Outreach Committee Meeting Minutes

OCTOBER 27, 2026 | 3:00 - 4:00 PM
In Person – East Leonard Elementary

FACILITATOR:	Alyssa Anten
MEETING ATTENDEES:	Tammy Vincent, Jennifer Shields, Emily Graves, Inez Escareno, Kevin Sears, Bryan Holt, Tyler Kregel, Artemis Tally, Alexis Sumner, Jeffrey Carter, Corey Kernodle, Jason Kelley, Michael Maher, Francine Kalnins, Maddie Martin
TIME CONVENED:	3:04 PM
TIME ADJOURNED:	3:58 PM

BUILT FOR ZERO DASHBOARDS

DISCUSSION:

Alyssa shared the September Built for Zero (BFZ) data dashboards, noting that the community reached a new low of 134 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.

- Providing context, Alyssa noted the community began a 90-day BFZ surge effort in July, when the chronic homelessness count was 154. Although there were a few months with higher counts during the surge period, ending September at 134 represented significant progress.
- Alyssa highlighted that two dashboard indicators appeared as dark blue dots, signifying a decreasing six-month trend (the improvement median).
- Alyssa also reviewed the inflow and outflow data, where orange represents inflow and blue represents outflow on the chart. In September, there were more individuals exiting chronic homelessness than entering it. Returns from inactive status were also lower than usual. Of those who outflowed, 79% exited to permanent housing placements, while a smaller portion exited due to inactivity. Alyssa noted that the dashboard showed more months with outflow exceeding inflow (blue indicators) than the reverse, demonstrating sustained progress.

Alyssa emphasized that consistently achieving greater outflow than inflow is a key indicator that the community is moving in the right direction and making measurable progress toward ending chronic homelessness.

Alyssa shared updates on unsheltered homelessness, noting that the community has only been tracking this measure for four months. She reported that the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness decreased from 79 in July to 61 in September, mirroring positive trends seen in other BFZ data. When asked how unsheltered homelessness is measured, Alyssa explained that an individual is counted if they experienced at least one night of unsheltered homelessness during the month.

Alyssa also reviewed data on unsheltered youth homelessness, which showed 291 youth ages 18-24 experiencing unsheltered homelessness. She asked whether the figure appeared accurate or if data quality concerns might be contributing to the high count. Artemis acknowledged that data quality can always improve but believes the

number largely reflects current conditions, noting that many young people are being added to the system while fewer are connecting to resources. Alyssa added that further conversations with HAP may be needed.

- Alyssa noted that the total number of actively homeless youth, including those who are sheltered, is closer to 500.

ACTION ITEMS: **Alyssa Anten:** Share login information for BFZ Dashboards.
Alyssa Anten: Investigate unsheltered youth data.

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (OEM) PRESENTATION DEBRIEF

DISCUSSION: Tammy shared that the purpose of the presentation from the Office of Emergency Management was to ensure the City and homelessness response system can communicate effectively during emergencies.

BRAINSTORMING FUTURE PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES
Tyler asked whether a task force exists to coordinate responses to severe weather events. HOT explained that a group of stakeholders, including police, fire, and other partners, meets to discuss emergency response, information sharing, and communication channels.

Artemis noted that weather alerts are already widely available through news outlets, but suggested it would be more helpful for OEM to share information not typically included in public alerts, such as how providers can assist during severe weather events, available resources, and opportunities for coordinated response efforts.

Tyler emphasized that timely communication with the CoC and homelessness response system would allow providers to assist more effectively during emergencies. Tammy asked whether information shared with the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) could also be communicated to the CoC. HOT indicated that alerts could be shared with the CoC, who could then distribute that information to outreach teams. Tammy offered to serve as an alternative point of contact.

- Alyssa noted that including the CoC in emergency communications could strengthen coordination across the homelessness response system, particularly among shelters. She shared that a coordinated communication process could help quickly distribute information such as shelter availability and other urgent resource updates. Group members expressed support for the idea, emphasizing the value of timely information-sharing to improve awareness of available resources and response options across the system.

PIT COUNT PLANNING

DISCUSSION: Alyssa shared that PIT Count planning has started earlier than usual this year to reduce the total number of planning meetings. Outreach Workgroup members have been invited by Kate Meyer to join the planning effort. Anyone interested who has not been contacted by Kate Meyer should reach out to Alyssa.

OUTREACH MAPPING TOOL
Alyssa gauged interest in using the BFZ Outreach Mapping Tool for PIT Count planning. Members were supportive of the idea. Michael noted that while initial setup

may take extra time, the tool would be beneficial in the long term. Alexis added that it would be helpful for organizations who don't use Google.

Tammy appreciated that the tool is free and asked about user access. Alyssa said all PIT Count participants could be granted access. Michael noted that in previous years, map access was generally limited to team leads to simplify coordination, not because of HMIS requirements.

Tyler asked whether gaining access to the tool would be a simple process. Alyssa said the CoC would just need to contact BFZ to have the tool activated and that she hopes to do so shortly.

Tammy shared feedback from past PIT Counts that pausing encampment cleanups before the count and resuming them afterward can feel predatory to unsheltered individuals. She encouraged discussion about approaches that avoid that perception.

Tammy also asked about the PIT Count date. Alyssa estimated it would take place January 27.

ACTION ITEMS: **Maddie Martin:** Add "Strategies for Encampment Cleanup Following the PIT Count" to next month's Outreach Workgroup agenda.

POINT OF CONTACT WORKFLOWS

DISCUSSION: Tammy shared about the City of Grand Rapids' proposed 311 Homelessness Assistance Form, which is still under development and has not yet been approved or launched. Based on analysis of the most common homelessness-related calls received by the City, the form is intended to guide residents to the appropriate response. Rather than being framed as a "Homelessness Complaint Form" it would be labeled a "Homelessness Assistance Form." Users would select the concern they want to report and receive an automated response with relevant information. Tammy hopes certain form selections can route citizens to request outreach services at a specific location.

Key discussion points included:

- Michael suggested providing educational information or response tips to users who receive a "hard stop" in the form submission process. Artemis felt this may not be necessary, noting that individuals submitting complaints are often looking for action rather than educational resources.
- Tyler expressed concern that placing the form under the City's enforcement section may make it difficult for genuinely concerned residents to find.
- Members questioned expected response times and how useful the form would be if requests were not routed quickly. Tammy said this detail is still being worked out.
- Tammy explained that complaint response would depend on the concern selected, with uncategorized concerns likely routed to her inbox for follow-up.
- Alyssa asked whether any submissions would be routed directly to street outreach teams and whether referrals should connect to CHC, 211, or another resource. Tyler suggested routing outreach requests through the CoC and incorporating the process into broader governance discussions. The group

	thinks that a process similar to encampment notifications, where the CoC distributes information to outreach providers, could be effective. Alyssa suggested piloting the process within the City of Grand Rapids and, if successful, exploring whether a similar approach could be expanded through the CoC website for areas outside the city. Tammy said we could test it on the whole area at once, noting that the City would simply not respond to concerns outside its jurisdiction. Michael asked whether there would be opportunities to provide feedback during testing. Tammy said the form can be modified relatively easily once approved and implemented.
ACTION ITEMS:	**Tammy Vincent:** Share the 311 draft link with Maddie to share to the Outreach Workgroup. **Outreach Workgroup:** Review the 311 form and send all suggested edits to Tammy Vincent (tvincent@grcity.us).

ADJOURNMENT – *Next meeting: November 24*