ASU Project Cities

Approaches to Helping the Homeless and Mitigating Community Impact

Best Practices – PUP 571: SocioEconomic Planning

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Presentation Outline

- Project Overview

- Goals/Objectives

- Findings

- Conclusions & Recommendations

Project Overview:

Best practices for approaching homeless among Apache Junction peer communities

Source: Leroy Skalstad

- **7 U.S. cities chosen for peer community review**
- **Data gathered through content analysis and key informant interviews**
- **Compendium of best practices**

Selection:

- **Data collected on communities with similar demographic, socioeconomic, and geographic qualities**
- **Existing reports reviewed to identify similar communities who were already addressing homelessness**
- **Final selection facilitated by Apache Junction**

Selection:

- **7 U.S. cities identified as likely peer communities to Apache Junction**
  - El Centro, California/Sunrise Manor, Nevada (adjacent)
  - Marana, Arizona
  - West Valley, Utah
  - Harlingen, Texas
  - Kenosha, Wisconsin
  - Rome, Georgia

Peer community geography

Kenosha

West Valley

Sunrise Manor

El Centro

Marana

Rome

Harlingen

Research Overview:

- **Students created a list of 14 interview questions**
- **Approached peer community members perceived as having insight on issues of homelessness within their community**
  - city and government officials
  - service providers
  - non-profits
  - law enforcement

Research Overview:

- **Interviews conducted with peer community members via email and phone**
- **Results of research used to draft individual best practices reports for each community**
- **All reports used to compile peer community best practices report for Apache Junction**

Source: Leroy Skalstad

Goals/Objectives:
To understand how to best respond to issues of homelessness through best practices of peer communities
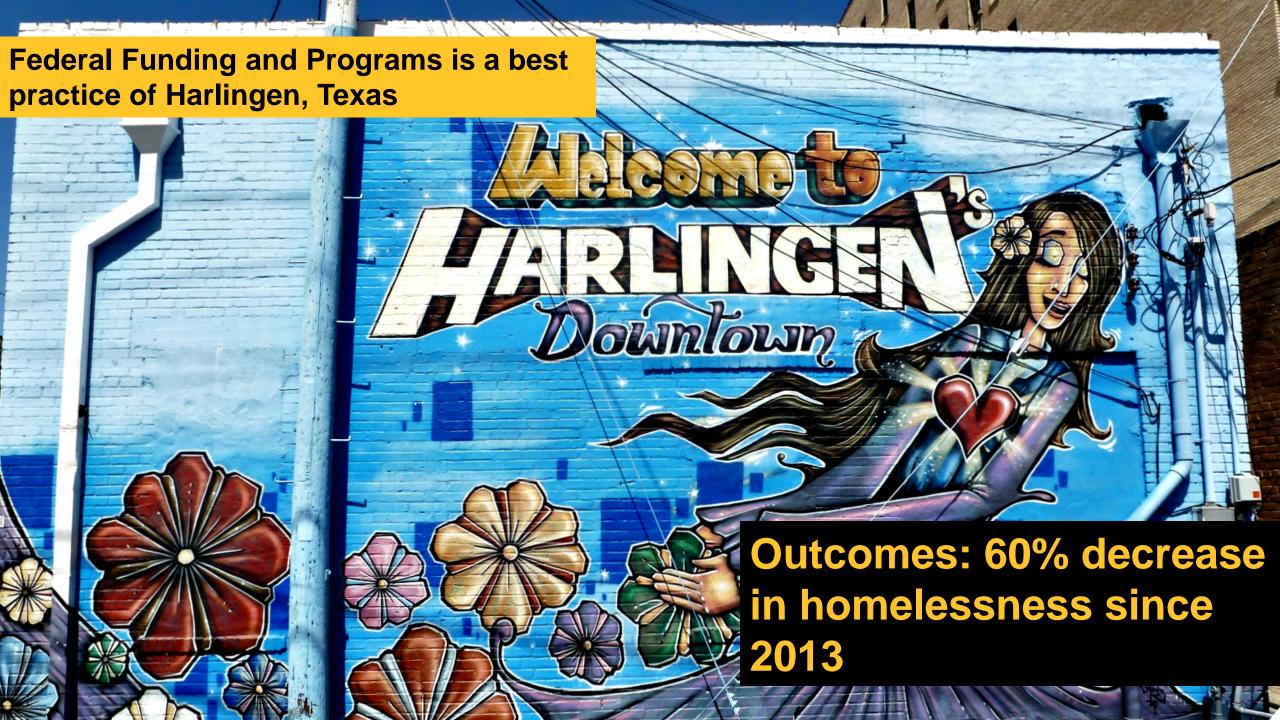
Findings:

- **Approaches to helping the homeless**
- **Strategies used to mitigate community impact**

Federal Funding and Programs:

- **Continuum of Care (CoC) developed by HUD – funding to nonprofits for rehousing**
  - o **Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)**
- **Housing First model developed by United State Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH)**

Federal Funding and Programs is a best practice of Harlingen, Texas

Outcomes: 60% decrease in homelessness since 2013

Collaboration and Data Sharing:
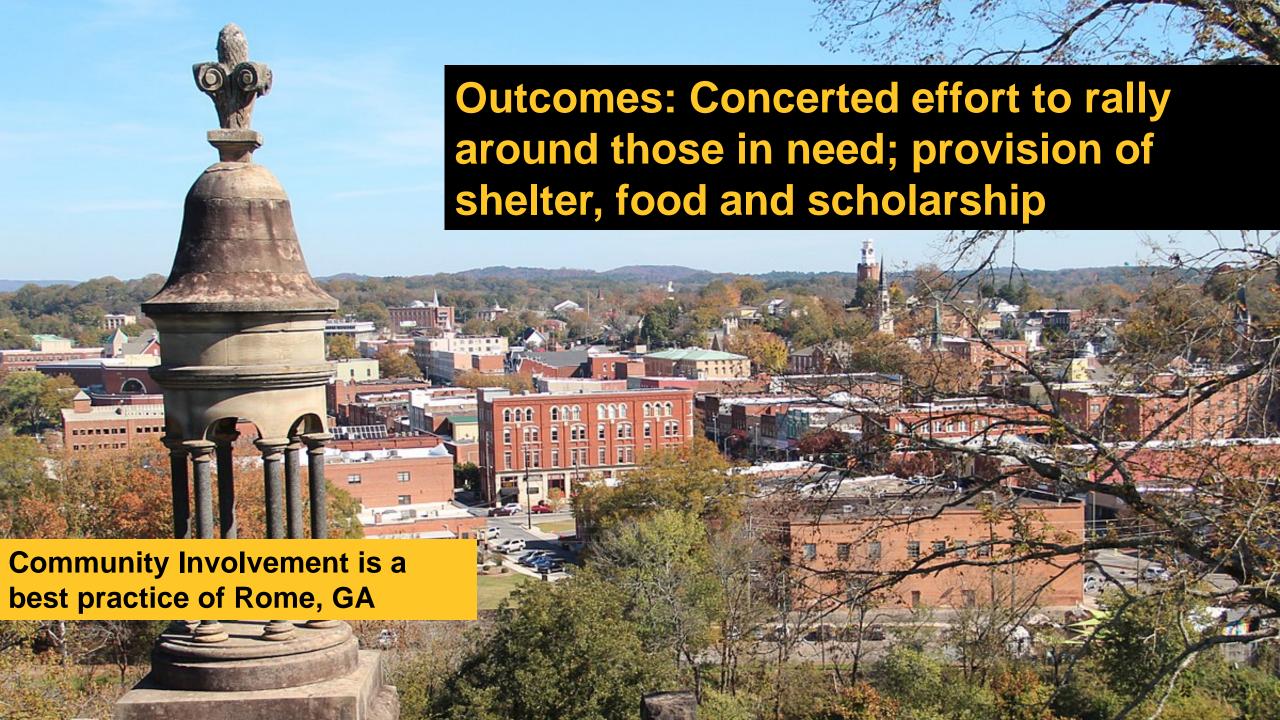
- **Coordinated Entry uses HMIS data to keep records of services provided to individuals**
  - o **Shared among all service providers / homeless organizations in a region**
  - o **Streamlines the entry process and determines the needs of individuals**
  - o **Client-centered**

Outcomes: Since 1992, *Project Homeless Connects* has assisted over 15,000 homeless individuals using the help of over 600 volunteers.

Collaboration and Data Sharing is a best practice of adjacent cities Sunrise Manor, NV and El Centro, CA

Source: Stan Shebs and Aaroads.com
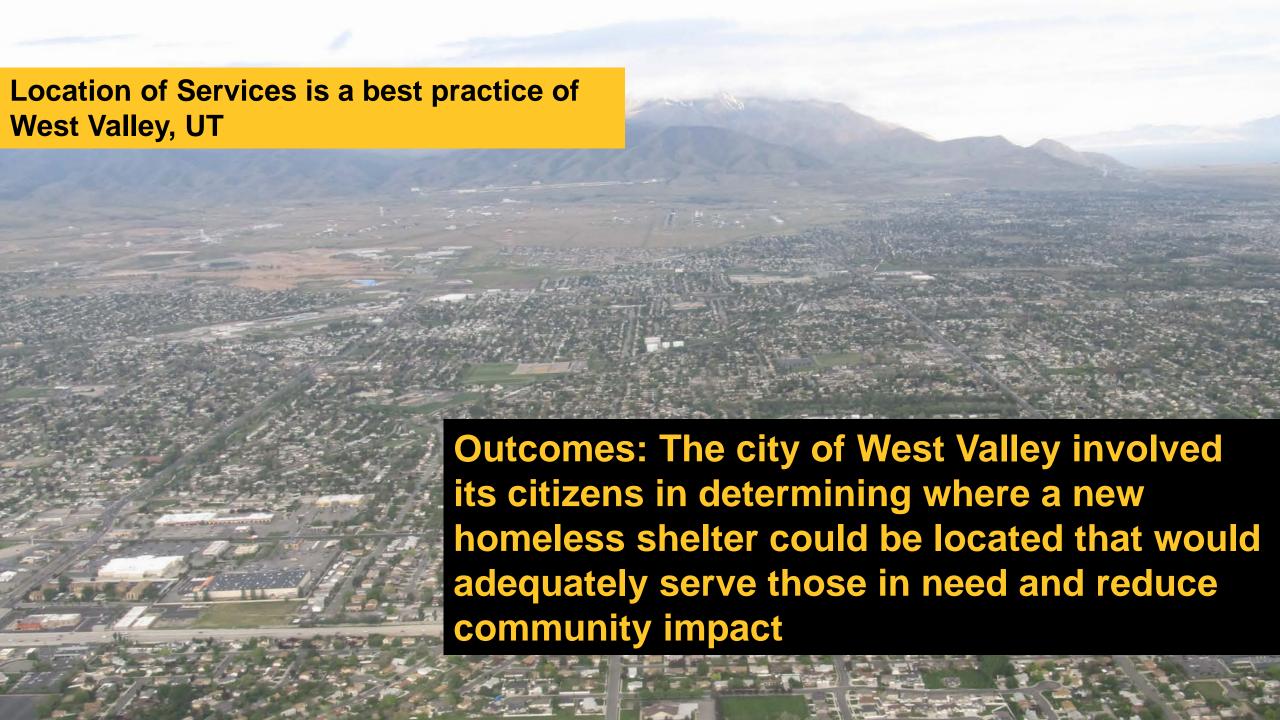
Community Involvement:

- **Public meetings**
- **Promote Volunteering**
- **Creating a space for conversation and understanding**

Outcomes: Concerted effort to rally around those in need; provision of shelter, food and scholarship

Community Involvement is a best practice of Rome, GA

Service Locations:

- **Striking a balance between accessible services and services that do not disrupt the everyday lives of local residents**
    - Local resident concerns: safety, refuse accessibility to businesses
    - Homeless concerns: proximity to public transit, foot, and bike

Location of Services is a best practice of West Valley, UT

Outcomes: The city of West Valley involved its citizens in determining where a new homeless shelter could be located that would adequately serve those in need and reduce community impact

Public Engagement and Education:
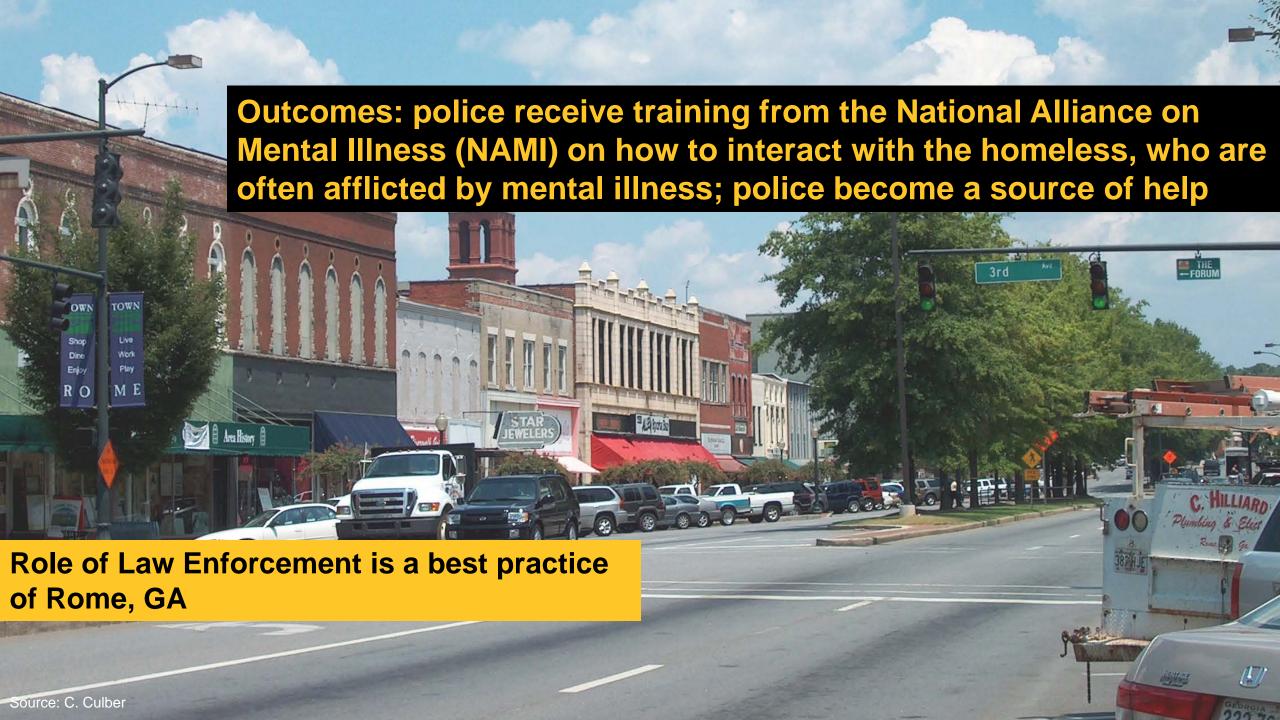
- **Eradicate stereotypes and dispel myths through education**
- **Encourage opportunities to engage with the homeless community and aid organizations**

Public Engagement and Education is a best practice of Kenosha, WI

Outcomes: Human and Development Services performs the Point in Time count, hands out care packages, recruits new landlords and brought together 28 organizations to partner in helping spread awareness about homelessness

Role of Law Enforcement:

- **Build trust**
- **Offer help and support**
- **Relevant trainings**

Source: C. Falsetti

Outcomes: police receive training from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) on how to interact with the homeless, who are often afflicted by mental illness; police become a source of help

Role of Law Enforcement is a best practice of Rome, GA

Role of Law Enforcement is a best practice of Harlingen, TX (Cameron County)

Outcomes: a Bike Patrol police unit services homeless individuals with mental health issues by connecting them to local programs providing services specific to the needs of the mentally ill

Conclusions and Recommendations:

- **People-centered and community approach**
- **Collect all the data you can**
- **Share data among services in your community and region**
- **Use resources already available**
- **Involve the community in the process**

Source: Leroy Skalstad

Thank you!

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