

Lutheran Social Services Youth Programs Street Outreach Program

Provides street based outreach services to homeless and runaway youth under the age of 24. Outreach workers assist in obtaining temporary/transitional housing, provide a positive adult presence on the streets, offer youth counseling services, basic needs support and serve as a bridge between street youth and community resources. If non-youth experiencing homelessness are encountered, they will be informed of resources and informed of the appropriate Area Coordinated Entry Intake Point.

Day	Time	Outreach Locations
Tuesday (Week 1)	3:30-4:30 pm	Hutchinson Public Library
Tuesdays (Week 1)	7:00 pm – 9:00 pm	during warmer months; Fair grounds, Mall parking lot, Laundry Mats, Parks (drive through for youth sleeping)
Wednesday (Week 1)	11:30 – 12:30pm 4:30 – 6:30 pm	Willmar High School, ALC, Willmar YMCA, Skate Park, Plaza one, Kandi Mall
Friday (Week 1)	7:00 – 9:00 pm	Stingers baseball games, Football games. School sporting events that draw large crowds.
Tuesday (Week 2)	7:00-8:00pm	Rice Park, Skate Park, WEAC, Kandi mall, RBI
Saturday (Week 2)	7:00am- 8:00am	Robbins Island, Downtown Willmar, Local parks
Tuesday (Week 3)	3:30-4:30 pm	Hutchinson Public Library
Wednesday (Week 3)	6:00-7:00pm	Epic
Thursday (Week 3)		Willmar YMCA, Skate Park
Friday (Week 3)	5:00 – 7:00 pm	Plaza one, Kandi Mall, Stingers baseball games, Football games. School sporting events that draw large crowds.
Saturday (Week 3)	1:00 – 3:00pm	Games Lake/ Green Lake, Mill Pond, Deep freeze (NL) and walking trail

During spring, summer, and fall this is the schedule that will be followed. Outreach workers will also spend time at the county fair, and community events such as Cinco De Mayo festival, annual community day, and other local events especially the free events that draw large crowds. Outreach workers will spend time on the streets, vacant lots, businesses that are open 24 hours, and locations that have been identified as locations for homeless youth. During the winter months outreach workers will continue to explore the above areas. However, the majority of outreach street hours will be spent on the indoor locations. Stops at 24 hour

businesses, laundry mats, coffee shops, libraries, YMCA, indoor ice rinks, and school events will still be attended.

Any youth who self identifies as homeless, precariously housed, or at risk of homelessness will be provided outreach services to begin to build relationships and meet their immediate needs, while eventually working to connect them with a range of services including housing. Prior to providing emergency housing or hotel vouchers, LSS Willmar Youth Programs will assist the youth to attempt to locate any other safe temporary housing options, including contacting parents or extended family members, when safe and appropriate.

There will be no residency requirements for service. LSS Willmar Youth Programs is the only youth-specific agency in the southwest CoC region. One other agency provides a youth housing component, but otherwise serves adults. Furthermore, this other agency is located in Lyon County and does not serve the six counties included in this proposal. Youth who are located in one of the counties we serve will have the entire array of offered services available to them. Youth residing in other counties not specifically listed in this proposal will be served with referrals, information and assistance by phone to locate appropriate services in their community.

The Willmar Street Outreach Program (SOP) is built on the philosophy that youth should be afforded the opportunity to build trusting relationships with caring adults as a first step toward encouraging young people to leave the life on the streets. SOP staff build these relationships by consistently spending time in areas in which youth frequent and by ensuring that referral sources are aware of services available to youth. Outreach activities are conducted during rotating scheduled periods of time in specific geographic areas to meet the needs of a large geographic area paired with visits to pertinent local service providers and businesses. The schedule is somewhat flexible in order to meet community needs, but hours are typically rotated between day and evening hours Monday through Friday and some Saturday hours. During service hours, Outreach Workers will be present and will conduct crisis intervention, supply basic needs assistance, build relationships with youth on the streets, and work to connect youth to supportive adults, services and housing options. Staff will target different areas of local communities where young people typically gather: downtown areas, local libraries, skate parks, city/county parks, ball fields, school grounds, community events/fairs, food shelves, housing developments, and shopping centers. A detailed initial outreach schedule is provided, however Outreach staff continually have their ears and eyes open to learn of other areas in which youth congregate, both from the youth themselves and from other community contacts, so the schedule is subject to change based on youth congregating patterns.

Moreover, in rural areas homeless youth SOP staff conduct extensive community outreach to: schools, churches, law enforcement, support groups, parent groups, county and social service organizations, student service groups, and mental health providers. Teachers, pastors, employers, law enforcement, social service providers and other community members serve as an important extension of the direct youth outreach effort carried out by staff. Staff members continue to participate in regular speaking engagements, talking directly with hundreds of

people each year. Program literature, posters, and regional resource directories are distributed through speaking engagements, and to businesses and local resource agencies. SOP is listed in the National Runaway Hotline, and on the LSS website. The program is also active on Facebook.

For youth in crisis or desiring more intensive services, LSS staff will offer case management services and will complete an initial assessment to determine: adult connections, financial resources, immediate housing needs, education and training needs, employment, transportation, current medical and mental health needs and chemical dependency issues.

LSS Willmar Youth Program staff possess a 24 hour cell phone for youth emergencies that is rotated between staff members. Staff hours are flexible to meet the needs of the youth that we serve and include scheduled evening and weekend hours so that staff are present during out of school times to connect with youth and attend community events. Below is an example of a three-week outreach schedule, which will be used as a guide for street outreach if this proposal is funded as requested.

Case management includes intake, assessment of basic needs, referrals, education, independent living skills plan development, service coordination, and monitoring of goal achievement. When a youth demonstrates need and openness to receiving case management services, the process begins with an intake, through which youth self-report information that helps staff members identify strengths, challenges, security threats, and key opportunities for personal development. Following the intake, each youth's individual needs are addressed and prioritized according to severity in the form of an individualized goal plan. The goal plan identifies recommended services and supports to help youth achieve goals related to safety, well-being, self-sufficiency, and permanent connections to caring adults. Youth play an active role in writing their goal plans. Case management includes referrals to appropriate community resources and case coordination of services to assist youth in achieving goals and securing stable housing. Examples of referrals include: education, employment programs, health, and mental/chemical health treatment programs.

After the screening and assessment process youth may receive one or more of the following services, depending on what is determined to be the most appropriate type and level of assistance:

- Case management
- Advocacy and referral services
- Access to housing resources
- Access to Mental and chemical health services
- Access to employment resources
- Outreach
- Food
- Recreational activities
- Access to medical and dental care
- Phone
- Transportation
- Family reunification services

- Access to Individual, family and group counseling
- Crisis intervention and conflict mediation
- Access to mainstream resources
- Temporary housing
- Basic needs supplies

Purpose of services

The purpose of case management services is to provide the support and resources youth need to ensure their basic needs are met, facilitate the acquisition of stable housing, and prepare them for long-term stability and self-sufficiency.

Frequency of contacts

Case managers will encourage weekly contact with each youth on their case load; however actual contact will be based on the youth's preference and needs. Whenever possible, contact is made in person, which helps to model trust and build rapport between youth and LSS staff members. Telephone is typically the second preferred form of communication for case management, but other means are also used when in-person or phone communication is not possible (e-mail, social networking site, voicemail, etc.).