

# **COTA** *COTA's* Response to Unhoused Individuals



May 3, 2022

COTA'S VISION

# TO MOVE EVERY LIFE *forward.*



# Strategic Response Specialists Team

Strategic Response Specialists (SRS Team) are change agents within our community to increase safety and security while serving vulnerable populations and proactively addressing issues including unhoused people, substance abuse, and mental health issues.

- Address vulnerable populations with compassion and dignity
- Proactively monitor/ride high ridership lines to have a visual presence and engage riders
- Physical presence at park and rides, transit centers, stops, and shelters
- Partner and support Safe and Secure COTA For All task force
- Align mission paths of security, accident investigation, claims, and litigation and insurance defense within a single division

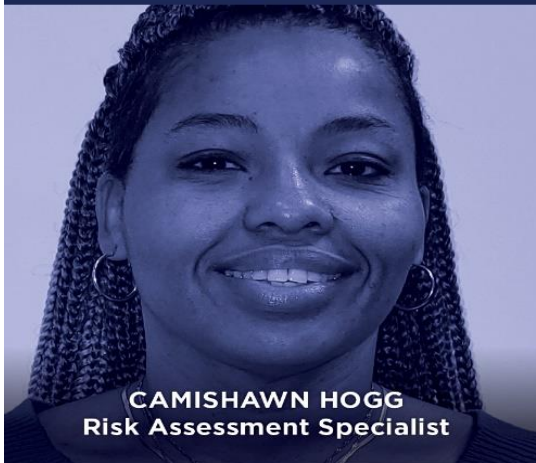




# GET TO *know*

## THE NEW RISK ASSESSMENT TEAM!

This team will amplify how COTA shows up daily to support our teams and protect our customers by investigating accidents and engaging with members of the public who are experiencing social plights and hardships.



# Specialized Training

- Accident Investigations
- ADA
- COTA Strategic Plan
- LINK US Initiative
- Public Records Requests
- Photography
- Report Writing
- Special Duty Officer (SDO) Program/K9
- TSA First Observer
- National Incident Management System
- Active Shooter Training - DHS
- Mental Health Training – North Community Center
- Human Trafficking – Out of Darkness Columbus
- De-Escalation Training – CPD



# Safe and Secure COTA For All

## **Purpose:**

- Improve the customer experience
- Ensure all people feel safe and secure using COTA services
- Work together to solve community issues through a human lens
- Connect people with specific needs to community resources

# Safe and Secure COTA For All

## Unhoused Individuals:

In collaboration with the SRS Team, the Safe and Secure COTA for All task force has been involved in the following initiatives to assist the unhoused.

- \*Warming/Cooling stations
- \*Overnight lodging during extreme weather
- \*Winter clothing drive
- \*311 Columbus dispatch system
- \*Community Ambassador Team (CAT) cards
- \*Brandon + Richard success stories

# Brandon

- Brandon was a frequent rider on COTA and was always intoxicated. Subsequently, Brandon had been found unresponsive on COTA buses numerous times.
- Brandon had been transported to local hospitals over 50 times. The cost to taxpayers was estimated to be over \$100,000
- He was approached by the SRS team. Brandon admitted that he faked the unresponsiveness so that he could be transported to a hospital since he didn't have housing and they always admitted him. He was open to assistance.
- The SRS team started researching different facilities to get Brandon some long-term care and shelter. Ongoing process.





# Richard

- Richard was found sleeping at a COTA bus top by the SRS team. He was approached and was open to assistance. Richard did not have housing, had mental health issues, was alcohol dependent and only had one toe on each foot.
- The SRS team contacted Netcare and was informed that they could provide assistance to Richard. Netcare is Franklin County's 24-hour mental health and substance abuse crisis intervention and assessment services for adults and adults with developmental disabilities.
- Richard was transported to NetCare where he was admitted and transitioned into the facility.



# Safe and Secure COTA for All Task Force Members

City of Columbus

Community Shelter Board

Community Refugee + Immigration Services (Crisis) Ohio

Kaleidoscope House

Huckleberry House

Columbus Police Department

OSU

Capital Crossroads/Special Improvement District (SID)

Lifecare Alliance

Kipp Columbus

North Community Counseling Center

Lutheran Social Services Network of Hope

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Committee (MORPC)

YMCA

Columbus Coalition for the Homeless

University District Organization (UDO)

Out of Darkness Columbus

Make A Day

Short North Alliance

Homeless Families Foundation

Columbus Public Library

Franklin County Public Health Dept.

ADAMH

Home for Families

Veterans Affairs Administration (VA)

Southside Learning

University District Organization (UDO)

Community Medical Services

Ohio Health

Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio (SARNCO)



“WE PROVIDE SOLUTIONS  
*that connect people to prosperity*

through innovation, dedication and teamwork.”

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