

**DHS-PB-2023-011**

<p><b>SUBJECT:</b></p> <p>Street Homeless Solutions Engagement with Families with Minor Children or Minors Appearing to be Experiencing Street Homelessness</p>	<p><b>APPLICABLE TO:</b></p> <p>Street Homeless Solutions Outreach teams and Division of Family Services intake staff</p>	<p><b>ISSUED:</b></p> <p>July 17, 2023</p>
<p><b>ADMINISTERED BY:</b></p> <p>Street Homeless Solutions          Division of Family Services</p>	<p><b>APPROVED BY:</b></p> <p>Joslyn Carter, Administrator          Department of Homeless Services</p>	

■ **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this procedure is to provide instruction to the Department of Homeless Services (“DHS”) Street Homeless Solutions (“SHS”) outreach teams on how to assist families with minor children (“family” or “families”) or minors they encounter during outreach and appear to be experiencing street homelessness. Although minors are very rarely seen experiencing unsheltered homelessness, DHS has developed this procedure in conjunction with the Administration for Children Services (ACS) to be prepared for these extremely unusual circumstances.

This procedure does not preclude a family experiencing street homelessness from applying for services at the Prevention Assistance and Temporary Housing (PATH) intake center of their own accord. This procedure also does not preclude a minor, runaway and/or homeless youth from applying for services at the Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD). Prior notice from an SHS outreach team is not required.

## ■ PROCEDURE

### I. OUTREACH ENGAGEMENT

#### A. Families

If an outreach team encounters a family who appears to be experiencing unsheltered homelessness, the team will attempt to engage the family including assessing if there are minors in need of care. If the outreach team determines that a minor in the family needs care, and refuses to engage with the outreach team, the team must call 911 and the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) at 1-800-342-3720 providing their contact information and as much information as possible about the family.

##### 1. Families that do not engage

Some families may not want to engage with an outreach team, provide detailed information about their circumstances, or accept services. In these cases, the outreach team will update their tracker with any identifying information about the family and share with both the New York Police Department (NYPD) and Administration for Children Services (ACS) staff who respond to the SCR call. If the family refuses shelter services and leaves the area prior to further engagement, the outreach team will return to the location to attempt to locate and re-engage with the family.

##### 2. Families that accept shelter service

- If a family is willing to enter a DHS shelter, the outreach worker will call the manager on duty (MOD) at the Joint Command Center (JCC) at 212-607-6040 to inform them that the family wants to accept shelter.
- The JCC MOD will contact the PATH MOD informing them that an unsheltered family will be applying for shelter.
- The JCC MOD sends PATH any identifying information about the family including previous shelter history and the family's estimated time of arrival.
- The outreach team will transport the family to PATH and will remain with the family to provide a warm handoff for the intake application.

#### B. Minors who appear to be by themselves

If an outreach team encounters a minor aged 0-17 who appears to be by themselves, they must call the SCR<sup>1</sup> and NYPD, if NYPD is not working alongside the outreach team. The outreach team will work in conjunction with SCR and NYPD to determine next steps for engaging the minor. If the minor is aged 14-17, outreach may also provide information to NYPD and the minor about a Department of Youth and Community Development drop-in center.

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<sup>1</sup> If Outreach doesn't receive a follow-up call from ACS, they may call ACS' Office of Safety First Hotline at 718-KID-SAFE (718-543-7233) Monday - Friday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm for an update.

## **II. PATH PROCESSING FOR FAMILIES ASSISTED BY SHS OUTREACH TEAMS**

Families brought to PATH by an outreach team will be granted a conditional placement. A PATH supervisor must place appropriate notes in CARES (THA) to document the information reported by the applicants and/or the outreach team.

PATH staff will refer families to the onsite ACS staff during ACS' hours of operation. If the household arrives after ACS' business hours, PATH staff will refer the family to be screened by ACS on the next business day. DHS and ACS will work together to determine the required services for the family.

*Effective Immediately*