

Law enforcement perspectives on homelessness and overdose

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Project overview: The [Overdose Response Strategy](#) and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are doing a study about overdose among people experiencing homelessness. The goal of the study is to improve services for people experiencing homelessness who use drugs. We are interested in hearing from law enforcement who work in communities where homelessness is common. We are interested in your opinion. There are no right or wrong answers.

Risks and Discomforts: You will be asked about your experiences and perspectives. There may be some questions you do not want to answer.

Benefits: There is no direct benefit to you for participating in this study. The information you give us will help improve services for people experiencing homelessness who use drugs. This includes helping law enforcement feel more informed and better prepared when serving people experiencing homelessness who use drugs. Findings from this study could lead to fewer overdoses in your community.

Compensation: This survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. You will not be compensated for your time.

Confidentiality: Your individual responses will be confidential and anonymous. Your name and agency will never be linked to your responses.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal from the Study: Participation is voluntary. You may stop the survey at any time without penalty. You may skip questions that you do not wish to answer.

Contact Information

Contact the project lead at 470-851-6012 if you have any questions about this project or your part in it.

If you agree to participate in the survey, check this box.

* Do you agree to participate in the survey?

I consent to participate in the survey.

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How many years have you been working in law enforcement? (Please only enter number of years).

In what state is your office located?

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In what ZIP code is your office located? (Enter 5-digit ZIP code; for example, 00544 or 94305. You may leave this field blank if you prefer not to answer.)

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What is your role?

- Commissioner
- Police chief
- Sheriff
- Deputy sheriff, patrol officer, or trooper
- Sergeant, lieutenant, or other supervisory role
- Detective or investigator
- Other (please specify)

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Within the last 3 months, about how many times did you respond to a call for service involving a person experiencing homelessness who uses drugs?

Within the past 3 months, how frequently did the following outcomes occur during your field encounters with persons experiencing homelessness who use drugs:

	Never	About 10% of the time	About 25% of the time	About 50% of the time	About 75% of the time	About 90% of the time	Always
EMS arrived on scene	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arrest or citation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Encampment was cleared	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Person was relocated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Person was referred to services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bystanders were referred to services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Law enforcement administered or left behind naloxone (Narcan)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No action taken	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Does your department have a community outreach or emergency response team to respond to calls for service involving people experiencing homelessness?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Explain if unsure

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Who is on this team? Check all that apply:

- Officers
- Peer navigators
- Social workers
- Clinicians
- Other (please specify)

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On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being almost no knowledge and 5 being very knowledgeable, please select the response that best represents your **current level of knowledge** about each of the following programs or services for people experiencing homelessness who use drugs.

	1: Almost no knowledge	2: A little knowledge	3: Somewhat knowledgeable	4: Knowledgeable	5: Very knowledgeable	Prefer not to answer
Housing programs with few, if any, preconditions to entry (e.g., abstinence)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Substance use disorder treatment that incorporates harm reduction, walk-in services, and same-day medication initiation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sanctioned encampments or encampment resolution programs (e.g., programs that resolve encampments by assessing individual needs, connecting to services, and providing safe, stable, and dignified housing)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Naloxone distribution or leave behind	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drug-checking services (i.e., harm reduction practice in which people check to see if drugs contain certain substances)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Homeless outreach/response teams	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Deflection/pre-arrest diversion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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In response to calls for service involving people experiencing homelessness who use drugs, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree, **to what extent do you disagree/agree** that law enforcement should:

	1: Strongly disagree	2: Disagree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	4: Agree	5: Strongly agree	I don't know	Prefer not to answer
Dispatch a homeless outreach/response team as opposed to law enforcement if there is no acute safety issue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Refer to treatment or case management if there is no probable cause for arrest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Refer to naloxone services if there is no probable cause for arrest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Refer to treatment or case management in lieu of arrest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clear a homeless encampment, if applicable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Make an arrest for unlawful sleeping, camping, eating, sitting, or panhandling in public spaces, if applicable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Administer naloxone in the event of an overdose	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Distribute or leave behind naloxone to people experiencing homelessness who use drugs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree, please rate **to what extent you disagree/agree** with the following statements based on your personal and professional experience with people experiencing homelessness who use drugs. There are no right or wrong answers. Please feel comfortable sharing your views.

	1: Strongly disagree	2: Disagree	3: Neither agree nor disagree	4: Agree	5: Strongly agree	I don't know	Prefer not to answer
Persons experiencing homelessness who are addicted to drugs are usually responsible for their own condition.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Those who become homeless and addicted to drugs are those who lack the work ethic needed to get "clean" and find housing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Those experiencing homelessness who are addicted to drugs are self-harming persons who exacerbate (make worse) their own condition.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Treating persons experiencing homelessness who are addicted to drugs seems futile (incapable of producing any useful result).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Full recovery from drug addiction is impossible.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most people who become homeless and addicted to drugs stay homeless and addicted to drugs for life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am going to need more training before I would feel confident to refer someone experiencing homelessness to drug treatment or social services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know very little about how to refer someone experiencing homelessness to drug treatment or social services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would be able to respond effectively to someone who asks for drug treatment or social services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Have you received training in the past two years on how to help people experiencing homelessness reduce overdose risk?

Yes

No

Are you interested in receiving future trainings on how to help people experiencing homelessness reduce overdose risk?

Yes

No

What barriers would or does your department face in helping reduce overdose among people experiencing homelessness? Check all that apply.

Lack of funding

No departmental policy about helping reduce overdose among people experiencing homelessness (e.g., making referrals to drug treatment or case management, naloxone administration or distribution, etc.)

Lack of access to naloxone to administer or distribute

Lack of services (e.g., treatment, case management, social services, etc.) in the community to connect people to

Lack of homeless outreach/response team in our community

Lack of training in how to help reduce overdose among people experiencing homelessness

People experiencing homelessness refuse offers to be helped

Homelessness is not perceived as a priority issue in our community

Overdose among people experiencing homelessness is not perceived as a priority issue in our community

Stigma toward people experiencing homelessness who use drugs

Other (please specify)

What support from public health, policymakers, or other law enforcement agencies would help you address the needs of people experiencing homelessness who use drugs?

Is there anything else you'd like us to know or that you would recommend to help reduce overdose among people experiencing homelessness?

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