Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness

The Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) program supports the delivery of services and resources to individuals who have serious mental illness, may have a co-occurring substance use disorder, and are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness.

Background

PATH prioritizes serving people with complex needs and barriers to housing who are often difficult to locate, engage in services, and connect to resources to meet their basic needs. PATH services work to find and then assist people to connect to community based services and transition from homelessness.

Primary services through PATH are:

- Outreach
- Case management

PATH services may also include:

- Screening and diagnostic assessment
- Community mental health
- Substance use treatment
- Limited housing supports

Impact of Homelessness

Homelessness for people with serious mental illness and co-occurring substance use disorder in Minnesota remains a persistent and increasing problem. Wilder Research reported that in 2018, 11,371 people were homeless on a single night, an increase of 10% since 2015. Most adults experiencing homelessness (81%) have either a chronic physical health condition (57%), serious mental illness (64%), or substance use disorder (24%). 50% have more than one of these conditions.

In 2020, there were 2,187 persons with serious mental illness contacted by PATH, with 681 of the people contacted becoming enrolled. Nearly half of these enrollees were chronically homeless. When first contacted, roughly 1/3 of PATH enrollees were unsheltered, 1/3 resided in a temporary shelter, and 1/3 were at imminent risk of homelessness, including exiting an institutional setting without housing.
History of PATH

The federal Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Amendments Act of 1990 created the PATH program. Available in all states and territories, the PATH program supports the delivery of outreach and services to individuals aged 18 and older with serious mental illnesses and those with co-occurring substance use disorder who are experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness.

Since 1987, Minnesota has supported outreach services for persons with mental illness who are homeless. The State expanded outreach services with the PATH program in 1991 by supporting homeless outreach projects in the Twin Cities Metro and Greater Minnesota. Currently, there are seven Minnesota PATH project grantees across the state.

Grantees

PATH projects are supported by the federal PATH grant in combination with state funds. Grantees work to:

- Establish partnerships with the local housing and homeless organizations that have available supportive housing units, rental subsidies, or other affordable housing opportunities which can be available for the people served
- Partner with the county local mental health authority, regional adult mental health initiative, or a tribal nation in order to link people to behavioral healthcare services and the resources they are eligible for
- Provide services which are recovery oriented, person-centered, and provide or link people to best practice and evidence-based behavioral health services
- Utilize Certified Peer Specialists and Peer Recovery Specialists to provide services
- Provide access to SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) services
- Offer case management services