This step will help determine which individual(s) can bring the experience and expertise to inform effective and sustainable practices to address homelessness, including determining which responsibilities and needs might be met by external partners and identifying which airport stakeholders need new or additional training. Several airports have determined that specialized knowledge is required when engaging with homeless populations and have created positions, such as outreach leads and crisis coordinators, within the airport organizational structure to address this knowledge gap.
- **Designate a law enforcement liaison.** Airports should designate a liaison, whether internal to airport law enforcement or from local law enforcement with purview over the airport, with whom to coordinate on airport response efforts. Having a designated law enforcement contact will enable airport staff to obtain insight into police response on homelessness, contextual information, lessons learned from engaging with homeless populations, and other key information that will be useful to program development. This liaison should have specialized training in crisis intervention or mental health responses and should ideally be connected to local, regional, state, or federal initiatives to respond to homelessness, such as through task forces.
- **Determine a process for external coordination.** The number of stakeholders involved in response efforts will grow over time as the program evolves and the coordination becomes more formalized. Once airports have identified one or more possible organizations, airports should engage them to discuss how the parties will coordinate and develop a response plan. Because airports and external organizations have limited resources and competing priorities, a detailed strategic response plan will allow airports

### Crisis Coordinator as Part of Compassionate Response Piloted at Port of Seattle

#### Strategy 5: Outlining Staff and Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities

In 2022, the Port of Seattle implemented a multifaceted approach to addressing homelessness, called SEA Cares, that supports safety in the airport and compassionately connects those in crisis to regional services. As part of the approach, Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA) is piloting a crisis coordinator role within the Port of Seattle Police Department. The crisis coordinator serves as a key resource for police officers, local outreach organizations, and community programs. In addition, a team of public support specialists monitors terminal entry points overnight and serves as visible points of contact (Port of Seattle 2022).

to maximize their partner resources and offer a smooth process during response situations. The following questions are examples that could be discussed with each partner:

- What bandwidth or level of availability does the organization have to support the airport?
- In what types of situations should the organization be contacted?
- What is the process for contacting the organization?
- What resources can the airport provide to help the organization?
- Is an MOU, contract, or other formalized relationship needed?
- **Create a contact list or organizational chart.** Developing a contact list, organizational chart, or other visuals can help airports keep track of each person’s roles and responsibilities. The contact list should include external partners for staff to engage with when responding to homelessness. The list should include the organization, the point of contact, and the role the organization plays in response to homelessness. The list should be shared with any airport staff members who might be involved in engaging or responding to people experiencing homelessness so that they know whom to contact and when. To be effective, such a document will need to be kept up-to-date as staff turn over and will need to be as specific as possible in defining each person’s responsibilities.

## Airport Stakeholders Involved

Table 10 shows the airport stakeholders involved in Strategy 5.

## How to Leverage External Partners

External partners can play a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to address homelessness, so specifying their responsibilities and who will coordinate with external

**Table 10. Airport stakeholders involved for Strategy 5: Outlining Staff and Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities.**

Stakeholder Function	Responsible or Accountable	Consulted or Informed	Role
Airport management	☑		Lead organization of a formal committee; confirm roles and responsibilities among staff; commit resources for filling staffing gaps.
Airport homelessness program lead	☑		Serve as lead of formal committee; establish external coordination processes; maintain and share contact list of stakeholder roles and responsibilities.
Airport homelessness outreach lead	☑		Participate in the committee; support program lead as needed.
Airport operations and security		☑	Provide information to the committee; potentially participate in committee.
Airport law enforcement and ARFF/EMS		☑	Provide information to the committee; potentially participate in committee.
Airport communications and dispatch		☑	Participate in committee, as needed.
Tenants, concessionaires, and contractors		☑	Participate in committee, as needed.
External partners		☑	Participate in committee, as needed.

**Table 11. Tools and resources for Strategy 5: Outlining Staff and Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities.**

Source	Resource Name	Type	Description	URL
Appendix to this report	Strategies to Address Homelessness at Airports: Stakeholder Worksheet	Decision-support tool	This document (included in the appendix to this guide) includes a graphic of the types of internal and external stakeholders to engage with in an airport program to address homelessness and enables the user to develop a contact list of specific individuals.	

partners should be part of the process. Once staffing and coordination with internal stakeholders are established, the program lead and homelessness outreach lead can start to engage service providers that could support the airport response build-out.

## Tools and Resources

Table 11 shows the tools and resources for Strategy 5.

1	2	3	4	5	Strategy 6	7	8
Learning the Fundamentals	Assessing Current Conditions	Identifying and Working with Partners	Planning a Response	Outlining Staff and Stakeholder Responsibilities	Developing and Implementing a Training Program	Developing an Engagement Protocol	Tracking Progress

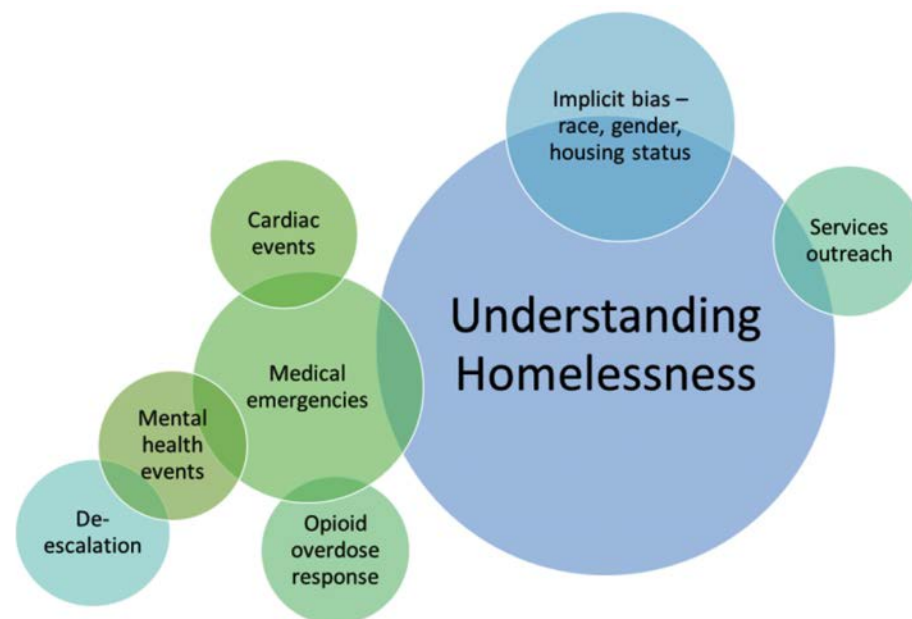
## Strategy 6: Developing and Implementing a Training Program

### Background and Need

Training helps frontline airport staff build competency in interacting with people experiencing homelessness and provides staff with information to share on available services and resources. The content of the training provided is likely to differ by employee and position based on their different roles and responsibilities. For example, employees with a significant degree of contact with the general public will benefit from more comprehensive training on a range of topics related to homelessness and other issues. This level of detail may not be necessary for other employees, for whom shorter, more fundamental training limited to the key issues may be more appropriate.

Employees should be trained to understand the basics of what homelessness is, who experiences it, what causes it, and how homelessness is prevented and resolved. This awareness is integral to equipping employees to effectively respond to people experiencing homelessness. Other trainings that employees receive to work with the entire public, homeless or not, may also be relevant when working with someone experiencing homelessness. This training could include topics such as implicit bias, responding to medical emergencies such as cardiac arrest, and de-escalating situations involving upset airport visitors. Figure 2 shows the intersections between training and how it connects to an overall understanding of homelessness and supporting people experiencing homelessness.





**Figure 2.** *The intersection of relevant training topics.*

There are several options for airports looking to implement training programs, including using existing off-the-shelf materials from organizations, working with an outside organization to develop customized training, and developing in-house, airport-specific training resources. A resource on example training materials is provided in the appendix.

Training can also be provided through a variety of delivery methods. It can be in-person, classroom-based, and instructor-led training, or online and either instructor-led (i.e., live) or self-paced training. Airports can also consider offering more in-depth training to staff once, with shorter refresher courses offered to the same staff at later intervals. To get staff trained quickly, airports can use existing off-the-shelf online video or self-paced training, or they can train multiple staff together in person via instructor-led formats. Airports can also consider integrating training into other processes to engage staff, such as by adding trainings to badging requirements for new hires.

## Actions to Consider

Actions for airports to consider are discussed in the following bullet points.

- **Determine which staff should receive training.** Priority staff are those who are most likely to encounter or engage with people experiencing homelessness. These could include staff from airport operations and security, law enforcement and ARFF/EMS, and communications and dispatch, as well as customer service representatives, custodial personnel and bathroom attendants, shuttle and other ground transportation operators, and call-center staff. Each airport must determine which staff are most relevant to train based on its own situation.
- **Apply best practices.** Consider the following best practices when developing a training program:
  - *Training should be human-centered.* Human-centered learning requires that the needs, interests, and lived experiences of participants be considered when designing training. This will best facilitate retention and integration of the material.
  - *Incorporate lessons on countering bias.* Training needs to address how bias can affect staff's treatment of persons experiencing homelessness (e.g., men versus women, those of

different races, those suffering from substance use issues, those with mental health challenges or disabilities). Using counter-stereotypical examples is a good de-biasing strategy in training. Implicit bias training can teach staff to avoid discriminating when interacting with people experiencing homelessness and avoid criminalizing the individuals involved.

- *Be specific to the airport context.* Training should be relevant and reflect what airport staff might see at their specific airport. For example, training could focus on local prevalence and characteristics and account for what services and resources are available locally. Training should also be customized to the participants where feasible because staff members have different skills, responsibilities, capabilities, and opportunities.
- *Plan experiential and engaging training.* Training should be as experiential as possible and include stories to assist with retention. In-person, classroom-based, and instructor-led training tends to be the most valuable because participants get a chance to ask questions and stay present and focused on the issue. More information can be presented in a classroom setting compared to a self-paced virtual format since it is possible to expand on concepts and dig deeper into the subject. Training can be enhanced with quizzes or “Did you notice . . .?” questions. Training content can include situations airport staff are likely to encounter related to people experiencing homelessness, with before-and-after scenes and discussions to help trainees identify key details and know the best way to approach a situation.
- *Use train-the-trainer formats.* Airports can use a train-the-trainer approach, where staff are trained to deliver a particular subject-matter curriculum that enables them to provide training to their colleagues. This can be an efficient use of limited training budgets and helps to build institutional knowledge.
- *Integrate homelessness training into other training programs.* Airports can maximize efficiency by incorporating training on homelessness as part of other training provided to staff.
- **Identify desired training content.** Training should be designed to equip staff to implement activities that support the goals and objectives of the airport’s overall approach to homelessness. The following types of content may be useful:
  - *Homelessness overview.* This type of training can provide an overview of the prevalence of homelessness locally and nationally, information about the experience of homelessness, and a review of the research related to the causes and consequences of homelessness.
  - *Implicit bias.* Implicit or unconscious bias training can assist staff to become aware of their implicit biases, provide tools to adjust automatic patterns of thinking, and help eliminate discriminatory behaviors. This training should cover issues related to housing status as well as topics such as race, gender, and disability status.
  - *Communication and outreach tools and strategies.* There are a variety of training options related to improving staff’s ability to effectively communicate and engage with people experiencing homelessness.
    - *Trauma-informed communication and engagement.* Trauma-informed communication assists staff in understanding the impact of trauma on the behavior of survivors and provides tools that more effectively engage affected individuals with various forms of assistance. These types of communication skills are beneficial for airport staff to employ in all interactions and not just with people who are homeless.
    - *De-escalation.* Training on de-escalation teaches staff how to create nonthreatening situations as well as how to use reflective listening and other communication techniques that help to defuse a potentially dangerous situation. While it cannot be applied in every situation, de-escalation can be used in situations beyond those involving people experiencing homelessness.

### Volunteers of America Train Salt Lake City International Airport (SLC) Employees

#### Strategy 6: Developing and Implementing a Training Program

In addition to assisting SLC when responding to people experiencing homelessness, Volunteers of America provides training to airport frontline staff (e.g., landside officers and terminal specialists). The training, focused on human-centered best practices when engaging people who are homeless, is mandatory for frontline staff.

(Information obtained from 2021 focus groups with SLC staff)

- *Engagement protocols.* Many of the recommended actions included in Strategy 7: Developing an Engagement Protocol are also relevant to training content, such as those in the “general considerations for engaging with people experiencing homelessness” bullet point in the Actions to Consider section.
- *Medical emergencies.* Training can equip staff to respond effectively to a variety of medical emergencies. (It is important to note that these situations are not limited to or even primarily presented by people experiencing homelessness.)
  - *Crisis intervention.* Provides staff with the skills and techniques needed to respond, communicate, and engage effectively with individuals in either mental health or drug-related crises.
  - *Cardiac event.* Helps staff to recognize and respond to a cardiac arrest, including administering cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and using an automated external defibrillator (AED).
  - *Overdose.* Educates staff about how to identify the signs of overdose and the steps involved in administering naloxone, as well as performing other activities that help prevent injury and death.
- *Program overview and orientation.* Airports can provide overviews to staff of new airport-specific programs such as outreach services or other initiatives related to homelessness. These would inform staff about program goals and objectives, core services, and the roles and responsibilities of the staff.
- *Overview of local services and resources.* Airport staff can be provided with information about the range of services that are available locally for people experiencing homelessness as well as information and tips about how to access these resources.
- **Identify training delivery method.** Training can vary from short, prerecorded videos to more substantive instructor-led classroom sessions. Airports should determine the training type that is best suited to their budgets and specific needs (e.g., role of staff being trained, airport type/size).
  - *Online (instructor-led or self-paced) training.* Training can be offered virtually (online). This type of training can be prerecorded by the instructor, where trainees can engage at a date/time of their choosing (asynchronous), or the training can be live, where the trainees and instructor are online at the same time (synchronous).
  - *Instructor-led classroom training.* Training can take place in person, where the trainees and instructor meet at a specified date and time.
  - *Customized training.* Airports may consider whether they will need to customize their training. This decision may come down to available resources, whether the training need is immediate, as well as other factors.
- **Consider using pre-existing training materials.** Using pre-existing training materials could save airports considerable time and money when compared to developing their own. While there are several free or low-cost training materials that airports can use, some materials are available for purchase. For instance, the National Alliance to End Homelessness provides a suite of homelessness training modules. Airports should explore the availability of training resources in their community and nationally. For example, organizations working on homelessness, as well as other types of social service providers, are likely to know about a range of training resources. Community colleges and public safety agencies may also have information about relevant training.
- **Identify training frequency and integration with other processes.** Airports should define the expected frequency of key staff training requirements. Training that is held more frequently will support memory retention. Airports can integrate training with other processes, such as:
  - *Badging processes.* Airports could require training on homelessness for certain employees as part of a badge or rebadging process. Integrating the training into the Security Identification Display Area (SIDA) badging process for employees is an efficient and comprehensive approach. Any new training included in the badging process may need to be brief.

- *Annual all-staff meetings.* Some airports may wish to integrate homelessness training into annual staff meetings.
- **Evaluate training.** It is important for airports to track the success of their training programs to continuously make improvements and strengthen their response to homelessness overall. Airports can use pre- and post-training survey tools to assess baseline and learned knowledge. Airports can also consider tracking metrics such as the number of employees trained.
- **Consider regulatory requirements or implications related to funding.** Airports must consider federal regulatory requirements set by the FAA for federally funded airports, as well as any state or local requirements. Federally obligated airports can use airport revenue to pay for training for their own staff. There may be restrictions on whether airport revenue can be used to pay for training for employees of other entities (e.g., contractors providing custodial, operations and maintenance, security, and other services, ground transportation operators, and anyone who does not normally work in the airport environment). Airports are advised to consult with the FAA’s designated Airports District Office or Regional Office or with the FAA’s Office of Airport Compliance and Management Analysis.

## Airport Stakeholders Involved

Table 12 shows the airport stakeholders involved in Strategy 6.

**Table 12. Airport stakeholders involved for Strategy 6: Developing and Implementing a Training Program.**

Stakeholder Function	Responsible or Accountable	Consulted or Informed	Role
Airport management	☑		Responsible and accountable for training program; responsible for selecting training format, content, and frequency, and for deciding which staff get trained; should be trained on homelessness; can provide input on training program design; can help assess training to improve program.
Airport homelessness program lead	☑		Responsible for selecting training format, content, and frequency, and for deciding which staff get trained; can provide input on training program design; can help assess training to improve program.
Airport homelessness outreach lead	☑		Can provide input on training program design; help assess training to improve program.
Airport operations and security	☑		Public-facing airport operations and security staff should be trained in human-centered response; can serve as trainers to other staff.
Airport law enforcement and ARFF/EMS	☑		Public-facing airport law enforcement, ARFF, and EMS staff should be trained in human-centered response; can serve as trainers to other staff.
Airport communications and dispatch		☑	Participate in airport-provided training as feasible.
Tenants, concessionaires, and contractors		☑	Participate in airport-provided training as feasible.
External partners		☑	Provide input on training program design.

How to Leverage External Partners

External partners are critical for helping airports create, prepare, and deliver training. Local service providers, homeless advocates, and other agencies or organizations focused on homelessness can provide a wealth of expertise on training best practices and content, such as how to connect people experiencing homelessness with services.

Tools and Resources

Several organizations and agencies have developed relevant training. Examples are provided in the appendix. These training materials can serve as useful resources for airports exploring the use of outside experts to train their staff.

1	2	3	4	5	6	Strategy 7	8
Learning the Fundamentals	Assessing Current Conditions	Identifying and Working with Partners	Planning a Response	Outlining Staff and Stakeholder Responsibilities	Developing and Implementing a Training Program	Developing an Engagement Protocol	Tracking Progress

Strategy 7: Developing an Engagement Protocol

Background and Need

Airport staff and their partners should strive to engage with people experiencing homelessness in a manner that is consistent with the needs of the individual. Engagement may differ depending on the situation and circumstances and, in many instances, will be similar to engaging with a person who is not experiencing homelessness. Airport staff should refer to the protocols best suited for the situation, regardless of the person’s housing status.

Actions to Consider

Actions for airports to consider are discussed in the following bullet points.

- **General considerations for engaging with people experiencing homelessness.** Airport staff engaging with people experiencing homelessness should be informed of a basic understanding of the causes of homelessness, who experiences homelessness, and services available (as described elsewhere in this guide). There are many myths perpetuated about homelessness, including that people do not want to be housed, that they are resistant to services, and that all people who experience homelessness deal with behavioral health–related issues such as problematic substance use or mental health challenges. Rather, in many instances, there is not enough permanent housing available to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness. People experiencing homelessness often are making the best decisions they can to keep themselves safe and meet their needs when no other services are available. While engagement protocols provide an overview of questions to ask and steps to take around certain situations, it is important to remember that not all people who are experiencing homelessness will experience the following situations, and that people who are not experiencing homelessness may also experience these same situations.

The remainder of this section provides specific examples of the types of interactions that might necessitate airport staff to engage with a person experiencing homelessness. These situations are often similar to those that might necessitate airport staff interactions with



general patrons of the airport, and similar approaches may be appropriate. Regardless of the situation, there are a few things that airport staff and their partners should aim to do while engaging with people experiencing homelessness. (These are also likely applicable to other situations as well.)

- *Try to minimize the number of airport staff present during the engagement.* People can be easily overwhelmed when approached by a group of airport staff and partners. Further, when a large group approaches, it may make the individual feel even more targeted and brought to the attention of other travelers and airport visitors. This can be uncomfortable and scary, and may make people feel unsafe or as though they did something wrong. One suggestion is to have no more than two airport staff or partners engage with an individual at once. If more than two people are necessary, they should stand at a distance and observe rather than appear to be hovering nearby.
- *Minimize the appearance of force.* Whenever possible, have people approached by staff members who are wearing plain clothes. The staff member could still be a law enforcement officer, but the lack of a uniform could increase the comfort of the person experiencing homelessness. This minimizes the attention drawn to the person and the power dynamics associated with law enforcement or other airport staff.
- *Respect personal space and property.* As much as possible, airport staff should try to leave a few feet of space between themselves and the person they are engaging. It is important to respect personal space boundaries. Similarly, whenever possible, airport staff should not touch the property of the person experiencing homelessness without asking and being granted permission.
- *Think about relational dynamics.* There are clear power dynamics that are brought into engagement with people experiencing homelessness, and it can be helpful to recognize these and to minimize them when possible. For example, if a person is sitting on the floor, consider crouching down to be able to talk eye to eye. Physically being on the same level may make someone feel more comfortable than if they are being towered over.
- *Service engagement such as assessing needs or referring to housing, shelter, or other services.* People experiencing homelessness in airports may be interested in seeking or accessing services related to shelter, housing, or other social services. This is likely the most frequent interaction that airport staff would have with people experiencing homelessness. Trained community engagement staff or service providers who provide outreach services at airports should be familiar with local referral services. The following are some ways in which airport staff could engage with individuals residing in airports looking for services:
- *Engagement and brief assessment.*
  - Introduce yourself to individuals and see if they are willing to share their name and any other information that may be helpful in engaging with them/referring them to services.
  - Briefly assess the situation. This could include (1) determining what their needs are or what sort of information they are interested in, (2) learning more about their situation, and (3) making sure they are not in immediate danger and do not need immediate services such as EMS.
- *Provide information and tangible support, including:*
  - Calling a shelter or homeless service provider.
  - *Assisting with transportation to a shelter or other service.* This could include providing transportation assistance, such as light-rail fare, bus token, taxi, or rideshare fare.

### **Better Outcomes in Responding to Homelessness Without Staff in Official Uniform**

#### **Strategy 7: Developing an Engagement Protocol**

Given power dynamics, law enforcement response can be triggering for people who are homeless. Several airports have observed better outcomes when engaging with people experiencing homelessness when:

1. Using co-responder models that have service organizations leading engagement, or
2. Performing response efforts with police officers who are not in official uniform.

(Information obtained from 2021 focus groups with airport staff)

## Crisis Intervention and De-escalation Techniques to Improve Interactions with People Experiencing Homelessness

### Strategy 7: Developing an Engagement Protocol

Several major airports have implemented crisis intervention or de-escalation training to improve staff interactions with people experiencing homelessness and mental health disorders. In addition to preventing conflict escalation, these techniques assist in improving communications to offer services to people who are homeless.

(Information obtained from 2021 focus groups with airport staff)

- *Allow for individuals to remain in the airport while services are accessed.* If individuals are not causing any harm, are not in danger, and are interested in connecting to services or are already engaged with a provider and are waiting on services, it is recommended that they be allowed to remain in the airport/same spot until they can access services. This is particularly important if the airport staff member calls a homeless outreach team or similar provider. If people are interested in engaging in services and are forced to move while waiting for them, it can also make them lose trust in a system built to provide assistance (especially if they are then unable to connect with services). For those already working with providers that are trying to get them into housing, allowing them to stay where they are will help provide continuity of care.
- *Many people may not have working phones.* If unhoused individuals are without a phone, the only way a social service worker can make contact with them is by knowing where to find them. If a housing placement becomes available, and the worker cannot find individuals because they have been removed from the premises, they may lose out on the housing opportunity and subsequently lose trust in the social service worker—ultimately making it harder to accept/agree to assistance again.
- **De-escalation techniques.** At times, airport staff may be involved in situations that require de-escalation. For example, an individual experiencing homelessness may be asked to leave the airport and become upset. Other issues that may affect people experiencing homelessness are being woken up while sleeping or feeling that they are being criminalized/penalized for experiencing homelessness. In these types of situations, airport staff should use similar de-escalation techniques with people experiencing homelessness as they do with people who are not experiencing homelessness.
  - *Use de-escalation best practices.* Some key techniques in de-escalation include:
    - Give people distance.
    - Do not yell; speak calmly and slowly.
    - Do not stand directly in front of them.
    - Avoid giving directives (e.g., “Do this now,” “You have to do this”). Instead, try non-directive feedback, such as “Can you tell me what happened?”
    - Try to minimize the number of people present since too many people can be overwhelming and agitate or upset an individual more.
  - *Consider training for public-facing airport staff.* Ideally, all airport staff who work in public-facing roles would be trained in de-escalation, but due to the general capacity of staff and availability of training, this may not be feasible. Employees who would most likely initiate conversations or engagements should be prioritized for training (for example, operations staff, law enforcement and ARFF/EMS, and other first responders).
- **Health crises.** People experiencing homelessness have poorer self-reported health statuses compared to their housed peers, as well as higher rates of chronic health conditions, including lung disease and kidney problems (Lebrun-Harris et al. 2013). In addition, they are more likely to have two or more chronic health conditions than those who are housed (Lebrun-Harris et al. 2013). Further, people experiencing homelessness face barriers to accessing primary and preventative care and may need urgent medical care more frequently since they do not have consistent access to medication or health care.
  - *Implement a consistent protocol when responding to health crises.* Airport staff should address the health crises of people experiencing homelessness the same way they do the crises of people who are not experiencing homelessness. Airport staff should be trained in CPR and know where AED machines are located in each public area (and how to use

them). In addition, emergency medical services should be called if a person is experiencing a medical emergency such as seizures, severe pain, trouble breathing, or chest pain, or if a person is unresponsive.

- *Be familiar with the types of health crisis that commonly affect people experiencing homelessness.* Some types of health crises that people experiencing homelessness may experience are cardiac events and acute health episodes related to high blood pressure or diabetes; they may also need emergency care due to chronic health conditions.
- *Consider creating a list of local health services.* While not an option for a health crisis, airport staff could also identify and compile a list of local health services that offer services to people experiencing homelessness, including federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) and mobile clinics. A tool for finding FQHCs is discussed in the Tools and Resources section.
- **Mental health–related crises.** Some best practices for dealing with a mental health–related crisis, regardless of housing status, include understanding that (1) not all people who are experiencing homelessness have a mental health condition, (2) not all mental health conditions are considered serious mental illnesses, and (3) exhibiting symptoms of a mental health condition does not necessarily mean someone is experiencing a mental health crisis that needs intervention. For example, responding to internal stimuli (i.e., talking to oneself) or pacing back and forth is not necessarily indicative of a mental health crisis on its own; however, signs of distress or disruptive/threatening behaviors in addition to talking to oneself may be. To assess whether someone is in a mental health crisis, airport staff should:
  - *Assess for signs of distress.* Do individuals look like they are in distress? Signs of distress might include screaming, crying, or other behaviors that might be considered disruptive.
  - *Determine if the distress is a mental health–related crisis.* If individuals appear to be in distress, is it possible to check in with them? In some instances, a person may appear to be amid a mental health crisis but is in distress for an unrelated reason. When possible, airport staff should attempt to engage with individuals to see if they are able to have a conversation and if they can tell you what they need, if anything.
  - *Follow established airport protocol for responding to a mental health crisis.* If a person is unable to communicate, airport staff should follow protocols established for engaging anyone experiencing a mental health crisis. If such protocols do not yet exist, airports should proactively develop some to best address these issues when they arise. Protocols could include elements from general engagement and de-escalation best practices, including establishing safety and avoiding harm to all parties involved; listening and trusting the individual’s experiences, needs, and preferences; and meeting people where they are, both physically (e.g., not making them move to a new location, engaging with them eye to eye) and emotionally (e.g., not asking them to “act okay” or “calm down” if they are not ready to at that time). Mental health protocols should also include a list of resources to provide to affected individuals as well as for airport staff to contact (including local crisis intervention teams, homeless outreach teams, and emergency medical services).
- **Substance use–related crises.** Airport staff should address all people experiencing substance use–related crises the same way, regardless of whether the individual is experiencing homelessness. Substance use–related crises include overdoses and acute intoxication from drugs or alcohol. Signs of overdose include unconsciousness, slow or shallow breathing, and fingernails or lips turning blue. Other signs of substance use–related crises are nodding off and exhibiting symptoms such as mania.
  - *Ensure that appropriate staff are trained in overdose response.* Airport workers who may be involved in providing first aid, CPR, or AED response should be trained in overdose response and should have Narcan/naloxone easily accessible. Emergency medical services should be called when an overdose is suspected and when Narcan/naloxone is administered because sometimes the dosage is not enough to fully reverse an overdose.
  - *Engage with and instruct disruptive individuals.* If airport staff encounter individuals (housed or unhoused) experiencing acute intoxication resulting in disruptions for travelers or airport



operations, airport staff can first engage with these individuals to inform them of the airport policies they are breaking and ask them to modify their behaviors. Airport staff can also engage with individuals to identify whether they need any services such as EMS, a safe place to sit down to sober up, or tangible items that may make an individual feel better such as food or water. If an individual is unable to follow directions and remains disruptive, airport staff should proceed using established guidelines for handling disruptive passengers or guests.

- *Consider creating a list of local substance abuse–related services.* While not an immediate option for someone who is experiencing a substance use–related crisis, airport staff could also identify and compile a list of local organizations that offer services related to substance use, including harm reduction services, outpatient treatment, and inpatient services.

## Airport Stakeholders Involved

Table 13 shows the stakeholders involved in Strategy 7.

**Table 13. Airport stakeholders involved for Strategy 7: Developing an Engagement Protocol.**

Stakeholder Function	Responsible or Accountable	Consulted or Informed	Role
Airport management	☑		Support the establishing of engagement protocols and incorporate them into training and response initiatives.
Airport homelessness program lead	☑		Develop, document, and update engagement protocol and provide training to other airport staff and stakeholders; ensure that consistent information sharing is maintained across all applicable airport stakeholders.
Airport homelessness outreach lead	☑		Coordinate with external partners to develop engagement protocols; ensure that there are open communication channels with airport staff and external partners when engaging with people experiencing homelessness.
Airport operations and security	☑		Provide input and review of engagement protocol based on previous experience; ensure that staff are trained on response and engagement protocols.
Airport law enforcement and ARFF/EMS	☑		Provide input and review of engagement protocol based on previous experience; ensure that staff are trained on response and engagement protocols.
Airport communications and dispatch		☑	Be aware of any responsibilities included in the engagement protocol.
Tenants, concessionaires, and contractors		☑	Be aware of any responsibilities included in the engagement protocol.
External partners	☑		Provide input and review of engagement protocols; ensure that employees are aware of any responsibilities included in the engagement protocol; maintain open communication channels with airport staff.

## How to Leverage External Partners

Airports are encouraged to work with regional or local service providers to develop engagement protocols that are human-centered and informed by people with lived experience. Airports will also need to leverage the expertise and resources of external partners that are part of the engagement process since some partners can provide the airport with best practices on engagement protocol development.

## Tools and Resources

Table 14 shows the tools and resources for Strategy 7.

**Table 14. Tools and resources for Strategy 7. Developing an Engagement Protocol.**

Source	Resource Name	Type	Description	URL
Appendix to this report	Strategies to Address Homelessness at Airports: Engagement Reference Card	Communication product	This communication resource (included in the appendix to this guide) includes a graphic with tips for engaging with people experiencing homelessness. Airport staff are encouraged to have a copy of the reference card to employ engagement best practices more readily.	
Bureau of Justice Assistance	Best Practices for Effective Outreach and Care Connections	Communication product	This pamphlet provides best practices for navigating encounters with people experiencing homelessness. The resource is intended for law enforcement and community-based responders, although the content is applicable to anyone engaging with a person experiencing homelessness.	<a href="https://bja.ojp.gov/program/pmhc/responding-homelessness#outreach-best-practices-and-community-examples">https://bja.ojp.gov/program/pmhc/responding-homelessness#outreach-best-practices-and-community-examples</a>
Health Resources and Services Administration	Find a Health Center	Website	This interactive database provides a health center locator tool where users can search for a FQHC by address, state, or county.	<a href="https://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/">https://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/</a>
National Coalition for the Homeless	Engaging with People Who Have Been Homeless	Written document	This document provides tips for general engagement with people who are experiencing homelessness as well as how they can be included in decision-making processes. Airports can refer to the Engaging for the First Time with Folks Who Are Homeless section for tips on human-centered engagement.	<a href="https://nationalhomeless.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Homeless-Leadership.docx.pdf">https://nationalhomeless.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Homeless-Leadership.docx.pdf</a>
National Health Care for the Homeless Council	Outreach & Enrollment Quick Guide: Promising Strategies for Engaging the Homeless Population	Written document	This guide offers best practices and tools for building engagement with people who are homeless. While the guide is intended for organizations that serve people experiencing homelessness, airports can reference the guiding principles, challenges, and strategies for effective outreach.	<a href="https://nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/outreach-enrollment-quick-guide.pdf">https://nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/outreach-enrollment-quick-guide.pdf</a>

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Strategy 8
Learning the Fundamentals	Assessing Current Conditions	Identifying and Working with Partners	Planning a Response	Outlining Staff and Stakeholder Responsibilities	Developing and Implementing a Training Program	Developing an Engagement Protocol	Tracking Progress

## Strategy 8: Tracking Progress

### Background and Need

Airports are encouraged to track progress to determine whether their efforts to address homelessness issues are working as intended. The first step is to clarify desired outcomes. Desired outcomes may include helping people who are experiencing homelessness live more dignified lives, be safer on airport property, make vital connections to social services that can help them transition to living inside, and mitigate impacts on airport employees, other visitors, and infrastructure. Reducing the number of people experiencing homelessness that visit or live at the airport may or may not be a desired outcome because airports may not be able to help produce the affordable housing needed to prevent and end homelessness in the region. Nevertheless, airports should still strive to track the progress of their programs where they can based on available data and by comparing against their program objectives, using qualitative assessments where necessary.

### Actions to Consider

Actions for airports to consider are discussed in the following bullet points.

- **Evaluate whether the program can be sustained over time.** Airports should examine whether there are systems in place to ensure the longevity of their programs. Some evaluation criteria are:
  - *Funding.* Airports should assess how the program is budgeted and any funding sources used to ensure that ongoing resources are available.
  - *Institutional buy-in.* Airports should seek to have multiple champions for the program so that its continuity does not rely on one passionate leader who could leave, which could compromise program momentum.
  - *Demonstrated impact.* If airports do not periodically communicate program achievements and impacts, particularly to leadership, the program may be deprioritized.
- **Assess program goals and metrics.** When identifying program goals and metrics, airports should also consider how they want to achieve those goals. Goals and metrics can produce perverse incentives and encourage actions that undermine airport commitments to serving the public good. For example, if an airport aims to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness visiting or living on their properties, that can be accomplished through aggressive exclusion measures such as repeated camp removal and policing. These actions, however, will harm people experiencing homelessness, make relationships between service providers and people experiencing homelessness harder, and result in people experiencing homelessness simply moving elsewhere.
- **Use a logic model to gauge impact of initiatives.** To evaluate whether the objectives of different initiatives, such as training, were met, airports should consider using a logic model. A logic model is a program evaluation tool that helps identify and link the desired program outcomes with the resources (inputs) and activities (outputs) necessary to create and implement a program. By clearly identifying the specific program's expected and desired outcomes, airport staff can better ensure that they identify the right resources (inputs) to create and

the right activities (outputs) to track the program. Outcomes will sometimes include short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes. Logic models assume that program activities are being implemented effectively. If the expected outcomes are not being achieved, program implementors then identify where the gap or gaps are. Creating outcome metrics equips airport staff with information to determine whether programs are working. Outcome metrics differ from output measures. Where output measures count the conducted activities of a program, the outcome metrics help staff members track changes in behavior, knowledge, and actions driven by the activities.

- **Review whether protocols were followed.** Following any response to homelessness, airports should assess whether existing protocols, such as engagement protocols, were followed—and if not, why not. This type of review can reveal necessary adjustments to protocols.
- **Use a third-party evaluator.** Airports could employ a third-party organization, such as a homeless advocacy organization, to review all aspects of a program and identify areas for improvement.
- **Update program evaluation mechanisms periodically.** Airports should review evaluation mechanisms and update periodically to incorporate recent research, data, and best practices.

## Airport Stakeholders Involved

Table 15 shows the stakeholders involved in Strategy 8.

**Table 15. Airport stakeholders involved for Strategy 8: Tracking Progress.**

Stakeholder Function	Responsible or Accountable	Consulted or Informed	Role
Airport management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Establish mechanisms to be used for tracking program progress based on objectives and available information; synthesize and present program progress to peer airports.
Airport homelessness program lead	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Manage analysis of logic models; primarily responsible for synthesizing results for airport management; make recommendations for potential areas of improvement.
Airport homelessness outreach lead	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Coordinate with external partners in data-collection efforts; analyze logic model outputs; contribute to synthesizing results.
Airport operations and security		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Support airport management in tracking metrics.
Airport law enforcement and ARFF/EMS		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Support airport management in tracking metrics.
Airport communications and dispatch		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Support airport management in tracking metrics.
Tenants, concessionaires, and contractors		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Support airport management in tracking metrics.
External partners	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Design or develop programs and evaluation plans; share examples of metrics; collect data and share data when appropriate.

## How to Leverage External Partners

External partners can help airports evaluate their programs by providing both input on evaluation metrics and data that can shed light on the program’s impact. Local service providers and homeless advocates can help airports evaluate whether their programs are sufficiently integrating lived experience perspectives and can help airports establish human-centered evaluation metrics.

## Tools and Resources

Table 16 shows the tools and resources for Strategy 8.

**Table 16. Tools and resources for Strategy 8: Tracking Progress.**

Source	Resource Name	Type	Description	URL
Appendix to this report	Strategies to Address Homelessness at Airports: Logic Model Template	Decision-support tool	This template (included in the appendix to this guide) helps airports create logic models for assessing and understanding the impact of response strategies to address homelessness. It provides guidance as to the elements of a logic model.	
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	Logic Models	Website	This website provides a descriptive overview of logic models through a framework for program evaluation. A checklist of key steps to developing an informed logic model is included.	<a href="https://www.cdc.gov/evaluation/logicmodels/index.htm">https://www.cdc.gov/evaluation/logicmodels/index.htm</a>
Metrics for Health	Logic Model Examples	Website	This website provides general resources for developing logic models. Several example logic models are depicted, including one for supportive housing services.	<a href="https://metricsforhealthcommunities.org/logic-models/about-logic-models">https://metricsforhealthcommunities.org/logic-models/about-logic-models</a>



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# Acronyms and Abbreviations

AED	Automated External Defibrillator
ARFF	Air Rescue and Firefighting
ATL	Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta International Airport
BOS	Boston Logan International Airport
CoCs	Continuums of Care
CPR	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
DAB	Daytona Beach International Airport
DCA	Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport
DEN	Denver International Airport
DFW	Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
FAI	Fairbanks International Airport
FQHC	Federally Qualified Health Center
IAD	Washington Dulles International Airport
LAX	Los Angeles International Airport
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NLIHC	National Low Income Housing Coalition
ORD	Chicago O’Hare International Airport
PATH	Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness
PDX	Portland International Airport
PHL	Philadelphia International Airport
PIT	Point-in-Time
SEA	Seattle–Tacoma International Airport
SFO	San Francisco International Airport
SIDA	Security Identification Display Area
SJC	Mineta San Jose International Airport
SLC	Salt Lake City International Airport
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
STL	St. Louis Lambert International Airport
TSA	Transportation Security Administration
U.S. GAO	U.S. Government Accountability Office





## APPENDIX

# Tools and Resources

This appendix provides tools and resources to support the development and implementation of an airport program to address homelessness. The tools and resources included here have been carefully developed or selected to aid in the implementation of the strategic action plan. Table 17 shows each tool or resource with a summary and outlines which of the strategies in the strategic action plan it supports.

**Table 17. Matrix of tools and resources for addressing homelessness at airports.**

Tool/Resource	Strategies							
	Learning the Fundamentals	Assessing Current Conditions	Identifying and Working with Partners	Planning a Response	Outlining Staff and Stakeholder Responsibilities	Developing and Implementing a Training Program	Developing an Engagement Protocol	Tracking Progress
<b>Strategies to Address Homelessness at Airports: List of Terms</b> Basic guidelines and best practices for person-centered language for homelessness.	☑							
<b>Strategies to Address Homelessness at Airports: Contextual Factors Checklist</b> Checklist to document contextual factors that may influence the prevalence of homelessness at airports.		☑						
<b>Example Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to Formalize Partnerships</b> Example scope of services exhibit from an MOU for homelessness outreach services at an airport.			☑					
<b>Strategies to Address Homelessness at Airports: Program Status Worksheet</b> Worksheet that can be used by airports to document activities related to each item and track progress.		☑		☑				
<b>Strategies to Address Homelessness at Airports: Stakeholder Worksheet</b> Worksheet template to build out a contact list of stakeholders to consider for engagement in the program.					☑			

	Strategies							
	Learning the Fundamentals	Assessing Current Conditions	Identifying and Working with Partners	Planning a Response	Outlining Staff and Stakeholder Responsibilities	Developing and Implementing a Training Program	Developing an Engagement Protocol	Tracking Progress
<b>Example Training Materials for Supporting Responses to Homelessness</b> A compilation of example training and resources to support the development and implementation of an airport training program to address homelessness.						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Strategies to Address Homelessness at Airports: Engagement Reference Card</b> Engagement best practices for interacting with people experiencing homelessness.							<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Strategies to Address Homelessness at Airports: Logic Model Template</b> Logic model template that can be used to understand the impact of an airport's efforts to address homelessness.								<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### Tool: Strategies to Address Homelessness at Airports: List of Terms

Figure 3 presents basic guidelines and best practices for homelessness terms and can be used by airports as a resource for educating airport stakeholders about homelessness.

Figure 3. List of terms for homelessness.

## Homelessness Terms

### Basic Guidelines and Best Practices

Person-centered language is generally accepted as the preferred way to describe someone experiencing homelessness. Person-centered language puts the person first – rather than their housing status. In practice, person-centered language looks like this: saying “person/people experiencing homelessness” rather than “homeless person/people.” Other ways to center the person over their situation could be “people who are unhoused” or “people who are homeless”.

### Terms to Avoid

The Homeless	<p>Used as a “catch all”</p> <p>It is not appropriate to refer to all people who experience homelessness as one homogenous group.</p>
Transient, Hobo, Street Person, Indigent, Vagrant	<p>Considered derogatory</p> <p>These terms perpetuate negative stereotypes about people experiencing homelessness.</p>
Panhandler	<p>Commonly used, but derogatory</p> <p>Not all people who are experiencing homelessness ask others for money, and not all people who ask others for money are experiencing homelessness.</p>
PEH (as an acronym)	<p>Gained traction as an alternative to writing “people experiencing homelessness”</p> <p>Using an acronym to describe a person-centered phrase removes the person-centeredness.</p>
Euphemisms (e.g., “street involved”)	<p>Used in attempt to be “better” sounding</p> <p>Consider the rationale and necessity of wanting to make a situation sound better.</p>











### Using the Language People Use to Describe Themselves

When possible, let people describe themselves in terms of their choosing. Some people may refer to themselves as houseless, homeless, unhoused, or undomiciled. Take an individual’s lead and use the terms they use to describe themselves.

## Tool: Strategies to Address Homelessness at Airports: Contextual Factors Checklist

The checklist in Table 18 can be used to document the contextual factors, in order of importance, that may influence the prevalence of homelessness at airports. These factors can be used as a basis for developing response strategies that reflect local conditions. Depending on the number and types of factors present, airports may want to prioritize the implementation of specific response strategies that will have the most significant impact on homelessness at their property. Airports may wish to work with local service providers and other experts to tailor the checklist. The description and importance of each factor is included in Table 1 in the primer.

**Table 18. Checklist of contextual factors of homelessness in an airport setting.**

Contextual Factor	Presence of Factors	Strategies to be Implemented
 <b>Airport Size/Type</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Presence of multiple terminals <input type="checkbox"/> Airport includes large or numerous adjacent properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a homelessness assessment</li> </ul>
 <b>Accessibility from Mass Transit Systems</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Airport located on or adjacent to mass transit systems (e.g., light rail and buses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formalize a partnership with the applicable transit agency</li> </ul>
 <b>Feasibility of Shelter in Airport Facilities or Adjacent to Airport Property</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Accessible airport facilities, including parking structures, car rental facilities, and transit stations <input type="checkbox"/> Presence of adjacent properties, including public roadways and property owned by others, where encampments can be established	
 <b>Extent of Publicly Accessible Services and Amenities at the Airport</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Public restrooms in nonrestricted areas <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of electrical outlets in nonrestricted areas <input type="checkbox"/> Free Internet connectivity <input type="checkbox"/> Food and water options in nonrestricted areas	
 <b>Extent of Unsheltered Homelessness in the Community</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Airport located in/near areas (e.g., region, county, or city) with high rates of unsheltered homelessness	
 <b>Dominant Climate</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Airport located in an area that experiences distinct seasonal climates (e.g., frigid winters, very hot summers)	
 <b>Existence of Outreach Programs That Have Dedicated Service Areas That Include Airports</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Substantial supportive services and programs available in region, county, or city <input type="checkbox"/> Inclusion of airport within designated service area of service providers	
 <b>Airport Ownership and Governance</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Airport policies on addressing homelessness are aligned with regional or local policies. <input type="checkbox"/> Airport policies on addressing homelessness are insulated from broader regional or local policies.	
 <b>Public Space Definition</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Presence of large, nonrestricted areas	
 <b>Airport Business Restrictions</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Established airport business definition and policies <input type="checkbox"/> Policies and practices (e.g., trespassing citations) limiting access for those that do not have official airport business	

## Resource: Example Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to Formalize Partnerships

Airports may need to formalize certain partnerships due to the sensitive nature of homelessness. This can be done through an MOU or a contract, which some organizations may require for their support. MOUs or contracts may discuss the use of intellectual property, jurisdictional questions, and support interactions. Figure 4 presents an example scope of services exhibit from an MOU for homelessness outreach services, including the identification, engagement, and referral of services to people experiencing homelessness at ATL.

**Figure 4. Example scope of services exhibit in the MOU for services related to addressing homelessness between ATL and Travelers Aid Metro HOPE Atlanta.**

### Project Purpose

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport is seeking one agency that is an active member of the Atlanta CoC (Continuum of Care) and has the current capacity to provide the services listed below and can expeditiously implement the project described below.

The Proponent will engage individuals living in places not meant for human habitation. Homeless individuals will be engaged and receive case management with the ultimate goal of placing them in treatment programs, emergency and permanent housing. The target populations for the Outreach Program are the chronically and episodically homeless, those suffering from severe mental illness, and individuals battling substance abuse.

The purpose of this project is to provide emergency services and rapid re-housing to homeless individuals at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport ("ATL"). The focus is to assist individuals in becoming stably housed and self-sufficient. The Proponent will provide services from:

10 PM to 6:30 AM and

6 AM to 2:30 PM, 7 days of the week including holidays.

There will be a team of two outreach staff working between the hours of 10 PM and 6:30 AM. There will be a team of three outreach staff working between the hours of 6 AM to 2:30 PM.

The teams will identify and engage homeless individuals experiencing homelessness at the airport. Homeless individuals will be engaged and receive case management with the ultimate goal of placing them in the most appropriate permanent housing solution. The team will also identify and place clients in emergency and bridge housing as it is available. This will include navigating the client through the process and transporting clients to those locations. The team will identify homeless individuals, especially those with severe mental illnesses, connect them to mental health services and other resources needed to end their cycle of homelessness, if the client is willing to accept those services but doing so should not be a precondition to aiding in the referral and connection to permanent housing.

### Services will include:

- Provide onsite airport outreach, referrals and transportation to emergency housing and supportive services to chronically and episodically homeless and those with mental health and substance abuse issues.
- Leverage 10 reserved shelter beds for homeless individuals at the airport who are in need of temporary shelter.
- Outreach staff will provide case management services and shall assist to connect participants to community resources for treatment, life skill programs and employment assistance.
- Develop an Individual Service Plan (ISP) for each client/case and document in the Client Track HMIS system, as well as make referrals to other service providers to support improved access to mainstream benefits.
- Maintain documentation as part of record keeping which verifies that the clients' homelessness status and income. Reporting will include but not be limited to the following and can be modified by Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport staff with 7 days' notice:
  - Monthly performance and progress reports, identifying the number of individuals offered and accepted outreach services; shelter; transportation and other referrals as specified. This report should include where individuals were placed as well as their service need category (i.e. substance abuse, chronically homeless, mental health, etc.)
  - Attend bi-weekly status meetings with the Airport for the first six (6) weeks of the program; thereafter once a month.
- Coordinate outreach training and engagement guidelines for Airport employees, including but not limited to Atlanta Police Department onsite at the Airport.
- Act as the Coordinated Entry access point for Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and provide assessment and placement into Permanent Supportive Housing.
- Case management services will also be available at Proponent's office.

Tool: Strategies to Address Homelessness at Airports: Program Status Worksheet

This report includes eight strategies an airport can implement to initiate or enhance its response. The worksheet in Table 19 can be used by airports to document activities related to each item and track progress.

Table 19. Program status details.

Action Step	Status	Lead	Activities to Date	Next Steps	Estimated Progress to Implementation	Notes
Example Row: Strategy 7: Developing an Engagement Protocol	In progress	Joseph Smith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Joseph developed an initial draft of the protocol, and it was reviewed by the homelessness response committee.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Need to coordinate with external partners to discuss adjustments to human-centered approaches</li><li>Incorporate suggested revisions from airport law enforcement</li></ul>	45%	
Example Row: Strategy 8: Tracking Progress	Plan to pursue in FY25					For the first progress assessment, need to work with the committee to help identify initiatives that should be evaluated in a logic model
Strategy 1: Learning the Fundamentals						
Strategy 2: Assessing Current Conditions						
Strategy 3: Identifying and Working with Partners						
Strategy 4: Planning a Response						
Strategy 5: Outlining Staff and Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities						
Strategy 6: Developing and Implementing a Training Program						
Strategy 7: Developing an Engagement Protocol						
Strategy 8: Tracking Progress						

**Tool: Strategies to Address Homelessness at Airports: Stakeholder Worksheet**

The airport stakeholder worksheet allows the airport homelessness program lead to build out a contact list of stakeholders to consider for engagement in the program. Figure 5 shows the types of stakeholders a program lead may engage with as the program evolves. When starting the program, the program lead may want to initially engage contacts within the “Internal Airport Staff” group since these contacts are directly employed by the airport or airport authority and may be most straightforward to organize into an initial informal working group. Contacts from the “Airport Ecosystem Stakeholders” or “External Partners” groups could be invited to participate in the informal working group or brought in at a later stage once some of the action steps to build a response program have been initiated. This will depend on several factors unique to the airport or the program lead, such as whether the program lead has existing relationships with contacts among those stakeholders or whether there is a local homeless service organization that can partner with the airport and provide expertise to get the program off the ground.

Whether they are just starting a program or looking to expand it, program leads can use Table 20, in combination with the stakeholder groups shown in Figure 5, to build out a contact list of stakeholders to engage with. Program leads can refer to Figure 5 to see which stakeholders the program has not yet engaged with and then find a point of contact for that stakeholder, noting in their list adapted from Table 20 how the contact would contribute to the program so that the program lead has a clear understanding of the necessary directives when engaging the contacts. Program leads are encouraged to adjust the table to suit their needs (e.g., it could become the roster for a formal airport committee to address homelessness) and update it periodically to reflect staffing, stakeholder, or other changes.



**Figure 5. Stakeholders for an airport program to address homelessness.**

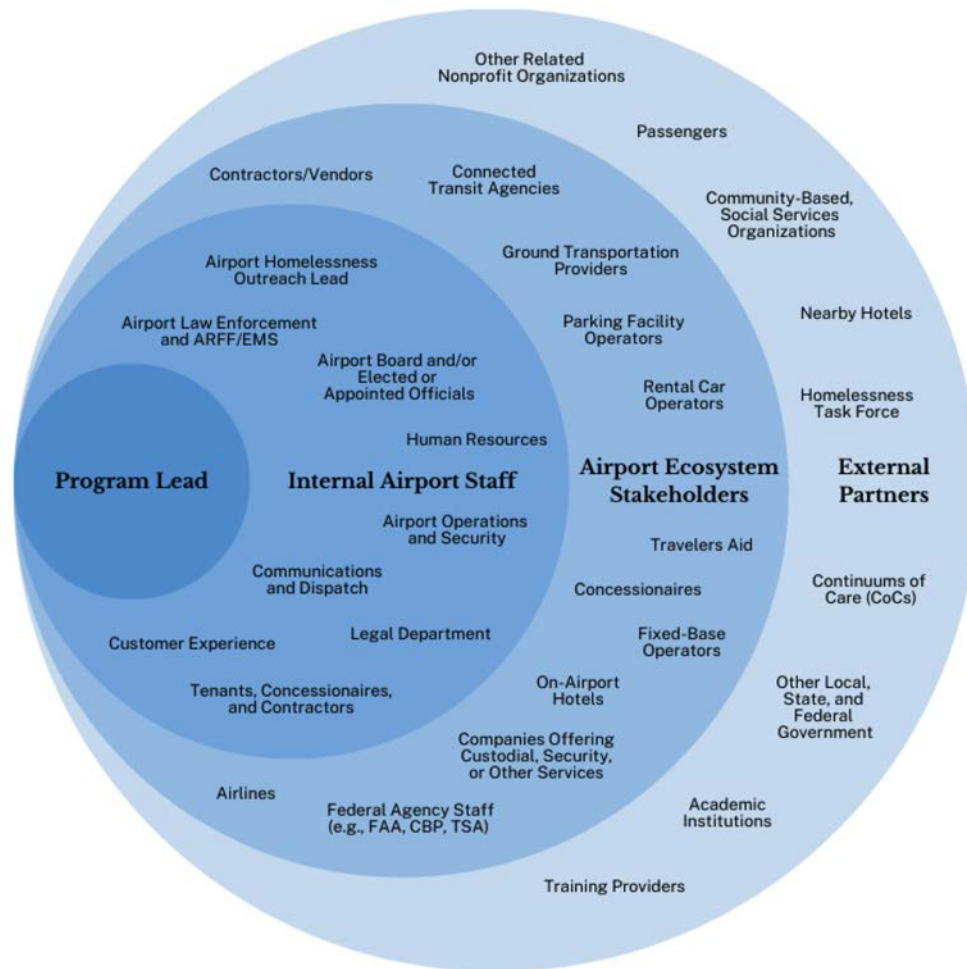






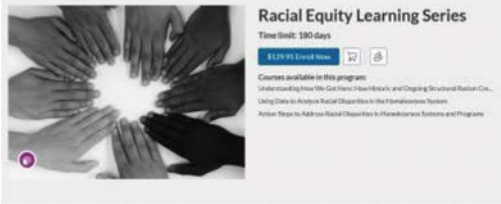


Table 20. Program contact list.

Stakeholder Group	Organization Name	Contact Name	Contact Email	Contact Phone Number	Anticipated Role	Engagement Type
Example Row: Community-based, social services organizations	Homelessness Support Services, Org.	Ana Roberts	aroberts@hservices.org	123-456-7890	On-call support for referral services	Homelessness Support Services provides a variety of referral services to people experiencing homelessness.
Example Row: Airport law enforcement	Airport XYZ	Oscar Anders	o.anders@airport.com	123-456-7890	Law enforcement liaison	He has experience with the airport’s current response methods and has great ideas on how it can be improved.





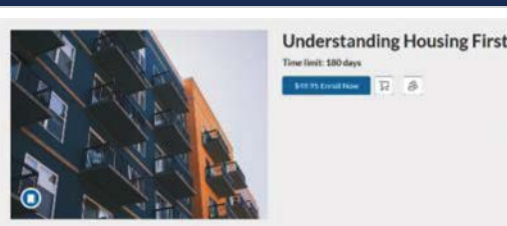
## Resource: Example Training Materials for Supporting Responses to Homelessness

Figure 6 provides examples of training and resources to support the development and implementation of an airport training program on addressing homelessness. The materials are listed under the training topics of implicit bias, services outreach, medical emergencies, mental health, and substance use.


**Figure 6. Example training materials for supporting responses to homelessness.**

Implicit Bias		
	<b>Author/Owner:</b>	National Institutes of Health
	<b>Title:</b>	Implicit Bias Training Course – Full Course and Refresher Course
	<b>URL:</b>	<a href="https://diversity.nih.gov/sociocultural-factors/implicit-bias-training-course">https://diversity.nih.gov/sociocultural-factors/implicit-bias-training-course</a>
	<b>Format Type:</b>	Video
	<b>Author/Owner:</b>	The Ohio State University – Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity
	<b>Title:</b>	Implicit Bias Module Series
	<b>URL:</b>	<a href="https://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/implicit-bias-training">https://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/implicit-bias-training</a>
	<b>Format Type:</b>	Video
	<b>Author/Owner:</b>	National Alliance to End Homelessness
	<b>Title:</b>	Racial Equity Learning Series
	<b>URL:</b>	<a href="https://naeh.catalog.instructure.com/programs/raceequitylearningseries">https://naeh.catalog.instructure.com/programs/raceequitylearningseries</a>
	<b>Format Type:</b>	Video
	<b>Author/Owner:</b>	National Alliance to End Homelessness
	<b>Title:</b>	Cultural Humility
	<b>URL:</b>	<a href="https://naeh.catalog.instructure.com/courses/cultural-humility-2021">https://naeh.catalog.instructure.com/courses/cultural-humility-2021</a>
	<b>Format Type:</b>	Video
	<b>Author/Owner:</b>	Canadian Observatory on Homelessness
	<b>Title:</b>	Homelessness among Women & Gender-Diverse People
	<b>URL:</b>	<a href="https://homelessnesslearninghub.ca/trainings/homelessness-among-women-gender-diverse-people/">https://homelessnesslearninghub.ca/trainings/homelessness-among-women-gender-diverse-people/</a>
	<b>Type: Format</b>	Video


## Services Outreach

	<b>Author/ Owner:</b> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development <b>Title:</b> Homelessness 101 <b>URL:</b> <a href="https://www.hudexchange.info/trainings/course/s/homelessness-101/">https://www.hudexchange.info/trainings/course/s/homelessness-101/</a> <b>Format Type:</b> Video
	<b>Author/ Owner:</b> The Homeless and Housing Resource Center <b>Title:</b> Introduction to Housing Models, Housing Navigation, and Engagement <b>URL:</b> <a href="https://hhrctraining.org/training-courses/training-course/12/introduction-to-housing-models-and-navigation">https://hhrctraining.org/training-courses/training-course/12/introduction-to-housing-models-and-navigation</a> <b>Format Type:</b> Video
	<b>Author/ Owner:</b> National Alliance to End Homelessness <b>Title:</b> Understanding Homelessness: The Basics <b>URL:</b> <a href="https://naeh.catalog.instructure.com/courses/understanding-homelessness-the-basics-23">https://naeh.catalog.instructure.com/courses/understanding-homelessness-the-basics-23</a> <b>Format Type:</b> Video
	<b>Author/ Owner:</b> National Alliance to End Homelessness <b>Title:</b> Effective Emergency Shelter: An Introduction <b>URL:</b> <a href="https://naeh.catalog.instructure.com/courses/effectiveemergencyshelter">https://naeh.catalog.instructure.com/courses/effectiveemergencyshelter</a> <b>Format Type:</b> Video
	<b>Author/ Owner:</b> National Alliance to End Homelessness <b>Title:</b> Understanding Housing First <b>URL:</b> <a href="https://naeh.catalog.instructure.com/courses/understandinghousingfirst">https://naeh.catalog.instructure.com/courses/understandinghousingfirst</a> <b>Format Type:</b> Video


## Medical Emergencies

	<b>Author/Owner:</b>	National Health Care for the Homeless Council
	<b>Title:</b>	Strategies for Providing Integrated Health Care for People Experiencing Homelessness
	<b>URL:</b>	<a href="https://nhchc.org/online-courses/">https://nhchc.org/online-courses/</a>
	<b>Format Type:</b>	Video


  

	<b>Author/Owner:</b>	The Homeless and Housing Resource Center
	<b>Title:</b>	Introduction to Treatment Models and Engagement
	<b>URL:</b>	<a href="https://hhrctraining.org/training-courses/training-course/2155/intro-treatment-models">https://hhrctraining.org/training-courses/training-course/2155/intro-treatment-models</a>
	<b>Format Type:</b>	Video


## Mental Health


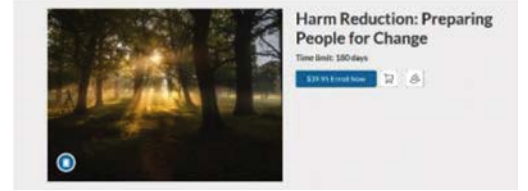

	<b>Author/Owner:</b>	The Homeless and Housing Resource Center
	<b>Title:</b>	Serious Mental Illness and Homelessness
	<b>URL:</b>	<a href="https://hhrctraining.org/training-courses/training-course/3999/SMI-homelessness">https://hhrctraining.org/training-courses/training-course/3999/SMI-homelessness</a>
	<b>Format Type:</b>	Video

	<b>Author/Owner:</b>	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
	<b>Title:</b>	SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach
	<b>URL:</b>	<a href="https://store.samhsa.gov/product/SAMHSA-s-Concept-of-Trauma-and-Guidance-for-a-Trauma-Informed-Approach/SMA14-4884">https://store.samhsa.gov/product/SAMHSA-s-Concept-of-Trauma-and-Guidance-for-a-Trauma-Informed-Approach/SMA14-4884</a>
	<b>Format Type:</b>	Decision-support tool

	<b>Author/Owner:</b>	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
	<b>Title:</b>	TIP 55: Behavioral Health Services for People Who Are Homeless
	<b>URL:</b>	<a href="https://store.samhsa.gov/product/TIP-55-Behavioral-Health-Services-for-People-Who-Are-Homeless/SMA15-4734">https://store.samhsa.gov/product/TIP-55-Behavioral-Health-Services-for-People-Who-Are-Homeless/SMA15-4734</a>
	<b>Format Type:</b>	Decision-support tool

Substance Use	
	<b>Author/Owner:</b> Canadian Observatory on Homelessness
	<b>Title:</b> Harm Reduction for the Homelessness Sector
	<b>URL:</b> <a href="https://homelessnesslearninghub.ca/trainings/harm-reduction-for-the-homelessness-sector/">https://homelessnesslearninghub.ca/trainings/harm-reduction-for-the-homelessness-sector/</a>
	<b>Format Type:</b> Video
	<b>Author/Owner:</b> National Alliance to End Homelessness
	<b>Title:</b> Harm Reduction: Preparing People for Change
	<b>URL:</b> <a href="https://naeh.catalog.instructure.com/courses/harm-reduction-preparing-people-for-change-2021">https://naeh.catalog.instructure.com/courses/harm-reduction-preparing-people-for-change-2021</a>
	<b>Format Type:</b> Video
	<b>Author/Owner:</b> The Homeless and Housing Resource Center
	<b>Title:</b> Whole-Person Care for Opioid Use Disorder
	<b>URL:</b> <a href="https://hhrctraining.org/training-courses/training-course/6968/whole-person-care-oud">https://hhrctraining.org/training-courses/training-course/6968/whole-person-care-oud</a>
	<b>Format Type:</b> Video

## Tool: Strategies to Address Homelessness at Airports: Engagement Reference Card

Figure 7 presents four tips for engaging with people experiencing homelessness that are applicable in all situations. This figure can be printed and used as a reference card by airport staff.

*Figure 7. Reference card for engaging people experiencing homelessness.*





### Tool: Strategies to Address Homelessness at Airports: Logic Model Template

The logic model template in Figure 8 can be used as a basis to build out a logic model to understand the impact of an airport's response strategies to address homelessness. Figure 8 includes the simplified elements of a logic model: inputs, outputs, and outcomes. Logic models can be used to build consensus among airport stakeholders and external partners to determine the parameters of the strategies and their intended outcomes. Airports should regularly update their logic models to track changes and growth of applied strategies to determine whether they need to refine approaches or implement new or additional strategies.

**Figure 8. Logic model template.**

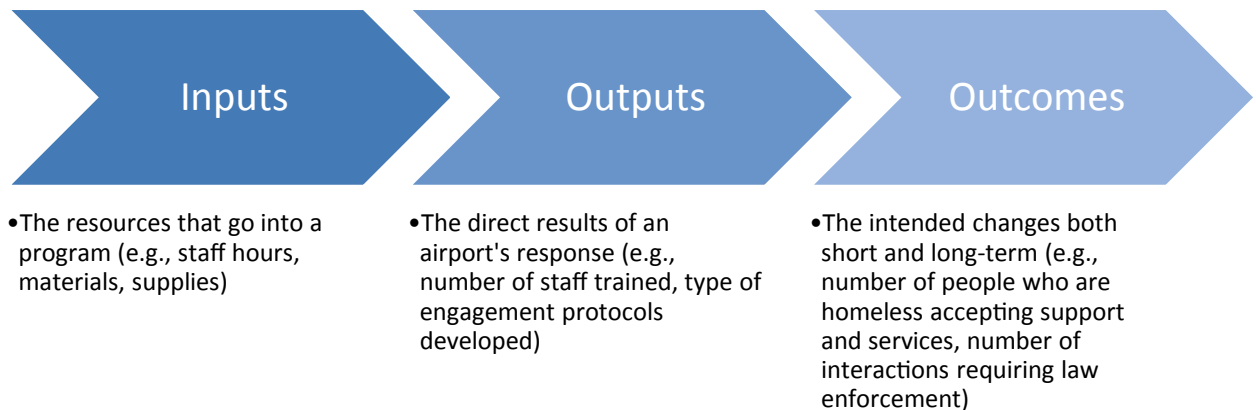
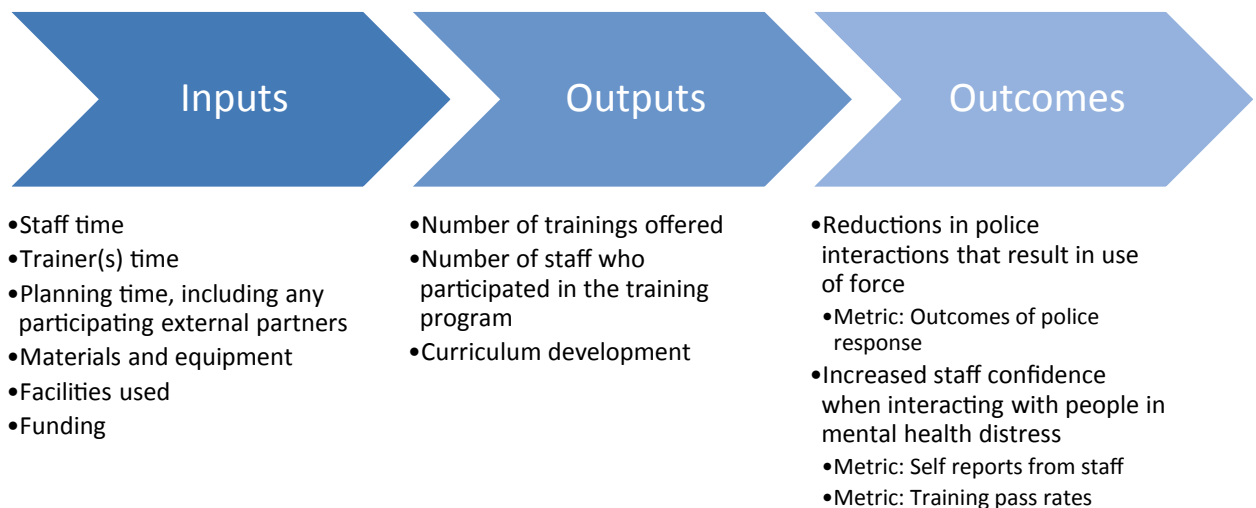


Figure 9 presents an example logic model for a de-escalation training program meant to provide a framework for assessing various components of such a program. Airports could monitor several outcomes associated with de-escalation training and how it relates to addressing homelessness. For instance, in the logic model in Figure 9, a long-term desired outcome might be that interactions between airport staff and people experiencing homelessness are mutually seen as constructive and human-centered.

**Figure 9. Example logic model for assessing effectiveness of de-escalation training.**



*Abbreviations and acronyms used without definitions in TRB publications:*

A4A	Airlines for America
AAAE	American Association of Airport Executives
AASHO	American Association of State Highway Officials
AASHTO	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
ACI-NA	Airports Council International-North America
ACRP	Airport Cooperative Research Program
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
APTA	American Public Transportation Association
ASCE	American Society of Civil Engineers
ASME	American Society of Mechanical Engineers
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Materials
ATA	American Trucking Associations
CTAA	Community Transportation Association of America
CTBSSP	Commercial Truck and Bus Safety Synthesis Program
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOE	Department of Energy
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FAST	Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (2015)
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FMCSA	Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
FRA	Federal Railroad Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GHSA	Governors Highway Safety Association
HMCRP	Hazardous Materials Cooperative Research Program
IEEE	Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers
ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991
ITE	Institute of Transportation Engineers
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (2012)
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NASAO	National Association of State Aviation Officials
NCFRP	National Cooperative Freight Research Program
NCHRP	National Cooperative Highway Research Program
NHTSA	National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
NTSB	National Transportation Safety Board
PHMSA	Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
RITA	Research and Innovative Technology Administration
SAE	Society of Automotive Engineers
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (2005)
TCRP	Transit Cooperative Research Program
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (1998)
TRB	Transportation Research Board
TSA	Transportation Security Administration
U.S. DOT	United States Department of Transportation



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