

Street Outreach, Harm Reduction and Deflection Program (SOHRAD)

Funding Materials

Executive Summary

- The program is seeking \$38,860 from the Town of Chapel Hill Re-Imagining Public Safety Task Force funding for six months of funding for a needed fourth Peer Navigator position
 - Why is a fourth Peer Navigator needed? Since the original planning for SOHRAD, the number of people experiencing homelessness has increased 39% over 5 years and needs are rising; the additional Peer Navigator was recommended by the Chapel Hill Re-Imagining Public Safety Task Force; the additional position would allow for expanded coverage and hours, more case management, and more peer support interventions
- Orange County Street Outreach, Harm Reduction and Deflection (SOHRAD) team has been operating since October 2020
- In thirteen months, SOHRAD has served over 230 people, housed 60 people, and deflected over 60 law enforcement interactions
- SOHRAD has a broad base of community support from service providers, the criminal justice system, community leaders, community members, and other stakeholders
- Full list of community collaboration and support below
- Street outreach is an integral component in the work to end homelessness; SOHRAD fills a longstanding gap in the homeless service system

SOHRAD Accomplishments 10/15/20 – 11/25/21

Program Numbers:

Total number of people served:

Over 230

Entering permanent destinations:

60 (23 with Housing Choice Vouchers)

Entering transitional housing/shelter:

68

Entering other temporary destinations (friends/family, motel, etc.):

Over 180

Obtaining funded services (supplies, food, transportation, etc):

Over 180

Receiving COVID-19 vaccine from Mobile Unit:

26

Provided clinical support:

91

Law enforcement deflections:

Over 60

Annual 12 Month Budget (Based on FY 21-22 Costs)

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL
Personnel	Harm Reduction Deflection Clinical Coordinator, 1.0 FTE (includes salary and benefits)	\$81,174
Personnel	Street Outreach Peer Support Staff, 3.0 FTE (includes salary and benefits)	\$185,763
Personnel	Training/conferences	\$4,000
Personnel	Mileage	\$4,375
Supplies	Office Supplies (toner, business cards, printer, paper, files, etc)	\$3,300
Supplies	Laptop, MS Office, Hot Spot, Desk, Chair for new 4th position	\$3,000
Supplies	Phone Service	\$3,125
Supplies	Annual client needs - food, bus passes, tents, sleeping bags, transportation	\$20,000
In-Kind	Office space, admin support	\$0
TOTAL		\$304,737

Examples of Work:

In early October 2021, the Carrboro Housing Department notified SOHRAD of an individual sleeping in a vehicle in the Town Commons, stating that resident complaints would force the Town to soon trespass him. The community member, C, received permanent supportive housing services from a local agency that soon thereafter discharged him for behavioral issues. Within less than two weeks, SOHRAD helped Center IFC Community House, navigating initial client ambivalence and coordinating free veterinary services to screen his pet for congregate living. Program staff also assisted the client with identifying alternative locations to store his inoperable vehicle, as well as ultimately paid for towing.

In late September, Carrboro PD gave W three days to vacate his encampment on a Carrboro property slated for development. The individual had resided there periodically for over a year, erecting size-able structures. During previous encounters with SOHRAD staff, W had declined shelter and housing services, however he now wanted to complete Coordinated Entry. SOHRAD assisted the client with relocating his belongings to another location, thus avoiding further law enforcement involvement. A notable change from past encounters, W has since engaged frequently with staff to begin developing a permanent housing plan.

Following his release from jail, N arrived in Chapel Hill in December from Alamance County, where he experienced homelessness for approximately one and a half years. He possessed no income, previously applied and was denied for SSDI, and lacked any local support networks. SOHRAD assisted the client with transferring his probation to Orange County, as well as connecting with the Restoration Legal Counsel and Chapel Hill Debt Relief Fund for past court fines. With CARES funding, SOHRAD purchased the client a hotel bed throughout December, from where he entered non-congregate shelter through IFC Community House. IFC referred N for a Housing Choice Voucher, yet he was later discharged from their program. CEF and SOHRAD thereafter helped the client apply for a duplex in Chapel Hill, which he moved into this June with his Housing Choice Voucher, despite his lack of income and criminal record. N will continue working with the LRC on job training so he can secure employment.

Following domestic violence and her partner abruptly leaving, L lived unsheltered in Chapel Hill for over five years. During this period, she experienced significant mental illness, namely depression and anxiety, which worsened following a family member's death this year. SOHRAD assisted L in obtaining a Housing Choice Voucher and locating an apartment, which she and her emotional support animal moved into at the end of June. With a roof over her head, L now hopes to stabilize her mental health and successfully appeal her SSI denial, which will allow her to better retain her housing.

Carrboro PD contacted SOHRAD in June reporting an unsheltered community member sleeping outside the Food Lion at Carrboro Plaza. The man was already on the trespass list for the area and also risked a citation for public drinking. When program staff arrived, the officer voiced possibilities of charging A, if he did not comply with relocating. The individual wanted to pursue detox, so SOHRAD staff called Freedom House. Unfortunately, the facility had no open beds, so officers offered to transport A to the UNC ED without any further criminal justice involvement. Program staff thereafter connected with medical providers to coordinate services for A.

Late one June evening, a Carrboro resident notified SOHRAD of an individual screaming in crisis near Berkshire 54 apartments - police had already arrived on scene. Staff responded and helped deescalate the situation until the person calmed down. SOHRAD staff ensured that the individual had a safe place to spend the night.

J arrived in Chapel Hill unsheltered and hoping to transfer parole to NC following release from GA. The client had experienced homelessness chronically for over a decade, experiencing mental illness and substance use disorder. SOHRAD staff offered peer support and assisted J in entering detox at Freedom House. He thereafter entered ADATC for two weeks, before scheduling an intake at an Oxford House in Chapel Hill.

In late May, Chapel Hill PD contacted SOHRAD regarding a client, B, who continued loitering near the Blue Horn Lounge and yelling at pedestrians. Although the neighboring business had previously trespassed the client, Chapel Hill PD called SOHRAD due to B's mental illness and unsheltered status. Staff deescalated the situation and escorted the client to a safer location. The following week, the Blue Horn Lounge called SOHRAD directly when a similar situation occurred, thus avoiding law enforcement involvement.

After the Town of Chapel Hill sold the Wallace Deck to a private developer, SOHRAD staff assisted the CH Crisis Unit and Police Department with helping residents sleeping unsheltered atop the garage avoid future trespassing. Throughout March and April, Staff supported clients with locating temporary and permanent housing solutions, most notably aiding a couple with returning to family in Oklahoma City. Other clients entered transitional shelter through IFC, detox at Freedom House, and sober living at an Oxford House. Police did not trespass anyone, and the deck remains empty as of early June.

In early April, Chapel Hill PD called SOHRAD requesting assistance with T. IFC Community House had contacted the officers after they told the client he could not access cold-weather cots (due to his criminal history) and he refused to leave. Program staff responded and provided T a tent and other supplies, thereafter transporting him to a location where he could safely camp, thus avoiding any further law enforcement involvement.

In 2021, SOHRAD staff helped the Orange County Health Department's COVID-19 Mobile Vaccination Team vaccinate 26 unsheltered community members, as well as additional residents and staff of local shelters.

After experiencing homelessness chronically for multiple years, unable to afford rent with his part-time restaurant job, B finally obtained his own studio in Chapel Hill. SOHRAD first met the client in mid-October, as he panhandled outside of Starbucks. After leaving a residential program and finding his employment substantially reduced at the onset of the pandemic, B returned once again to camping in Carrboro. SOHRAD eventually helped the client apply for a Housing Choice Voucher, which he thereafter used to locate a unit on his low-income. Now stably housed, B has picked up extra shifts at work and plans to secure full-time employment soon.

Blue's on Franklin contacted SOHRAD regarding an individual who frequently loiters around their restaurant and an adjacent bar, allegedly harassing customers. Although the person would not disclose their living situation or name at this time, they agreed to share a coffee with street outreach staff at Starbucks.

In late February, SOHRAD had not seen an individual that they had continuously been working with for several months. This individual is mentally impaired and has an ACT Team. SOHRAD would usually see this individual on a daily basis, but had not seen him for 2-3 weeks. SOHRAD collaborated with this individual's ACT Team and CH Crisis Unit in putting out a "BOLO" alert. Once CHPD located this individual, SOHRAD immediately came to this location, clinically assessed him, drove him back to CH and waited with him while his ACT Team arrived to administer his monthly injection.

Carrboro PD requested SOHRAD respond to a local apartment complex where J had to leave his current housing situation due to domestic disputes. Staff arrived and helped de-escalate the situation, providing peer support and helping the individual arrange a plan for shelter. SOHRAD transported J to IFC Community House, where he accessed a cold-weather cot. The next morning, staff aided the client with obtaining a bus pass to return to family in Charlotte.

Chapel Hill police officers called SOHRAD reporting a man, T, who repeatedly loitered around a nearby hotel and appeared to experience both homelessness and significant mental illness. Instead of trespassing T, officers facilitated a warm hand-off with outreach staff, who thereafter assisted the individual to a safer location and discussed future services.

At the end of January 2021, Carrboro PD called SOHRAD reporting that B recently had his belongings stolen and, as such, appeared emotionally distraught. Officers were meeting with the individual at Amante's Pizza, where the client was eating, and requested SOHRAD to help coordinate shelter for the evening. SOHRAD staff met B and provided him new shoes, blankets, and other supplies. Staff also called IFC Community House to confirm cold-weather cot availability and thereafter helped transport B to the shelter.

SOHRAD has worked clinically in collaborating with Veterans Affairs (VA) to assist in completing temporary and permanent housing plans for unsheltered veterans. As of now, 2 veterans have been re-engaged with the VA through SOHRAD services and are now in the process of obtaining safe and stable housing. SOHRAD has also helped several other unsheltered veterans link to the VA to assess what supports they can assist them with, such as medical care, behavioral health care and pensions/benefits.

Throughout the late fall of 2020, A slept atop the Wallace Deck with supplies provided by SOHRAD. In December, the street outreach program provided the client a hotel room at the Residence Inn, until IFC Community House opened cold-weather cots following Christmas. After obtaining a new part-time position at a local gym, A applied for a Housing Choice Voucher, thereafter moving into a single occupancy room in February. The client hopes to use the room as a "stepping stone," saving throughout this year as he searches for a larger apartment.

At the end of November 2020, SOHRAD first met D panhandling outside a local convenience store, one of many that would trespass him during his time on the streets. He reported recently leaving an Oxford House, ejected again for drinking. As a participant in Outreach Court, D hoped to avoid continued law enforcement involvement. SOHRAD referred the client for the Local Reentry Council, as well as the Alliance for Disability Advocates for more long-term case management services. The program helped D successfully apply for a Housing Choice Voucher and, with Emergency Housing Assistance, he soon entered a studio apartment in Chapel Hill in February 2021. As of now, the client continues accessing meetings for alcohol use and medication management at Freedom House. He also soon hopes to begin Vocational Rehabilitation and thereafter find stable, living-wage employment.

Blue's on Franklin called SOHRAD reporting an intoxicated individual that refused to leave their restaurant premises. Staff arrived on scene and deescalated the situation, escorting the person down the street. The client agreed to detox, and staff accompanied him on the bus to Freedom House. However, while en route, he decided not to attend detox, so staff helped the client purchase some food and waited with him until he sobered up enough to walk to where he stayed at night. At the moment, the individual declined any shelter or additional services.

Orange County Magistrate called SOHRAD regarding C, who now sleeps unsheltered in his vehicle after fleeing domestic violence. Officers arrested him for a DWI and brought him to Orange County Jail. Instead of a sober hold, the Magistrate offered to allow him to stay in shelter. SOHRAD coordinated a cold-weather cot and, given the client's revoked license and towed vehicle, OC Sheriff transported C to IFC Community House.

Chapel Hill Crisis Unit contacted SOHRAD after police officers picked up R for public intoxication following a call from a local business. Officers purchased food for the individual at a local McDonald's, and program staff responded to the scene. SOHRAD reserved a cold-weather cot, and police escorted R to the IFC Community House for the evening. After spending several months either unsheltered or hospitalized, the client hopes to maintain his emergency shelter bed and work to manage his alcohol use.

In early February, Chapel Hill Police Department called SOHRAD reporting that the Franklin Mart had trespassed M for stealing items. The officers confirmed that they would not charge the client and requested SOHRAD to assist with shelter, given that the individual experienced homelessness and severe mental illness. Staff arrived on scene and helped remove M from the situation, thus deterring any further law enforcement involvement.

Late one January evening, the Chapel Hill Crisis Unit requested SOHRAD respond to a scene where CHPD officers had stopped an individual whose vehicle ran out of gas. The driver, A, reported sleeping unsheltered in her car, with no place to stay, given that IFC Homestart's cold-weather program remained full. Officers permitted A to park her vehicle in a nearby lot for the weekend, yet still hoped to connect her with housing resources. SOHRAD arrived and provided the driver a list of local services, as well as established a plan to meet sometime and discuss permanent housing. The individual then requested staff to assist with gas so that she could drive to a bank, where she could hopefully withdraw cash once she received her SSI benefits and then pay for a shared room. SOHRAD completed several trips to the gas station to help fill A's vehicle, and she safely drove to downtown Chapel Hill.

After experiencing chronic homelessness since 2015, D picked up his keys for a newly renovated rental January 2021, over five years later. Throughout the prior fall, D began working at a restaurant in Durham, hoping to save up money as he slept unsheltered in his vehicle. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic, with its multiple surges, continually reduced his hours, rendering his \$800 monthly income inadequate to afford housing. SOHRAD assisted D with accessing cold-weather cots at the IFC Community House, and eventually he located a cheap bedroom in a shared apartment - what he refers to as a "stepping stone." With Emergency Housing Assistance covering his application fee, security deposit, and first month's rent, he finally moved into the unit. With a Housing Choice Voucher referral pending and his restaurant job regaining hours, D hopes to stabilize here before eventually finding his own apartment.

SOHRAD first met M in early December 2020, while he sat eating outside the IFC Community Kitchen. The client reported sleeping unsheltered in his vehicle in Chapel Hill, after leaving an Oxford House following an altercation with a fellow resident. Unfortunately, due to COVID-related reductions in his contract employment, he could not afford application fees or security deposits in order to attain housing. Throughout the month, SOHRAD provided M with emergency supplies, even helping him apply for Transportation Fund assistance to repair his vehicle. In mid-January, the client located an apartment, and the program helped him apply for EHA to cover move-in fees. As of now, M has regained hours at work and hopes to reach full-time employment by February. With a pending Housing Choice Voucher application, the client hopes to finally achieve stable housing.

One morning in January 2020, two clients, S and S, laid down on E Franklin St in front of Starbucks, blocking the entrance. Shop employees began calling the police until SOHRAD luckily happened upon the scene and intervened. Staff described SOHRAD to the employees, asking that they contact the program instead of law enforcement should a similar situation occur in the future. Staff then walked with S and S down the street, explaining why they cannot loiter in those locations.

In mid-January 2020, the University Baptist Church called SOHRAD to report that a gentleman was repeatedly ringing their doorbell and requesting to meet with a female. Instead of calling the police, church staff called the program because the client sleeps unsheltered and appeared to live with mental illness. Program staff arrived at the location and de-escalated the situation, escorting S down the street. Staff and the client thereafter conversed over lunch at the IFC Community Kitchen. Although S did not want assistance at the time, staff provided him contact information for SOHRAD and other services.

After paying rent to stay at a friend's place, without ever signing a lease, H found himself unexpectedly evicted in early December 2020 and sleeping unsheltered for the third time in the last three years. Only receiving SSDI, the client could not afford fair market rent. Yet, after finally achieving sobriety and regaining a sense of stability prior to the pandemic, he refused to give up. Throughout the month, SOHRAD helped H transition from the streets into a CARES-funded hotel room and thereafter into IFC Community House for a cold-weather cot. During this time, program staff helped C apply for an apartment and request EHA to cover the application fee, security deposit, and first month's rent. As of January 2021, H is awaiting a Housing Choice Voucher, which will allow him to afford future rent.

Throughout the month of December, SOHRAD utilized CARES Act funding to move community members sleeping unsheltered into non-congregate rooms at local hotels. Approximately 25 men and 5 women accessed this program until IFC opened their cold-weather programs, with SOHRAD assisting with transportation services.

Late one evening in December 2020, SOHRAD staff approached B as Chapel Hill PD officers confronted him on E Franklin St. The officers planned to arrest the client for allegedly aggressive behavior to passersby, as well as loitering and public drinking. Upon arrival, Peer Support Navigators (PSNs) witnessed B escalating in threatening language against the officers. PSNs explained to officers that SOHRAD worked with the client and that he had another spot to sleep that evening. Officers allowed B to leave with SOHRAD, thus deflecting him from criminal justice involvement.

Following her release from prison in 2019, E had slept unsheltered in her vehicle in Hillsborough, struggling to find housing on her fixed SSI income. Responding to a Housing Helpline referral, SOHRAD first contacted E in late October 2020, thereafter helping her apply for a Housing Choice Voucher. Upon approval, the client began applying wherever she could, with SOHRAD requesting EHA to cover application fees. With a letter for reasonable accommodation, E successfully obtained an apartment in Hillsborough near where her grandmother lives, moving in shortly after the New Year. With her housing now stabilized, she hopes to focus on finishing her GED.

A week prior to Christmas 2020, SOHRAD accompanied J to retrieve the keys for their new 2-bedroom apartment. The community member began experiencing homelessness in October 2019, after his parents relocated and could no longer house him. Reporting physical disabilities, mental illness, and a fixed income, he slept unsheltered in Hillsborough until SOHRAD staff met him on his birthday a year later. Around Thanksgiving, J entered non-congregate transitional shelter at the Quality Inn, with the program thereafter helping him successfully apply for a Housing Choice Voucher. Within a few weeks, he was approved for an apartment in Hillsborough, where his children live, with SOHRAD assisting in requesting Emergency Housing Assistance to cover deposit fees, as well as reasonable accommodation for past criminal and credit history. Allowing him to further regain housing stability, the CH Criminal Justice Debt Relief Program will soon cover past court fines and DMV reinstatement fees, allowing J to obtain his Driver's License and begin working again.

On November 24, 2020, SOHRAD staff assisted the CH Crisis Unit in moving approximately 15 people sleeping atop the Wallace Deck to non-congregate shelter at the Quality Inn. In conjunction with IFC, all people moved to non-congregate shelter now have developed permanent housing plans, and some have applied for Housing Choice Vouchers.

In late fall of 2020, SOHRAD encountered B, a homeless mentally impaired individual who had been staying on Franklin Street for several months. Over a span of 2 months SOHRAD was able to track down B's legal guardian in Charlotte and his current ACT Team. SOHRAD has since been working together with the ACT Team to assist B in moving towards temporary housing.

SOHRAD Community Collaboration

The SOHRAD Team is fully integrated into the work of the Partnership to End Homelessness, the Housing and Community Development Department and the Criminal Justice Resource Department.

The SOHRAD Team has met with every patrol unit at the Chapel Hill Police Department, in addition to having a close partnership with the CHPD Crisis Unit.

The Town of Carrboro, Carrboro PD, and SOHRAD have frequently coordinated to identify new campsites that appear throughout the area. SOHRAD staff then visit these locations to connect residents with shelter, permanent housing, and additional programs. Although this might not result in an immediate relocation, these services help increase community relations and decrease law enforcement involvement.

Currently, SOHRAD is clinically working in conjunction with 5 different Community Support Teams (CST) and Assertive Community Support Teams (ACTT) on a weekly or biweekly basis. SOHRAD assists these teams in locating unsheltered CST or ACTT clients; signing important documentation and completing clinical assessments. SOHRAD is also in contact with at least 3 Cardinal Innovations (soon to be Alliance Behavioral Health) Care Coordinators in assisting with complex mental health/substance use disorder case management.

To date, SOHRAD has assisted in clinically assessing approximately 9 homeless and unsheltered individuals in the Orange County Detention Center prior to their release. SOHRAD assisted these individuals in coordinating with their attorney, friends and family appropriate and safe shelters/homes prior to their release. On occasion, transportation and cold weather supplies such as blankets, sleeping bags, tents gloves and food were provided.

Currently, SOHRAD has collaborated clinically for safe discharges from hospitals and treatment facilities such as UNC Hospitals, Triangle

Springs, Holly Hill, Old Vineyard, Maria Parham Franklin Behavioral Health, Freedom House, WakeMed Hospitals and R.J. Blackley Alcohol and Drug Abuse Treatment Center (ADATC).

SOHRAD has also assisted in providing monetary support and/or linking clients to local community agencies that aid in funding medical care for those needing psychotropic medication, to assist with every-day functioning; which has in return, has aided in avoiding any further unnecessary arrests due to mental instability. There have been at least 36 specific cases, up to date, that have resulted in deflection due to clients obtaining these medications.

SOHRAD has linked approximately 10-15 unsheltered individuals to long-term and short-term substance use disorder treatment facilities such as Freedom House, R.J. Blackley ADACT, UNC Horizons and several Oxford Houses.

SOHRAD's licensed clinical staff has also provided individual counseling services to over 48 unsheltered individuals. Linkage and coordination to other behavioral health providers such as HomeLink, Carolina Outreach, Freedom House, B&D Integrated Health Services and Carolina Behavioral Care has been provided to at least 35 program individuals.

SOHRAD has also assisted approximately 10 individuals with obtaining birth certificates, individuals with obtaining identification cards for 32 individuals and 10 more with Social Security cards and SSI/SSDI benefits.

SOHRAD has regular weekly hours at IFC's Community House.

SOHRAD has a close partnership with the Community Empowerment Fund (CEF).

SOHRAD makes referrals to the Chapel Hill Criminal Justice Debt Program, the Local Reentry Council and the Restoration Legal Counsel program.

Community Support

"SOHRAD's work has been vital to providing support and resources to the most vulnerable members of our community. In one short year, contact has been made with over 100 individuals. We must continue to increase this impact by funding this initiative for years to come."

Dawna Jones, President, Chapel Hill-Carrboro NAACP Branch

"Last year, the Orange County Bail/Bond Justice (OCBBJ) Board wholeheartedly supported the Street Outreach and Harm Reduction Deflection Program implemented by the Orange County Criminal Justice Resources Department and Partnership to End Homelessness. This diversion program aids rather than criminalizes people with mental health, substance use, and poverty issues. We are grateful for all the aid and support you have provided -- shelter, treatment, housing, jobs, and so much more."

We also appreciate you collaborating with OCBBJ to identify people who might benefit from our Bail Assistance Fund. The Street Outreach and Harm Reduction Deflection Program, based on proven best practices in other communities, is a priority for our Board and reflects recommendations in our Court Observation Report released in February, 2020. We are aware that the program funding expires in September of this year. We urge that this well-planned, broadly-supported, and much needed program be funded next year (and beyond) by Orange County, the Towns of Carrboro, Chapel Hill, and Hillsborough, and our law enforcement agencies. OCBBJ also supports the larger vision and longer-term recommendations discussed in the Street Outreach and Harm Reduction Deflection proposal (including a day center with integrated services, expanded access to shelter, and a fully funded, best practice rapid re-housing program).

These actions, together, will support the OCBBJ goals of investing in community healthcare services that divert people from the criminal justice system. We know there are many competing demands on the budget, but this is an investment worth making."

Kimberly Brewer, Chair, Orange County Bail/Bond Justice

"On the evening of January 7th, I was walking with my nine-year-old daughter on Franklin Street when we came across a man sleeping on the window ledge of Sutton's Drug Store. It was cold -- somewhere in the low- to mid-40's -- and he did not have gloves, a blanket, or a hat. I was concerned about him sleeping in that weather, and I tried to rouse him to see if he wanted help trying to find a warmer place to sleep that night. I wasn't successful. I didn't want to call 911. I was worried that a police or paramedic encounter wouldn't be helpful to the man -- he was African American and looked as if he might be unsheltered. My concern was that those factors could lead to an interaction that could create further harm or trauma, even if the police or medical responders were not ill-intentioned. But I also did not want to walk away and do nothing.

I called my colleague and friend, Caitlin Fenhagen, and when I asked her for ideas, she suggested that I contact the Street Outreach, Harm Reduction, and Deflection Program. I called SOHRAD, and the person I spoke with was a skilled listener, immediately responsive, and kind. Within 10-15 minutes, someone had appeared at Sutton's (I had stuck around in case s/he had questions) and was talking with the man. I could hear what sounded like shouting from the man initially; he seemed agitated. But the SOHRAD representative calmly talked with the man, standing a socially-distant length away but no more -- he exhibited through his body language that he was interested and attentive, but not domineering. Eventually, the man seemed to become calmer. I left while they were still talking, confident that the man would either be assisted in finding a shelter bed or would at least have had that option presented to him.

I learned later that the SOHRAD representative, through dialogue and engagement with the man, had successfully suggested and obtained a cold weather cot at IFC. SOHRAD also provided him transportation there by the 8:00 pm deadline. I was very happy to hear of this resource; our community is much better off for having SOHRAD. It is unacceptable for law enforcement to be the only response for the social problems that arise from poverty, high housing prices, mental health challenges, or substance use."

Barbara Fedders, Carrboro resident, Assistant Professor, University of North Carolina School of Law

"The Street Outreach, Harm Reduction & Deflection program in Orange County is demonstrating that reaching out to individuals experiencing homelessness who often also are experiencing behavioral health issues offers great promise. The literature in this area supports street outreach as an evidence-based practice leading to the benefits that are being demonstrated now by this program. Moreover, street outreach reduces the burden on law

enforcement (reduced law enforcement calls) while providing opportunities to help individuals access the support and care they need to improve their situation on a sustainable basis."

**Tony Marimpietri, NAMI-Orange County, Board Member
Orange County Behavioral Health Task Force, Chair of the Crisis-Diversion Facility Subcommittee**

"The Carrboro Housing and Community Services Department is supportive and appreciative of the work of the SOHRAD team. We have contacted them a couple of times over the past few months and they are a responsive and excellent resource for our community."

Rebecca Buzzard, Housing & Community Services Director, Town of Carrboro

"SOHRAD lives up to its name! IFC has worked with the team since its inception, offering our unsheltered neighbors street-based services until housing or shelter is available. SOHRAD staff have the flexibility to go where people are - camps, street corners, community organizations - and make connections. They bring sleeping bags, socks, hand sanitizer and other supplies, and link folks to resources for housing, medical, mental health, and substance use support. One of our favorite things about the team is that they can take calls that police would otherwise respond to. We know that unsheltered people need house keys, not handcuffs. That's why SOHRAD is so rad!"

Jackie Jenks, President & CEO, IFC (Inter-Faith Council for Social Service), Carrboro

"Having the SOHRAD team has been an integral part of our community being able to connect our most vulnerable to services in the community. When unsheltered members of our community show up at our CEF office, it's been a fast and seamless connection to SOHRAD that can make a difference to that person."

Donna Carrington, Executive Director, Community Empowerment Fund

The Downtown Partnership is so grateful to have the SOHRAD program building relationships and connecting those in need to services in Orange County. For decades our businesses and community members have been asking for a proactive approach to helping people get off the street and into stable and supportive housing. We hope this investment in the SOHRAD team continues, and other supportive services are expanded so that the neediest in our community are not left to sleep on Franklin Street and panhandle for their dinner."

Matt Gladdek, Executive Director, Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership

Staff Biographies



Tiffany Hall

Harm Reduction Clinical Coordinator

Ms. Hall graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill in 2004 with degrees in English and African-American Studies. She holds a Master's Degree from North Carolina A&T in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. She is a Licensed Clinical Addictions Specialist (LCAS) and a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor Associate (LCMHCA). Ms. Hall has over 12 years of experience working directly with individuals with mental health and substance use issues. Ms. Hall worked at Holly Hill Hospital as an inpatient therapist from 2017 to 2020, where she provided clinical assessments, treatment plans, case management, resource linkage and group therapy for individuals with significant behavioral health concerns, many of whom were experiencing homelessness and had justice involvement. Ms. Hall has also worked as a therapist at Insight Professional Counseling Services and Trinity Behavioral Healthcare. Ms. Hall is proficient in Spanish and is committed to working with vulnerable populations.



Don Hardin

Peer Support Navigator

Mr. Hardin has lived experience with homelessness and substance use. He has been in recovery for 7 years and is a North Carolina Certified Peer Support Specialist. Mr. Hardin has served as the Health Care Program Manager at Freedom House in Durham since 2015. In that position, Mr. Hardin taught and promoted recovery, wellness and self-advocacy to individuals with long-term substance use. Since 2018, Mr. Hardin has also worked with Josh's Hope in the Foundations for Hope Jail Peer Support program at the Orange County Detention Center. In that role, he has led weekly recovery group meetings at the Detention Center. Mr. Hardin is very familiar with area resources and providers and is dedicated to supporting and empowering individuals in their recovery and well-being.



Brandon Morande

Peer Support Navigator

Mr. Morande graduated from Bowdoin College in Maine in 2019 with degrees in Sociology and Latin American Studies. He has lived experience with housing insecurity and spent his undergraduate years studying homelessness and strategies for addressing it effectively. He worked with Maine Medical Center's Homeless Health Partners to connect people living on the street with health services. Following graduation, Mr. Morande was awarded a Fellowship to study peer-based homeless organizations around the world. He moved to Chapel Hill in August with his partner and sought this position because of his passion for linking unsheltered neighbors with housing services and enabling them to creatively voice their own experiences in a relationship-based model. Mr. Morande is fluent in Spanish.

SOHRAD Program Phone:

919-886-3351

SOHRAD Program Email:

SOHRAD@orangecountync.gov

Need for Street Outreach, Harm Reduction and Deflection Program:

Since 2017, each year people with lived experience of homelessness, housing and homeless service providers, the Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness, and other community stakeholders have identified a street outreach program as a gap in the Orange County homeless service system -- <https://www.ocpehnc.com/gaps-analysis>. Orange County has had proven success with a street outreach program, connecting people living unsheltered with services and housing, administered by Housing for New Hope -- this program ended when Housing for New Hope ended work in Orange County in 2016.

In April 2019, over thirty community stakeholders from the criminal justice system, healthcare, behavioral health system, and housing came together to participate in the Orange County Sequential Intercept Mapping Workshop facilitated by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. A systems intercept map and Final Report were created (SIM Final Report) and one of the identified community gaps that emerged from this process was the need to divert people who are high utilizers of the courts, health care, and homelessness systems from further criminal justice contact.

At the same time, stakeholders from the criminal justice system including law enforcement, the District Attorney's office, the Orange County Criminal Justice Resource Department (CJRD), and criminal justice reform advocates are seeking to expand harm reduction deflection efforts in Orange County. The current pre-arrest diversion program administered by the CJRD (OC PAD) allows for law enforcement to divert first-offenders, but the OC PAD Advisory Committee, District Attorney's Office and all law enforcement chiefs have endorsed proceeding with a plan to expand to a separate harm reduction track, which would allow for diversion for low level offenses committed by individuals impacted by behavioral health concerns, homelessness and prior criminal justice involvement. These individuals will be linked to appropriate resources and will avoid the trauma of arrest, short-term incarceration and justice system involvement. This harm reduction model of diversion moves away from ineffective punitive models and unnecessary law enforcement response and increases public safety, enhances stability and improves public health.

With the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020, homeless service providers reduced, changed, and eliminated existing services to comply with social distancing and other response recommendations. As a result, existing homeless service gaps, have been exacerbated and deepened. On any given night, there are thirty to forty people living unsheltered in Orange County. We have not seen these numbers increase during the COVID-19 response and recovery period, due to the incredible work and commitment of Orange County Government stakeholders and community advocates. However, the population experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity remains highly vulnerable and it is critical that this commitment to housing and shelter continue.

Research shows that street outreach programs that link people with housing improve health outcomes and positively impact spending in other sections including healthcare and the criminal justice system. In addition, recent national incidents of police brutality have led to a new urgency in addressing systemic racism in policing and a conversation about reinvestment in communities. Increasing therapeutic responses and deflection from the criminal justice system, where it is safe and appropriate, have been widely considered an evidence-based best practice for improved outcomes for individuals. Reimagining law enforcement as one of the conduits for referring people in crisis to behavioral health treatment experts and peer support is an important example of a reinvestment in impacted communities. In fact, Governor Roy Cooper's Task Force on Racial Equity in Criminal Justice specifically recommends that communities consider alternatives to law enforcement responses and increased deflection for low-level offenders. https://ncdoj.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/TRECReportFinal_12132020.pdf

The Street Outreach, Harm Reduction and Deflection (SOHRAD) program was designed with community partners and uses national best practices. The program works best while addressing other behavioral health and homeless system gaps, including a crisis-diversion facility, a day center with integrated services, expanded access to shelter, and a fully funded, best practice rapid re-housing program.

Grant funding from the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services allowed for the implementation of SOHRAD in October 2020, Orange County is providing funding for a three position SOHRAD program through June 2022 via American Rescue Plan funds.

Street Outreach, Harm Reduction and Deflection Program Design

SOHRAD uses a relationship-based model to engage with people living unsheltered or at risk of homelessness in Orange County and provides connections appropriate to each client, including:

- Housing resources
- Permanent housing programs
- Food and supplies
- Medical care for physical and behavioral health needs
- Therapeutic treatment and services
- Mainstream resources, like SNAP, WIC, etc.
- Employment and training programs
- SOAR for SSI/SSDI disability benefits

Staff of the SOHRAD program also provide direct support in a variety of ways, including:

- Making visits to campsites, hospitals, and jail
- Offer transportation for appointments
- Provide assistance in completing applications

- Help with obtaining personal identification materials and documents
- Serving as point of contact for downtown businesses and other community stakeholders interested in unsheltered homelessness
- Coordinating within established networks and meeting spaces of the Orange County Criminal Justice Resource Department and Partnership to End Homelessness

Orange County designed a street outreach program inclusive of the core elements of effective street outreach including a program that is:

- Systematic, coordinated, and comprehensive
- Housing-focused
- Person-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive, and
- Emphasizes safety using harm reduction

SOHRAD helps all people in Orange County who are living unsheltered. This means staff works outside of traditional business hours, and going out into the community to meet people where they are instead of expecting people to come to agencies. The peer support navigators working within the Orange County Housing & Community Development Department alongside the Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness collaborate closely with the Clinical Harm Reduction Deflection Coordinator working in the Criminal Justice Resource Department. All three positions are embedded in the communities they serve. The Peer Navigators provide peer support and direct engagement with those they serve. The clinical position works with court system and law enforcement stakeholders to ensure that harm reduction deflection is inclusive, equitable and operating with trauma-informed and evidence-based best practices. In addition, this position, in collaboration with the peer support navigators, offers opportunities for assessment, individualized programming referrals and case management to the individuals that would have otherwise been cited or charged by law enforcement.

Staffing overview:

TITLE	NUMBER OF STAFF	LOCATION
Harm Reduction Deflection Coordinator	1	OC Criminal Justice Resource Department
Street Outreach Peer Support Navigators	3	OC Housing & Community Development with OC Partnership to End Homelessness

Understanding that there are a disproportionate number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness who are Black or African-American, the Street Outreach program operates with a racial equity lens. The program will regularly examine data by race on program practices and on the street outreach impacts on homeless system performance measures to examine how racial equity is enhanced through peer and therapeutic outreach and deflection from law enforcement.

The combination of Street Outreach Peer Navigators and a Clinical Harm Reduction Deflection Coordinator filled two critical gaps in Orange County and ensures that unsheltered individuals and those at risk of police and justice system involvement due to homelessness or behavioral health concerns will be offered peer support, connections to resources and deflection from law enforcement and the criminal justice system.