

Community Intervention Program Report

Year 1 : October 13, 2021 — October 13, 2022

After 9 months of development, the Community Intervention program launched on October 13th, 2021.

Created as part of CapMetro's new approach to public safety, the Community Intervention Program is a street outreach effort designed to address quality of life issues on transit related to homelessness, substance abuse and mental illness. Community Intervention Specialists (CIS) employ the program by engaging vulnerable populations on the system, building a relationship with them, and navigating them to the appropriate resources. The following report will discuss the program metrics, operations and accomplishments for the first full year of operation.

Before diving into the numbers, it is important to highlight the CIS team's commitment to the quality of work with individuals rather than strictly focusing on quantity. This focus allows CIS staff to develop lasting relationships with individuals to help navigate them through a complicated, under-resourced and time-consuming homeless response system. The numbers discussed below reflect the time-intensive efforts CIS staff took to help individuals achieve their goals and address quality of life and house rule violations on the transit system.

Tracked Interactions

The CIS team developed four indicators to track efforts made in the program and progress made with individuals. Using the indicators defined below, CIS staff track all realized and attempted interactions with individuals on transit as well as efforts to navigate them to social services.

1. **Engagements** – An individual that is identified for outreach (either through a referral or self-initiated by CIS staff) is located and engaged in either relationship building or service navigation.
2. **Refusals** – An individual is located by CIS staff and an attempt is made to engage in services, establish relationship or provide resources. The individual declines to engage or offer for services.
3. **Unable to locate** – Attempted engagement; an individual is not able to be located. No communication was established.
4. **Referrals** – Staff make a referral to a social service agency or other identified resource during engagement with an individual. Examples include referrals for cold weather shelters, housing organizations and healthcare providers.

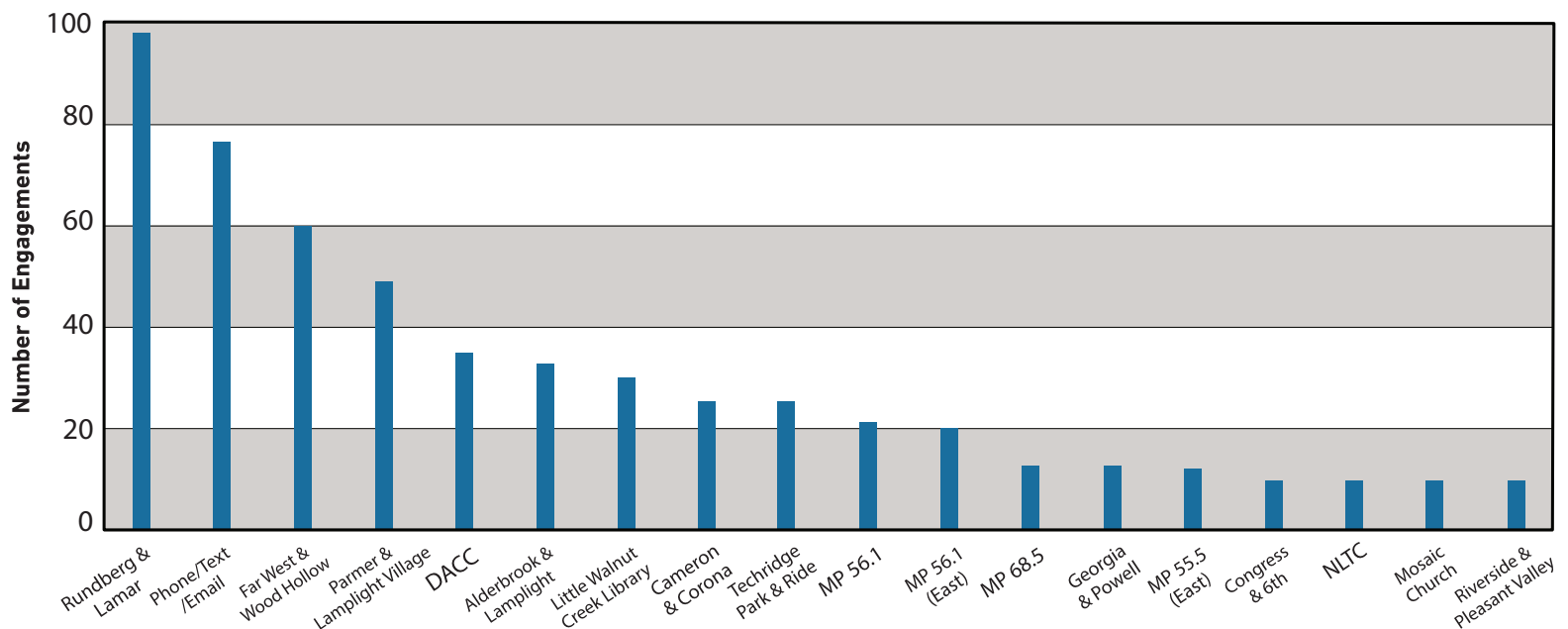
From October 13, 2021 to October 13, 2022, CIS staff had 712 engagements, 40 refusals, and 196 instances where an individual was deemed unable to locate. During engagement with individuals, CIS staff provided 246 referrals to social service, housing, food and healthcare resources.

CIS staff engaged with 346 unique individuals. Out of those 346 individuals, 220 were engaged with once, 89 were engaged two or more times, and 26 were engaged five or more times. The most engagements staff had with a single individual was 46, which speaks to our focus on building relationships with individuals to navigate them successfully.

Program Year 1 Totals	
Engaged	712
Refused	40
Unable To Locate	196
Referrals	246
Coordinated Assessments	100

Locations Serviced

CIS staff visited numerous locations during the first year, ultimately engaging with individuals at 100 unique locations across the city. Some of the most visited locations for conducting outreach are known hotspots on the transit system with high ridership traffic and quality of life issues. The chart below shows the most visited locations, with 10 or more engagements with individuals.



Introducing Coordinated Assessments

While implementing the program, CIS staff quickly discovered several barriers for individuals to access resources. To help reduce barriers and help individuals access resources quickly, CIS staff sought out training to provide more direct services. One of those trainings is the Coordinated Assessment (CA), which is a housing assessment done through the Ending Community Homelessness Organization (ECHO). This assessment is an important first step to put individuals on housing waitlists. CIS staff were trained to complete this assessment in March of 2022.

From March to October 2022, CIS staff completed 100 housing assessments. Out of the 100 assessments completed, 3 individuals were referred to a housing provider and placed in stable housing. Outside of the ECHO housing system, CIS staff worked intensively with an individual to help him obtain permanent affordable housing at the tiny home neighborhood called Community First! Village. This individual had experienced homelessness for over 10 years and was living at one of the CapMetro bus stops. He moved into his tiny home in September 2022 and shared the following with CIS staff after moving in:

"I've been homeless for the worse part of a decade now and hadn't done a whole lot or worked with anyone to help my situation out cause of one excuse or another. I've tried sober and halfway housing, shelters and shared living off and on all with the same unpleasant outcome. I've always wanted to be part of a community, but be left alone when I wanted as well, which is hard in my situation. I finally said I'm beat down and tired of it. I decided I would accept and welcome help of any kind and that's when I was introduced to Carlos and Holly. They've helped and given so much time to helping me get what I needed to work again as well as find great housing that fits me and doesn't set me up for failure. I now have a chance to be self-sufficient, be part of a community that is understanding of a person in my situation and cares and hopefully thrive. I can't thank them or CapMetro services enough for employing people like them that care and follow through."

Standout Success Stories

- In addition to these major successes in directly housing individuals, CIS staff accomplished the following with individuals in the first year of the program:
- Successfully navigated an individual in mental health crisis to inpatient mental health services, a housing assessment and helped reconnected him with his social worker for HIV services. Recently, this individual was pulled for housing and moved into permanent supportive housing in November of 2022
- Helped an individual experiencing homelessness obtain a job with the City of Austin's Violet Keepsafe Program which will pay him a living wage
- Helped two individuals gain social security benefits
- Connected an individual camping along the rail line back to his case manager, who helped him get into Community First! Village



Building Relationships

Outside of direct work with individuals experiencing homelessness, mental health challenges and substance abuse issues on the transit system, the Community Intervention team engaged in several initiatives and developed important partnerships. These initiatives and partnerships helped the CIS team improve their work with individuals, increased knowledge and skills with CapMetro staff and helped put CapMetro's innovative public safety efforts on the map nationally. Prior to launching and throughout the first year, the CIS team established important relationships with nonprofits, outreach groups and city agencies to streamline outreach work in Austin.

A few relationships of note include Downtown Austin Community Court, the City of Austin's HOST (Homeless Outreach Street Team) and Homeless Services Division, Community First! Village, Austin ECHO (Ending Community Homelessness Organization), the Sobering Center, Integral Care's PATH (people assisting the homeless) team, Maximizing Hope and The Charlie Center. These partnerships all played a key role in the CIS team's successes with individuals gaining access to resources and services such as, mail, ID replacement, food, shelter, showers, basic hygiene items and many other things.



The CIS team also established relationships nationally and helped form a national transit work group for vulnerable populations. This work group includes transit agencies across the nation that already have or are in the process of creating programs to address homelessness, mental health and substance abuse issues on their systems. This work group led to many shared learning opportunities and eventually resulted in a two-day workshop in Denver hosted by RTD. The workshop, which the CIS team helped plan and run, gave participants the opportunity to do a deep dive into each program. The work group eventually gained the attention of APTA and CIS Holly Winge attended the APTA Mobility Conference in May and spoke on a panel discussing transit agencies and their approaches to homeless populations.

Lasting, Transformative Change

Finally, the CIS team worked internally to develop new processes, improve coordination with different departments and train staff on mental health challenges. Both CIS staff became trainers for the nationally recognized and evidence-based 8-hour training called Mental Health First Aid (MHFA). The CIS team piloted the training with Demand Response staff and further trained both cohorts of Public Safety



Ambassadors (PSAs). CIS staff also trained PSAs on the state of homelessness in Austin, provided a basic overview of resources and worked closely with them to develop a clear referral process from PSAs to CIS staff. Lastly, CIS staff worked closely with the Public Safety Administrator to establish a new protocol for managing camps on property. This new protocol helps ensure individuals are connected to services and given ample notice before displacement. Shortly after developing this protocol, CIS staff were able to reconnect an individual living at a camp along the rail line with his case manager who helped him get into housing at Community First! Village!

The successes and efforts of the Community Intervention Program would not be possible without the tremendous support of CapMetro. The CIS team is proud to be an industry leader in addressing homelessness on transit and looks forward to building and growing the program for years to come.



Community Intervention Team

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