

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority
California

METRO'S TRANSIT HOMELESS ACTION PLAN

FEBRUARY 2017



TRANSIT.ORG/CA

Metro Transit Homeless Action Plan

Executive Summary

Los Angeles County's Homeless crisis has impacted our region's public transit system, with homeless individuals and families often seeking shelter on rail, bus lines, station stops and transit centers. In 2016, the Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count results showed an 11% increase in homelessness since 2015 with about 47,000 homeless persons in Los Angeles County. Furthermore, over two-thirds of homeless persons in Los Angeles County are unsheltered, which is evident in street homelessness, vehicular homelessness and encampments throughout the County of Los Angeles. The lack of sufficient housing and shelter services to meet the needs of the homeless population has increased the use of Los Angeles County's transit system as an alternative form of shelter.

Passengers often report homeless individuals sleeping on trains and buses, limiting access to seats, restrooms and elevators. This has directly impacted the ridership experience, with concerns that ridership will decrease if Metro does not proactively address transit homelessness. Transit homelessness is best described as the use of rail and buses as a form of shelter. Many of the places within Metro's transit system that homeless have sought as shelter have resulted in public safety concerns for both passengers and the homeless population. Metro's priorities are to enhance the ridership experience and maintain a high level of public safety. Metro also recognizes that its response to transit homelessness must include solutions that connect the homeless to appropriate housing and supportive services, by partnering with the County of Los Angeles, City of Los Angeles, and homeless service agencies.

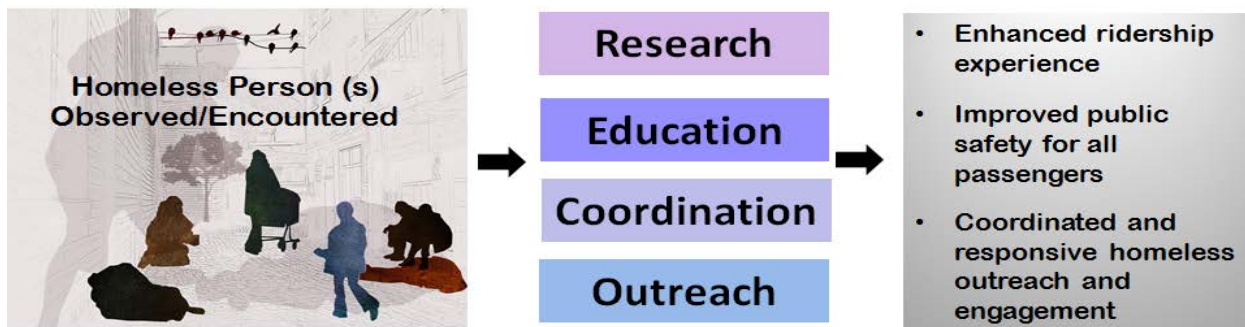
In July 2016, Metro launched a homeless strategic planning process which involved an extensive community and stakeholder process. Communities in Motion was the consulting firm hired by Metro to lead the planning process, which included community engagement sessions, interviews with individual stakeholders and convening focus groups involving people with lived homeless experience. This process was preceded with a comprehensive survey of Metro employees (over 1,100 respondents) who provided feedback on their experiences and observations of homelessness in Metro's transit system. These efforts resulted in the development of the Metro Transit Homeless Action Plan.

This action plan is focused on enhancing ridership by improving the experience of passengers daily through implementing a coordinated and comprehensive outreach and engagement plan that will be dedicated to the homeless individuals throughout Metro's Transit system. This plan includes an investment in transit homeless outreach teams specifically assigned to Metro. Additionally, partnership and coordination with the County of Los Angeles and City of Los Angeles as they continue to implement their February 2016 adopted homeless strategic

plans, will ensure homeless individuals and families are connected to the resources and services they need. This partnership and coordination will also make certain our regional transit system is accessible and safe to all passengers. Metro believes this action plan will support its priorities to maintain a high level of public safety in the region’s public transit system.

The Metro Transit Homeless Action Plan is scheduled for implementation in Spring 2017 and will focus on the following four areas:

- I. **Research:** Conduct surveys, convene internal and external stakeholders, analyze data and review information to better understand homelessness in Metro’s transit system.
- II. **Education:** Educate Metro staff and passengers about transit homelessness, what to do and how to best respond when encountering them in the public transit system.
- III. **Coordination:** Engage and partner with providers and other stakeholders involved in the homeless delivery system. Participate and collaborate with the County of Los Angeles and the City of Los Angeles to align and inform Metro’s Transit Homeless Action Plan with their adopted homeless strategies.
- IV. **Outreach:** Implement a comprehensive transit homeless outreach approach that is coordinated and effective in connecting homeless individuals and families to services, resources and housing provided by agencies serving the homeless population in Los Angeles County.



Key Highlights from the Planning Process

The Metro Transit Homeless Action Plan was developed as a result of extensive review of feedback gathered through the engagement process and an analysis of the scope and breadth of homelessness within Metro’s transit system. The plan was guided and informed by knowledge and insights of the issue that are critical to its successful implementation:

The Concept of Transit Homelessness

The patterns of the homeless population are often associated with individuals sleeping on the streets, forming encampments and using vehicles as shelter. Metro’s experience with homelessness requires

a different approach to engaging homeless individuals and families. Transit homelessness is best described as the use of rail and buses as a form of shelter. A twenty-four (24) hour approach to homeless outreach and engagement will be critical to addressing transit homelessness within Metro's system. Furthermore, homeless persons who use Metro rail and buses do not stay stationary, and move from location to location. Current Metro outreach teams encountering and engaging the homeless report they are a mobile population, requiring alternative approaches to outreach and engagement.

Understanding the Homeless Population

The homeless population has a diverse set of experiences and needs, which will require gaining a deeper understanding of their needs to better target resources, services and improve transit outreach and engagement approaches. Broad and diverse feedback during the planning process consistently centered on Metro conducting an analysis, and survey of homeless individuals and families in the transit system, as a way to better respond to the transit homelessness and coordinate resources and services.

Coordination and Partnership is Essential

In 2016, the County and the City of Los Angeles adopted homeless strategies to address Los Angeles County's homeless crisis. Metro's commitment to enhancing the ridership experience and ensuring public safety of its passengers are top priorities. However, Metro recognizes that homeless individuals and families utilize Metro for transportation; and in many instances use the public transit system as an alternative to shelter. Access and knowledge on how to connect homeless persons in public transit will require an increase in partnership and coordination with the County of Los Angeles, City of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, agencies serving the homeless and other stakeholders involved in the homeless delivery system. This will further create opportunities to align and inform homeless strategies, resulting in better leveraging and coordination of services.

Metro Transit Homeless Action Plan

The Metro Transit Homeless Action Plan is concentrated around four major areas that align with Metro's focus on enhancing ridership experience and maintaining a high level of public safety, while providing opportunities for the homeless in Metro's public transit system to connect with resources and services. Research, Education, Coordination and Outreach are the four areas that have specific objectives to be met. Implementation the action plan will commence in Spring 2017. Specific objectives will be monitored and evaluated quarterly.

I. RESEARCH

- A. Conduct **demographic surveys**
- B. Collect and analyze **data from outreach teams**
- C. Conduct a **cost-benefit analysis of homeless encampment removal or other options**
- D. Review and analyze data from **Homeless Count and Metro Customer Surveys**

II. EDUCATION

- A. Develop materials and information on **reporting transit homelessness and how they should respond or assist**
- B. Develop **formalized training** for Metro staff and law enforcement
- C. Formalize the **"Transit Homelessness"** concept

III. COORDINATION

- A. Work with the County and City of Los Angeles to **align homeless strategies**
- B. Participate in **committees and workgroups** related to the homeless system
- C. Partner and collaborate on **encampment protocols**
- D. Partner with the County and City of Los Angeles on **critical initiatives**

IV. OUTREACH

- A. Implement **C3 Outreach Teams**
- B. Develop **uniform outreach standards**
- C. **Implement specialized outreach teams**
- D. Lead and **coordinate** Metro homeless outreach
- E. Partner with agencies on **homeless connect days**
- F. Work with Veteran outreach teams
- G. Align Metro **workforce development efforts**

I. Research

Critical to Metro's success in responding to transit homelessness is better understanding the homeless in and around its transit system. To accomplish the research component of the Metro Transit Homeless Action Plan, there are specific data collection, analyses and research activities that will begin in Spring 2017 over a six-month period. These objectives will include the development of data collection methods, implementing surveys, convening internal and external stakeholders, and conducting an analysis of existing data related to transit homelessness. The main objectives under the research component of the plan are to:

- A. Conduct demographic surveys of homeless individuals and families in and around Metro's transit system.

- B. Collect and analyze data from Metro outreach teams (C3 and Specialized Teams). Teams convey this information to Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority.
- C. Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of Metro's current investment in clearing homeless encampments on Metro properties versus other methodologies.
- D. Review and analyze data specific to Metro from the Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count which is conducted on an annual basis.

II. Education

The education component of the Metro Transit Homeless Action Plan is an approach to help educate Metro staff and patrons. . A Metro awareness campaign, will improve communication, educate patrons and Metro staff about the homeless population encountered and observed. This component also recognizes the importance of developing a formalized training for Metro staff and law enforcement contracted with Metro on how to better respond and engage the homeless who use Metro. The education objectives will begin in Spring 2017 and be completed over a 9 to 12 month period. The objectives include

- A. Develop materials and information educating Metro staff and passengers on reporting transit homelessness and how they should respond or assist.
- B. Develop a transit homeless outreach curriculum and implement formalized training to Metro staff and law enforcement to better respond, communicate and understand how to best address homeless individuals and families they engage.
- C. Formalize the "Transit Homelessness" concept and integrate into implementation plans.

III. Coordination

In February 2016, the County of Los Angeles and the City of Los Angeles adopted comprehensive homeless strategies to address the homeless crisis in the region. Collaboration between Metro, Los Angeles County and Los Angeles City will allow for streamlining of existing and future homeless strategies to ensure Metro's Action Plan is successful. These partnerships include coordinating with the County of Los Angeles, City of Los Angeles and Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA). This component will be part of Metro's ongoing effort to regularly coordinate with the leadership of the homeless delivery system in Los Angeles County. The main objectives of the coordination component are to:

- A. Work with the County of Los Angeles and City of Los Angeles to align and integrate with adopted homeless strategies. Focus on strategies that impact Metro and provide opportunities for the homeless who use Metro to better connect and access services and resources they need.

- B. Participate in committees and workgroups related to the homeless delivery system that are relevant to transit homelessness convened by stakeholders, the County of Los Angeles, City of Los Angeles and LAHSA.
- C. Partner and collaborate with the County of Los Angeles, City of Los Angeles, other transit partners and homeless outreach leaders to review and discuss encampment protocols, involving clean-ups and clearing of encampments in both public and private property.
- D. Partner with the County of Los Angeles and City of Los Angeles on critical initiatives related to homelessness that will increase and leverage resources and services to better improve the overall homeless delivery system in Los Angeles County.

IV. Outreach

There is an immediate need for Metro to address transit homelessness and to expand and develop its approach to homeless outreach and engagement. Current efforts include law enforcement and a specialized team (Transit Mental Evaluation Team or TMET) from the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH) and Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. In November 2016, the Metro Board of Directors approved funding for Metro to hire two C3 (City, County, Community) Teams, which use a multi interdisciplinary approach to homelessness. Each team is comprised of health and mental health practitioners and homeless outreach staff who work to connect homeless individuals to services and permanent housing options. The planning process revealed the need for Metro to have a 24-hour presence on its transit system in order to effectively address transit homelessness. This component will also integrate and coordinate with all of Metro's transit outreach plans being implemented in Spring 2017 pending executed partnership agreement. Evaluations and monitoring will be conducted on a quarterly basis. The Outreach component includes the following objectives:

- A. Implement and integrate the C3 Outreach Teams to conduct outreach and engagement on assigned rail lines and in stations.
- B. Implement specialized outreach teams to develop a 24-hour outreach and engagement presence. This includes assigning teams to target particular areas and homeless subpopulations in need of specific support or staff with specialized experience and skills.
- C. Lead and coordinate on a regular basis Metro outreach teams which include C3 teams, specialized teams, TMET and Law Enforcement. Law Enforcement will include all agencies contracted with Metro including initiating alignment with Los Angeles County Sheriff Department, MET teams and Los Angeles Police Department, HOPE teams.
- D. Develop and adopt uniform outreach and engagement standards when addressing transit homelessness for Metro teams and contractors to follow.
- E. Partner with local homeless service providers and others to participate in homeless connect days, which provide access to homeless resources and services.
- F. Collaborate with outreach teams that work directly with Veterans to maximize available resources, services and housing targeting homeless Veterans.
- G. Align Metro workforce development efforts with the Transit Homeless Action Plan to support efforts to expand employment opportunities for the homeless. Metro may partner with

organizations to advance this objective as well as review their own efforts to build upon their already existing strategies and programs focused on workforce development.

Measuring Success and Performance Standards

Metro's Transit Homeless Action Plan's successful implementation will be reviewed and reported on a quarterly basis to ensure accountability within the four components. Areas in need of improvement or correction will be identified as objectives are implemented and monitored. The outreach component will include evaluations of transit outreach efforts on a regular basis to ensure successful outcomes and measuring whether the homeless population on the system is increasing or decreasing. Attached, (pages 9-13) is a Quality Assurance Guide for the Action Plan, which includes a system to measure progress and act as a guide for the evaluation of the Action Plan.

Conclusion

The Metro Transit Homeless Action Plan reflects a commitment to addressing transit homelessness to ensure ridership experience is enhanced and public safety continues to be a top priority for all passengers. The homeless crisis in Los Angeles County has resulted in the public transit system absorbing the crisis with homeless individuals and families seeking shelter and refuge in Metro rail, buses, stops and other properties. While ridership and safety are critical to Metro delivering a world class public transportation system, Metro recognizes that the homeless in need of resources, services and support utilize Metro for transportation purposes and shelter. Metro's approach to transit homelessness will be to coordinate and partner with those who have direct experience with the homeless and the homeless delivery system. The *Research, Education, Coordination and Outreach* components of the action plan demonstrate Metro's willingness to invest in addressing transit homelessness. It also illustrates Metro's commitment to partner with the County of Los Angeles, the City of Los Angeles, LAHSA and stakeholders involved in the homeless delivery system to better coordinate, avoid duplication of efforts, and effectively leverage and maximize resources. The focus to strengthen and improve transit homeless outreach and engagement to the homeless in and around Metro's system reflects Metro's dedication to responding to the region's homeless crisis. Beginning in Spring 2017, many components of the action plan will be implemented. Metro looks forward to working with its partners for a successful implementation.

Metro Transit Homeless Action Plan

Measuring Success and Performance Standards

I. RESEARCH

Overall Outcome: Produce data and demographic profiles of homeless individuals and families in Metro rail, buses, stops, transit centers and other properties.

Objective	Action Steps	Timeline	Quarterly Outcomes
A. Conduct demographic surveys of homeless individuals and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop methodology Convene internal and external stakeholders to review methodology and survey tools Develop survey tool Select surveyors Conduct training for surveyors Conduct survey Analyze data and produce report 	March to August 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> January to March 2017: Methodology and survey tool drafted April to June 2017: Survey tool completed, surveyors selected and trained, demographic survey launched July to September 2017: Surveys completed, data analyzed and report completed (August)
B. Collect and analyze data from outreach teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a plan of action in collaboration with transit outreach teams and track outreach and engagement activities Generate monthly reporting tool for transit outreach teams Produce monthly reports 	May 2017 to ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April to June 2017: Complete plan of action to track transit outreach and engagement activities, complete monthly reporting tool July to August 2017: Complete first monthly and quarterly report
C. Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of Metro's current investment and methods in clearing homeless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with designated Metro staff to develop methodology for analysis Complete methodology and data collection tools Conduct analysis 	March to August 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> January to March 2017: Draft methodology and data collection tools April to June 2017: Complete data collection tools and conduct analysis

encampments on Metro properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce findings and report 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July to September 2017: Review findings and complete report (August)
D. Review and analyze data specific to Metro from the Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count and Metro Customer Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and analyze 2016 and 2017 results from Homeless Count conducted by LAHSA • Review and analyze customer service surveys • Produce report 	May to August 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April to June 2017: Review data and draft summaries and report • July to September 2017: Produce report

II. EDUCATION

Overall Outcome: Educate Metro staff and passengers on transit homelessness, what to do and how to best respond when encountering them in the public transit system.

Objective	Action Steps	Timeline	Quarterly Outcomes
A. Develop materials and information educating Metro staff and passengers on reporting transit homelessness and how they should respond or assist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft preliminary concepts and messages • Convene internal and external stakeholders to discuss messaging and communication methods • Develop public awareness materials and communication tools • Launch public awareness campaign 	March to December 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January to March 2017: Convene internal Metro team and review action steps • April to June 2017: Complete preliminary concepts and messages • July to September 2017: Complete final draft of messaging concepts and implementation plan • October to December 2017: Launch public awareness campaign
B. Develop a transit homeless outreach curriculum and implement formalized training for Metro staff and law enforcement. Initiate alignment with Sheriff MET and LAPD HOPE teams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop implementation plan for training • Convene a work group to develop transit homelessness curriculum • Draft and review curriculum • Pilot training • Launch training program 	March 2017 to ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April to June 2017: complete implementation plan for training, convene work group • July to September 2017: Draft and review curriculum • September to December 2017: Pilot curriculum and training • January to March 2018: Formally launch training program
C. Formalize the "Transit Homelessness" concept and integrate into implementation plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete and agree on definition of "transit homelessness" • Integrate concept into Metro's Transit Homelessness Action Plan 	March to April 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January to March 2017: Finalize "transit homelessness" concept and incorporate it into Metro's Transit Homeless Action Plan

III. COORDINATION

Overall Outcome: Engage and partner with providers and others involved in the homeless delivery system. Participate and collaborate with the County and City of Los Angeles to align and inform Metro's Transit Homeless Action Plan with their adopted homeless strategies.

Objective	Action Steps	Timeline	Quarterly Outcomes
A. Work with the County and City of Los Angeles to align and integrate with adopted homeless strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and document how specific components of Metro's action plan aligns with the County and City of Los Angeles homeless strategies Participate in County and City of Los Angeles Homeless Strategy meetings related to transit homelessness 	March 2017 to ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> January to March 2017: Complete review of Metro action plan and County and City of L.A. Homeless Strategies April to June 2017: Produce first quarterly report
B. Participate in committees and workgroups related to the homeless delivery system that are relevant to transit homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a strategy to participate in homeless committees and task forces as it relates to transit homelessness, prioritizing outreach and engagement Develop meeting reporting tool to monitor activities and outcomes 	March 2017 to ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> January to March 2017: Complete review of County and City of L.A. homeless committees and task forces, begin participating in critical meetings, complete reporting tool and produce first quarterly report April to June 2017: Produce first quarterly report
C. Partner and collaborate with partners on encampment protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and document Metro's current encampment protocol Meet with the County of Los Angeles Chief Executive Office and City of Los Angeles Convene other transit partners about encampment protocols Share results from cost-benefit analysis Work with partners to discuss and develop standard encampment protocols Develop and adopt encampment protocols 	April to 2017 to April 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April to June 2017: Document Metro's current protocol, meet with County, City and transit partners July to September 2017: Share results from cost-benefit analysis with partners October to December 2017: Work with partners to standardize encampment protocols across the County January to March 2018: Draft and update Metro protocols April to June 2018: Adopt Metro encampment protocols
D. Partner with the County and City of Los Angeles on critical initiatives related to homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify critical initiatives Develop action plans related to 2017 initiatives Review and revisit efforts bi-annually 	March 2017 to ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April to June 2017: Complete draft summary of initiatives, develop action plans July to September 2017: Produce first quarterly report

IV. OUTREACH

Overall Outcome: Implement a comprehensive transit homeless outreach approach that is coordinated and effective in connecting homeless individuals and families to services, resources and housing provided by agencies serving the homeless population in Los Angeles County.

Objective	Action Steps	Timeline	Quarterly Outcomes
A. Implement and integrate the C3 Outreach Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene Metro staff and law enforcement representatives to discuss the integration of C3 • C3 Teams to complete Metro rail and bus certification • Work with C3 teams to coordinate transit outreach plans and check-ins with Metro • Develop reporting tools and processes • Evaluate C3 Model 	March 2017 to March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January to March 2017: Convene Metro staff, law enforcement and C3 Teams • April to June 2017: C3 Teams to complete Metro and rail certification, C3 Teams begin outreach and engagement • July to September 2017: First monthly and quarterly report completed • October to December 2017: Formal evaluation of the C3 Model • January to March 2018: Produce report and evaluation results of the C3 Model
B. Develop uniform outreach standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate implementation plan with curriculum development under the Education Component of Transit Homeless Action Plan • Draft uniform outreach and engagement standards • Convene Metro outreach teams, law enforcement teams and other partners • Adopt standards • Implement and integrate standards • Evaluate effectiveness of standards 	March 2017 to January 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January to March 2017: Integrate implementation plan with curriculum development, • April to June 2017: Draft outreach standards, convene outreach and law enforcement teams to review and provide feedback into draft standards • July to September 2017: Finalize draft standards, adopt and implement standards • October to December 2017: Evaluate effectiveness • January to March 2018: Report evaluation

V. OUTREACH (continued)

Overall Outcome: Implement a comprehensive transit homeless outreach approach that is coordinated and effective in connecting homeless individuals and families to services, resources and housing provided by agencies serving the homeless population in Los Angeles County.

<p>C. Implement specialized outreach teams to develop a 24-hour outreach and engagement presence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Metro outreach gaps based on research completed through data collection. Send feedback from Metro staff and law enforcement Develop plan to assign and contract with service providers to implement specialized outreach teams Implement specialized teams 	<p>July to December 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> July to September 2017: Review and analyze outreach gaps, produce report on outreach gaps and needs October to December 2017: Complete plan for specialized teams, identify specialized teams and implement specialized teams
<p>D. Lead and coordinate with transit homeless outreach and law enforcement teams</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop coordination plan for transit homeless outreach. Law enforcement and Metro staff to convene and address outreach needs regularly Implement coordination plan 	<p>April 2017 to ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April to June 2017: Complete and implement coordination plan July to September 2017: Complete first monthly and quarterly report
<p>E. Partner and participate with local homeless service providers and others on homeless connect days</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Coordinated Entry System (CES) to identify and develop a plan for Metro to participate and support connect days Develop a plan and approach for Metro to participate and support connect days 	<p>May to June 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April to June 2017: Complete Metro plan to support and participate in connect days, produce quarterly report
<p>F. Work with outreach teams specific to Veterans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene Veteran partners and outreach teams to share Metro's Homeless Action Plan and its Outreach Component Develop coordination plan with Veteran outreach teams Implement coordination plan 	<p>March to September 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April to June 2017: Convene Veteran partners and outreach teams July to September 2017: Develop and implement coordination plan, produce first quarterly report
<p>G. Align Metro workforce development efforts with its Transit Homeless Action Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an approach to align workforce efforts with its Transit Homeless Action Plan Partner with other agencies and organizations to enhance workforce development opportunities 	<p>July 2017 to ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> July to September 2017: Draft an approach to align workforce programs with the Transit Homeless Action Plan, meet with partners to discuss approaches October to December 2017: Complete plan and approach January to March 2018: Launch workforce development plan, produce first quarterly report