TRANSIT’S RESPONSE TO PEOPLE WHO ARE HOMELESS

SEPTA’S EXPERIENCE

JEFFREY D. KNUEPPEL, PE
GENERAL MANAGER
Of the 10 largest U.S. cities, Philadelphia ranks first in poverty

As a result, homelessness is a city-wide issue

Other contributing factors: housing costs, budget cuts, drug addiction and mental illness
Many of the City’s homeless seek refuge in public transportation locations

SEPTA has seen an increase of homeless persons at our stations and concourses with as many as 100 individuals observed in each of our Center City Regional Rail Stations at any given time

This situation calls for innovative problem solving
SEPTA partnered with Project HOME and the City of Philadelphia to assist with the growing homeless population at transit facilities.

SEPTA designed and constructed a homeless engagement center - the Hub of Hope - on City property adjacent to transit that is now managed by Project HOME Staff.

The Hub of Hope (11,000 s.f.) provides services to homeless individuals including:

- Assistance finding shelters/housing
- Meals and coffee
- Laundry service
- Shower and restroom facilities
- Access to physical/behavior health resources
HUB OF HOPE IMPACT – 2019 QUARTER 1 STATS

- Hours of operation expanded (full weekend service)
- 25,898 total visits with an average of 1,992 unique visits per week
- 635 placed in shelters
- 60+ placed in safe haven/long term respite
- 70+ referred to locations for permanent housing
- 168 received medical services with 36 referred to medical/treatment programs
- 1,466 showers and 716 loads of laundry
- 7,500+ meals served
ADDITIONAL SEPTA EFFORTS TO COMBAT HOMELESSNESS

FUNDRAISING

SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
2018 UNITED WAY PLUS CAMPAIGN

Notices:
- SEPTA has a posted pledge designation system that requires your contribution amount and designated agency to remain the same unless you indicate a change in your contribution amount and designate a new agency. Just mail your pledge card to the address shown below. University of Pennsylvania
- If you are designated to more than one agency, please indicate how your contribution should be divided among the agencies you select. Please send your contributions to one agency at a time.

We are grateful to our 2018 PLUS Campaign Supporters:

1. United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey
2. American Red Cross
3. Salvation Army
4. Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Philadelphia
5. Guardian Angels
6. University of Pennsylvania
7. Temple University
8. Drexel University
9. Community Foundation of Greater Philadelphia
10. Jewish Relief Agency
11. Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority
12. Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
13. Philadelphia Department of Human Services
14. Philadelphia City Hall
15. Philadelphia Works
16. Philadelphia Housing Authority
17. Philadelphia Mayor’s Office
18. Philadelphia Department of Labor and Industry
19. Philadelphia Department of Commerce
20. Philadelphia Office of Economic Opportunity
21. Philadelphia Department of Health
22. Philadelphia Department of Human Services
23. Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and IntellectualDisability Services
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UNIFIED WAY

VOLUNTEERING

EMPLOYMENT
SEPTA must balance customer comfort and safety with treating homeless with dignity and compassion.


Transit Police interact with homeless individuals and escort them to the Hub of Hope for services.

In March 2019, Transit Police began working with a Mental Health Professional to make contact with the resistant population in/around our stations.

- 649 engagements made
- 19 involuntarily committed for safety
- 18 individuals now in treatment facilities

In 2003, Philadelphia recorded 311 unintentional drug overdose deaths.

Unintentional fatal drug overdoses in Philadelphia hit a high of 1,217 in 2017.

Fatal drug related overdoses would be higher if not for availability of the overdose reversal drug Naloxone (Narcan).

*Source: City of Philadelphia Department of Public Health Opioid Misuse and Overdose Report, May 2019*
In 2018, SEPTA Transit Police delivered Narcan to 390 people who were overdosing on or around SEPTA vehicles and facilities

182 unresponsive/sick passengers reported on Subway/Elevated in 2019 with increasing passenger falls into the track area
SEPTA Transit Police Department received $500,000 Department of Justice grant to create overdose response team

- Officers trained by local drug rehab center to encourage persons suffering from addiction to accept help
- Respond to overdose calls to administer Narcan/transport to emergency treatment
- Engage population most likely to overdose
- Involves partnership between Angels in Motion – a drug rehab facilitator – and Temple University
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Find solutions that treat homeless individuals with dignity
- Everyone wants to help
- The situation is constantly evolving
- Engagement is good but permanent housing is key
- Mental health professionals important for strategic interaction particularly with resistant homeless population
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