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Collaborating Homeless Outreach in Broward County: A Law Enforcement and Social Services Engagement

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Collaborating Homeless Outreach in Broward County: A Law Enforcement and Social Services Engagement

by

Edward N. Rafailovic

A Dissertation Presented to the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences of Nova Southeastern University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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This dissertation was submitted by Edward N. Rafailovic under the direction of the chair of the dissertation committee listed below. It was submitted to the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and approved in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family and friends for enduring my long journey of graduate studies. Thank you for the love, support, and motivation to keep me moving forward. Your understanding in my long journey has made it all worthwhile.
Acknowledgments

From the moment I started in graduate school, Dr. Judith McKay was my guiding light. She inspired me to become more than I thought I could be and challenged me to use my knowledge, skills, and abilities into my education in ways that I never thought possible. Her support and unwavering dedication helped give me the direction I needed to reach this milestone in my life and I am forever grateful she was my dissertation Chair.

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Abstract

In Broward County, Florida, over 2,600 individuals experience homelessness daily (Broward Regional Health Planning Council, 2015). Both positive and negative publicity have resulted, based on how local governments have addressed the problem using law enforcement. The typical cycle of homelessness often results in arrests for life-sustaining misdemeanor crimes that would be better suited for diversion into social services. A recent phenomenon between law enforcement and social services emerged in Broward County to help problem-solve reducing criminal recidivism of the homeless. The focus of this study was the collaboration in Broward County between law enforcement and social services to improve communication between the agencies, leading to the reduction of criminal recidivism of homeless individuals. Using a case study methodology, archival data and other documents were collected and analyzed. The study included a comparison between the Broward Sheriff’s Office and the Houston Police Department. Both communities have significant homeless populations, both are multicultural, and both have collaborations between law enforcement and social services to address homelessness. The approaches used by the Broward Sheriff’s Office include specialized training for mental health and homeless outreach. These approaches appear to be the impetus of their successes, which show reductions of up to 21% since 2013 of their at-large (no fixed address) inmates in their jail population (Broward Sheriff’s Office, 2017). This case study suggests recommendations for law enforcement training, impacts of law enforcement collaborations with social services, and impacts of law enforcement utilizing case management systems.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter Introduction

The plight of the homeless is one of our nation’s greatest social issues, and one that South Florida law enforcement has historically had difficulties addressing (Huriash, 2017). The homeless population, for a variety of reasons, consumes a disproportionate amount of public safety resources. Focusing on social service issues such as homelessness is often at conflict with the mission of law enforcement organizations to utilize their limited and costly resources in the most efficient manner possible. Coupled with this are the difficult challenges of meeting the expectations and often conflicting demands of politics, commerce, and community leadership, as well as advocates for the homeless, social service providers, and the individuals experiencing homelessness (Police Chief Magazine Online, 2014).

One of the most common issues that results from individuals experiencing homelessness include being arrested. Arrests of individuals experiencing homelessness make it troublesome for them to maintain their job or gain one. The catalyst for arrest usually stems from these individuals conducting life sustaining functions that are seemingly misdemeanor via-vis ordinance offenses, but ultimately are causal to their life sustainment.

Ending the cycle of homelessness means helping an individual who is homeless and is arrested for low-level crimes and then released from jail, only to be re-arrested again. This recidivism has become commonplace for a law enforcement response and a near requisite in the wake of disparity by law enforcement seeking to maintain an
acceptable social order balance between the needs of the community and the needs of public safety (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2010).

Seemingly, the issue of homelessness is hidden in plain sight, leaving a void of social services and humanity. In societal terms, a gap in a system means a gap of care that represents a persistent problem in the everyday lives of individuals experiencing homelessness. The gap is described as a place where individuals who experience homelessness in Broward County, Florida, are invisible to society. The social injustices allow their languishing bodies to alter their mortality that can lead to their death much sooner than the average person.

Moreover, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2016), the homeless, compared to the general populace, are at greater risk for infections and chronic illness, poor mental health, and substance abuse. The CDC (2016) reported that the homeless have a mortality rate that is “four and nine times higher than those who are not.” This is a humanitarian crisis that continues in nearly every city in Broward County, Florida.

Figure 1. Photo 1. Note. Pictured is a Deputy Sheriff of the Broward Sheriff’s Office speaking with an unknown individual. Taken from Morris (2016).
Statement of the Problem

Individuals experiencing homelessness struggle daily to survive. They are affected by their inability to preserve their own independence and self-worth during difficult times. They reside in every state of the United States, although circumstances change for everyone and no quantifiable number can be ascertained for the hundreds of thousands of people experiencing homelessness during a year. The Housing and Urban Development (HUD) conducts a yearly Point-in-Time survey; the agency shared that there were 578,424 people homeless in 2014 in the United States (HUD, 2014). The number of individuals experiencing homelessness presents a special civil rights challenge to local law enforcement agencies around the nation and specifically to Broward County, as examined in this study.

For decades, jurisdictions all over the nation have worked to develop ordinances for minor crimes that advocates for the homeless would say criminalize homelessness. These crimes include laws that outlaw panhandling, loitering, sleeping in open air, storing belongings, or even sitting on sidewalks (Police Chief Magazine Online, 2014). The typical law enforcement response was to arrest an individual experiencing homelessness-regardless of the severity of the offense-and have them placed in the local jail. This quick fix, however, only leads to a continuous cycle of arrest for many of these individuals. Arrests did not solve the associated problems within the community or deal with the complexity of the problems facing the homeless, such as joblessness, domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental health issues.
This research identified a gap in the *system of care* provided in Broward County, where this study was conducted. The primary gap identified in this study is case management. While the study provides examples of successful case management in many social service cases, the lack of case management for individuals experiencing homelessness has been glaring, especially in the wake of politically feudal attempts to resolve what could simply be an assignment of case workers to individuals who are homeless as an outreach component.

According to the National Alliance on Ending Homelessness (2010), housing a person experiencing homelessness first, and then addressing substance and mental health related issues thereafter, has proven to be more effective than just waiting until the person experiencing homelessness is perfect before entry. Case management provides the assistance to marry the needs of a person experiencing homelessness and the permanent supportive housing they need. The National Alliance to End Homelessness (2010) further identifies that the past 20 years has shown cost effective solutions for the chronically homeless, keeping many of them off the streets and housed.

Due to the lack of enough case management within Broward County, there is a gap that has given way to a vacuum of individuals experiencing homelessness as they lack the advocacy necessary to be placed into housing and, in many cases, to receive services that they may qualify for. Hence, the problem underscores the necessity of case management, as it provides a homeless advocate case manager who can assess and help navigate an individual through the complexities of social services and ultimately lead individuals experiencing homelessness to the right door.
Purpose of the Study

This case study examined individuals experiencing homelessness in Broward County and investigated the barriers of law enforcement and social services in implementing case management to end the cycle of homelessness. Ending the cycle of homelessness means ending criminal recidivism attributed to the cycle of arrests and re-arrests individuals experiencing homelessness might endure because of minor crimes, usually life-sustaining misdemeanor crimes. This study investigated the conflictive barriers that exist between law enforcement and social services and defined specific roles, responsibilities, and recommendations for improving case management through law enforcement and social services.

This study focused on three research questions:

1) How can collaboration between law enforcement and social services improve their communication?

2) What is the impact of the collaboration to reduce criminal recidivism of individuals experiencing homelessness?

3) What is the impact of law enforcement utilizing social service case management systems in homeless outreach?

This dissertation highlights recommendations that seek to promote a proactive approach toward a comprehensive program to remedy a growing population in the United States and narrowly identifies these recommendations with a study of its inception in Broward County, Florida. This inception framework includes studying the reduction of the number of individuals experiencing homelessness and issues related to it. This
consists of training law enforcement with a better understanding of how to treat substance abusers and individuals with a mental health disorder. In order to realize the recommendations, stakeholders must be woven into the same fabric in which law enforcement and social services are collaboratively involved in. This collaboration is meant to be inclusive of amicably agreeing to end the cycle of homelessness synergistically.

In order to research the problem, a qualitative case study was used to describe the involvement and realistic context from both law enforcement and social services viewpoints. The research case study was based on multiple comparison case studies to include local, state, and national research that identifies with the practices of law enforcement, government, social service providers, and advocates for the homeless.

As a proposition, this case study examined the holistic impact homelessness has on law enforcement, local government, local communities, area businesses, advocates for the homeless, and individuals experiencing homelessness. It addresses what a prolonged conflict means, trying to end the cycle of homelessness with stakeholders, as well as ways in which solutions have been, and are, being developed to increase effective approaches overall.

**Definitions**

This dissertation provides numerous words and terms that are used to identify the vernacular utilized by social services. The meaning of these words can differ when taken out of the context of social services. Defining these words will help integrate their meanings within the scope of this research. The words provided are listed below:
**Chronic homelessness:** HUD defines a chronically homeless person as an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. To be considered chronically homeless, persons must have been sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., living on the streets) and/or in an emergency homeless shelter during that time (HUD, 2014).

**Consumer:** An individual or family who has or is currently experiencing homelessness (HUD, 2014).

**Continuum of Care (CoC):** A community with a unified plan to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless as they move to stable housing and maximize self-sufficiency. HUD funds many homeless programs and HMIS implementations through Continuums of Care grants (HUD, 2014).

**Disabling Condition:** A disabling condition, in reference to chronic homelessness, is defined by HUD as a diagnosable substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness or disability, including the co-occurrence of two or more of these conditions. A disabling condition limits an individual’s ability to work or perform one or more activities of daily living (HUD, 2014).

**Domestic Violence (DV):** Occurs when a family member, partner, or ex-partner attempts to physically or psychologically dominate another. This includes physical violence, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, intimidation, economic deprivation, and threats of violence. Violence can be criminal and includes physical assault (hitting, pushing,
shoving, etc.), sexual abuse (unwanted or forced sexual activity), and stalking. Although emotional, psychological, and financial abuse are not criminal behaviors, they are forms of abuse and can lead to criminal violence (HUD, 2014).

**Emergency Shelter (ES):** Any facility whose primary purpose is to provide temporary shelter for the homeless in general, or for specific populations of the homeless (HUD, 2014).

**Homeless Management Information System (HMIS):** Computerized data collection tool designed to capture client-level information over time on the characteristics and service needs of men, women, and children experiencing homelessness (HUD, 2014).

**McKinney-Vento Act:** The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan on July 22, 1987. The McKinney-Vento Act funds numerous programs providing a range of services to homeless people, including the Continuum of Care programs: the Supportive Housing Program, the Shelter Plus Care Program, and the Single Room Occupancy Program, as well as the Emergency Shelter Grant Program (HUD, 2014).

**Mental Health (MH):** The state of emotional and psychological well-being in which an individual is able to use his or her cognitive and emotional capabilities, function in society, and meet the ordinary demands of everyday life (HUD, 2014).

**Point-in-Time (PIT):** A snapshot of the homeless population taken on a given day. Since 2005, HUD requires all CoC applicants to complete this count every other
year in the last week of January. This count includes a street count, in addition to a count of all clients in emergency and transitional beds (HUD, 2014).

**Unaccompanied Youth:** Minors not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, including those living in inadequate housing such as shelters, cars, or on the streets. Also includes those who have been denied housing by their families and school-age unwed-mothers who have no housing of their own (HUD, 2014).

**U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD):** The Federal agency responsible for national policy and programs that address America's housing needs, improve and develop the Nation's communities, and enforce fair housing laws. HUD's business is helping create a decent home and suitable living environment for all Americans, and it has given America's cities a strong national voice at the Cabinet level (HUD, 2014).

**Limitations of Study**

This case study is limited mainly to the research afforded to Broward County and their ways and means of handling homelessness. This research does not source how techniques and skills evolved from the specific agencies provided. It is also limited to general categories related to homelessness, as each individual experiencing homelessness has their own personal reasons for why they became homeless. Furthermore, this study focused on individuals who are, by Florida’s legal definition, an adult of 18 years of age or older and not an unaccompanied youth.
Delimitations

In order to ensure that this research was provided with the most accuracy and to develop an actionable plan to potentially change the future of homeless outreach due to the phenomena of the findings, this study mainly focused on Broward County and the Houston Police Department’s law enforcement and social services involvement to present a system of care.

Assumptions

Due to overlap by social services and its stakeholders, it is assumed in this study that all the research provided by social services for the homeless meet the expected requirements under the HUD guidelines for their furnishings of reports and outcomes. While research can provide a better indication of trends, ultimately, individuals experiencing homelessness can increase or decrease, or simply be hidden within any specific time period as not being counted.

Additionally, the author of this study has been involved with overseeing homeless outreach in Broward County as a law enforcement supervisor. In order to ensure the effectiveness of the study, no assumptions or inferences on the outcome of the findings are included. The phenomena discoveries are only based on published case study findings and researchable information over the Internet.
Significance of Study

The traditional method of addressing complaints received from the public regarding a homeless person often include arrests for violations of ordinances related to activities such as solicitation, beverage violations, sleeping in open air, trespassing, or other arguably petty offenses. This approach may be the necessity for change, with the law enforcement attitude in dealing with the homeless being a paramount consideration for the case management solution.

With change, law enforcement can begin to both establish partnerships with homeless coalitions and identify social service resources – including homeless assistance centers (shelters). What has been profoundly counter-intuitive and costly is arresting individuals experiencing homelessness. Policies must be established to reflect the newfound recognition that the homelessness issue has not, and is not, going away, and
that innovative, problem-solving approaches need to be implemented to end the cycle of homelessness (Police Chief Magazine Online, 2014).

For any shift in a law enforcement response or approach to be successful, it must have the full backing and encouragement of the agency’s leadership. The support must then be clearly defined and codified by strong agency policies and procedures and reinforced by both the command as well as the training components of law enforcement agencies (Robert, Crawford, & Burns, 2013; Police Chief Magazine Online, 2014).

Creating comprehensive policy regarding homeless contacts and assessments establishes the type of follow-up necessary in defining how law enforcement changes its response to the issue of homelessness. This response includes learning about every individual’s unique situation and utilizing the problem-solving techniques to effectively affect change (Police Chief Magazine Online, 2014).

National research has shown that criminalization of the homeless in the United States can exacerbate the problem of homelessness. The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (2006) found that Broward County has approaches that work to reduce recidivism and increase social services using a law enforcement and social service partnership. The significance of this partnership is the core of the phenomena that has reduced, and in many cases ended, the cycle of homelessness for individuals experiencing homelessness in Broward County (National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, 2006). This approach has included diversion into social services by law enforcement as an option in lieu of the homeless individual being incarcerated and entering the criminal justice system.
According to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) (2016), there is research that shows a correlation existing between homelessness and incarceration. The National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) provided estimates showing that “one in five people living prison becomes homeless upon reentry into the community, with an increase of 30-50 percent in major urban areas” (n.p.). The establishment of programs such as Permanent Supportive Housing and Pay for Success strategies are meant to reduce homelessness by making communities safer via diminishing recidivism and overall victimization; assisting those who return from prison and jail to be productive citizens; and to also save taxpayer dollars by lowering direct and collateral costs of incarceration and services.

The challenges law enforcement continually face becomes a balancing act, weighing out the intrusive and demanding nature of law enforcement while maintaining the civil rights of citizens in order to resolve problems. With a renewed emphasis on law enforcement building relationships within communities, a conflict resolution strategy of collaboration becomes the key for problem-solving quality of life issues. Ironically, social services, homeless advocates, and individuals experiencing homelessness have expressed concern as to whether law enforcement officers are really a resource for help or a hindrance in their plight (Robert, Crawford, & Burns, 2013).

The concern of law enforcement involvement in ending the cycle of homelessness is ironic, as many individuals experiencing homelessness might end up incarcerated by the same law enforcement trying to help them. This highlights the very nature of this
research regarding the positional authority law enforcement has and its nexus to conduct social services on the street to individuals experiencing homelessness in lieu of being the enforcer of the law.

Central to the schema of helping an individual experiencing homelessness is trust. It takes specialized skills that are necessary by law enforcement to establish trust and build a rapport so that problem-solving can begin. For law enforcement to be effective, trust has to be developed in order to conduct a social services needs assessment when conducting street outreach (Schutt Garrett, & Blankeney, 1992, p. 126). This kind of relationship is no different than when someone seeks out a doctor, lawyer, or other professional for assistance and decides if they can trust them.

Negative encounters by individuals experiencing homelessness may erode trust and paint the perception that law enforcement cannot help them. This reaffirmation that law enforcement is not compassionate enough to be able to help bases itself on past experiences and the notion that law enforcement officers are there to arrest people. This case study examines the acceptance of trust by a vulnerable population where “the trustee [law enforcement officer] will care for the truster’s [homeless individual’s] interests” (Zakrison, Hamel, & Hwang, 2004).

Community Involvement

The strict law enforcement approach that police departments employed for many years created a long-standing adversarial relationship between law enforcement and advocates for the homeless, social service providers, and the homeless population. Complaints of police harassment of the homeless were very common. Civil action was
pursued by advocates in an attempt to fight what was described as the criminalization of
the homeless. These acrimonious conditions – as well as court decisions regarding police
response to the homeless – were the impetus for the seeds of positive working
relationships and partnerships to develop between law enforcement and the homeless
community (Police Chief Magazine Online, 2014).

Recognizing that partnering works best in a collaboration with various local, state,
and national organizations, this is a critical component to effectively address the social
service needs of the nation’s homeless population. A byproduct of this process includes
social service community partners working closely and communicating with law
enforcement, so they can expand these potential collaborations in order to fulfill the
assessment needs of the homeless through law enforcement compassion, interaction, and
engagements.

This collaborative concept imbues the basic tenants of community policing,
recognizing that law enforcement agencies who work with community partners and
stakeholders can accomplish great things that neither a police agency nor the community
could hope to accomplish on its own. This instills trust among the community, its
partners, and the individuals experiencing homelessness. Moreover, this is also where an
initiative with the vision, understanding, and cooperation of many individuals and
agencies comes together to provide a community partnership that focuses on the problem
of homelessness and evolves into pragmatic approaches and successes, as studied in this
dissertation (Police Chief Magazine Online, 2014).
Organization of the Study

Chapter one presented the introduction, statement of the problem, research questions, purpose of the study, and definition of terms, as well as limitations of the study, delimitations, and assumptions. Chapter two includes the review of the literature and research related to the problem that is being investigated: individuals experiencing homelessness. The type of methodology used for this study is presented in chapter three. The results and analysis contained in this study are in chapter four. Chapter five includes the study and findings, conclusions from the findings, a discussion, and recommendations for future study and application.

Conclusion

The homeless population, for a variety of reasons, consume a disproportionate amount of public safety resources. Arrests by law enforcement are the most common issue facing individuals experiencing homelessness. This type of enforcement was a near requisite in the wake of law enforcement seeking to maintain an acceptable social order. Unfortunately, homelessness is hidden in plain sight, leaving a void of social services and humanity.

The homeless are at greater risk for infections and chronic illness, poor mental health, and substance abuse, leaving their morbidity rates high. Every day, individuals experiencing homelessness struggle to survive. The primary gap identified in this case study is case management, which is necessary for individuals experiencing homelessness to get connected to services. Essentially, case management provides the assistance in
order to marry the needs of a person experiencing homelessness and the permanent supportive housing they need.

For decades, cities and towns all over the nation have worked to develop ordinances for minor crimes that advocates for the homeless would say criminalize homelessness. Law enforcement, generally poised to arrest individuals experiencing homelessness for minor crimes, are now at the forefront of a new phenomenon in creating community policing built on working with individuals experiencing homelessness and connecting them social services.

This case study examined barriers of law enforcement and social services in implementing case management to end the cycle of homelessness. Through this qualitative case study, a pragmatic view from both law enforcement and social services was evaluated and researched. The findings revealed a costly counter-intuitive criminal recidivism process with individuals experiencing homelessness, where arrest was the first option. In order to be effective, law enforcement agencies must create policies to ensure an innovative and problem-solving approach is used to end the cycle of homelessness.

Recognizing the importance of ending the cycle of homelessness, law enforcement agencies must have the full support of their leadership. The challenges law enforcement faces include weighing out the intrusive and demanding nature of law enforcement while maintaining the civil rights of citizens in order to resolve problems.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter Introduction

The objective in the interrelationship between law enforcement and social services is to end the cycle of homelessness by helping individuals experiencing homelessness recapture and regain their lives (Broward Sheriff’s Office, 2017). To understand this relationship, and the function in which it defines ending the cycle of homelessness, a holistic capture of national data introduces the historicity of events affecting homelessness.

Scope of Homelessness

On April 1st, 2015, the National Alliance to End Homelessness Coalition produced its annual report on *The State of Homelessness in America 2015*. The report reflects a January 2014 statistic demonstrating that in a single day in the United States, there are 578,424 people who are experiencing homelessness; these individuals were either sleeping outside, in an emergency shelter, or a transitional housing program. The top three states with homelessness included California, with nearly 140,000 homeless individuals; New York, with nearly 80,000 homeless individuals; and Florida, with over 40,000 homeless individuals (Wihbey, 2015). During this same time period, in Broward County, 2,766 homelessness individuals were documented (Broward Regional Health Planning Council, 2014).

Understanding the state of homelessness from a macro to micro level helps to establish the scope in recognizing that Broward County accounts for 6.6% of Florida’s homeless population, with a budget over $10,000,000 to end the cycle of homelessness.
(Broward County, 2015). It is important to understand the financial picture as it relates to the social service dollars for the homeless. For instance, the Broward County government agency that oversees homelessness is known as the Homeless Initiative Partnership (HIP). This organization works in conjunction with stakeholders and the Broward County government, and together it is known as the Continuum of Care. One of their funding sources come through the McKinney-Vento Act, which funds numerous programs providing a range of services to homeless people, including the Continuum of Care programs: the Supportive Housing Program, the Shelter Plus Care Program, and the Single Room Occupancy Program, as well as the Emergency Shelter Grant Program. The HIP mainly relies on County funds and grants to generate social service programs that are necessary to help end the cycle of homelessness and to obtain funding for affordable housing (Broward County, 2016).

Breaking down the figures based on the population of homelessness in Broward County, there is approximately $300 a month that could be associated with any one of the reported individuals experiencing homelessness – this is hardly enough to live off, much less survive with. Hence, program development and affordable housing makes better financial sense, so there are more resources utilized to help more individuals experiencing homelessness (Broward County, 2015).

From a chronically homeless perspective, supportive housing with intense case management, including mental health services, reduces the likelihood of re-entry into homelessness. This also has shown to alleviate acute medical care, the use of shelters, and criminal recidivism (Srebnik, Sylla, Hoffman, & Franzen, 2017). Considering the
plight of so many individuals experiencing homelessness, there is still the necessity to 
evaluate the greatest need overall, and outreach efforts are one of the best ways to make 
this happen.

**Street Outreach**

According to the *A Way Home Plan* (2013), a plan provided by the Broward 
County Government’s Homeless Initiative Partnership, dollars are diverted into social 
service programs that are meant to facilitate the coordination of homelessness into social 
service programs. One of those programs is, by design, a street outreach program. It is 
this very program in which the *gap* of the social services is identified as their most 
difficult process, as it involves a *Crisis Response System*. This system utilizes services for 
screenings, known as engagement services, for street outreach, which serves as an 
assessment tool necessary to help identify and determine the services an individual 
experiencing homelessness may qualify for or immediately receive (e.g. program beds for 

Broward County’s plan is not completely unique. In fact, many states and cities 
have developed similar programs. In 2004, in central Minnesota, within their 14 central 
counties, a ten-year plan known as *Heading Home* was developed to address 
homelessness. Part of this plan also included a homeless street outreach program to divert 
an individual experiencing homelessness from the criminal justice system and into social 
services (Central Minnesota Heading Home, 2007). In 2000, San Diego, California, 
created their first homeless outreach teams utilizing law enforcement and psychiatric
clinicians to redirect individuals living on the street directly into social services (San Diego Government, 2017).

It is this specific area of concentration regarding homeless outreach that this literature review focuses on with the nexus between law enforcement and social services working together in street outreach. According to the TaskForce Fore Ending Homeless Inc. (n.d.), a contracted recipient of Broward County government funding for street outreach, pairing the formerly homeless with law enforcement is an effective way to lessen criminalization of the homeless and connect them to social services, effectively ending their cycle of homelessness. This pairing historically proves to be efficient in developing an interrelationship with individuals experiencing homelessness and law enforcement as the catalyst for the research questions and outcomes discovered throughout this case study (Taskforce Fore Ending Homeless, n.d.).

The introduction of law enforcement would seem to be counter-productive, since one of the many reasons the cycle of homelessness occurs is due in part to the application of laws by law enforcement. How, then, does a process include collaboration with social services to end the cycle of homelessness by law enforcement? Robert R. Pusins, the Executive Director of the Broward Sheriff’s Office’s Department of Community Services, notes that the mission of their agency is to arrest the problem and not the person–linking individuals experiencing homelessness with appropriate social services (Police Chief Magazine Online, 2014).

A final report provided by HUD concerning the evaluation of Broward County’s continuum of care in 2002 noted a unique phenomenon that was innovative: linking
individuals who were formerly homeless with social services and law enforcement to inspire trust among individuals experiencing homelessness through peer involvement. The pairing of law enforcement and a formerly homeless person ignited immediate trust among individuals experiencing homelessness. This prior phenomenon shaped the groundwork and provided the building blocks in how Broward County began its journey in a holistic community outreach approach (HUD, 2002).

**Human Needs Theory**

In order to fully materialize the research, this study identifies with a human needs approach used by law enforcement to reduce recidivism and increase case management of individuals experiencing homelessness. Law enforcement has historically embraced helping others as an attribute of their profession. Social scientist Abraham Maslow (1943) identified human needs, known as the Human Needs Theory, which, when applied to theoretical research on the homeless, helps explain how human needs can be better utilized by law enforcement and their role in homeless outreach, engagement, and case management. A breakdown of this theory helps to explain the phenomena.

**Physiological Needs**

In Maslow’s theory, human needs include food, water, warmth, and rest. It is in this very part of the pyramid that this research seeks to explain case management by law enforcement. Addressing physiological needs serves as the conduit for reducing morbidity among our homeless population. The National Alliance to End Homelessness (2015) explains that acute behavioral issues among the homeless can further lead to exacerbating medical conditions. In fact, they go on to explain that diabetes and heart
disease are among the highest rates in the homeless, along with other physical ailments from living outdoors (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2015).

Law enforcement, as first responders, are generally in contact with the homeless most often. This contact often lends itself to an opportunity to conduct assessments. These assessments can include learning if an individual experiencing homelessness had eaten, or had sufficient clothing, or potential shelter, or would need such. This basic human interaction addresses simply the most humanistic approach: checking on the welfare of another.

For example, there are cases like the one in Ocala, Florida, where on or about July 27, 2015, a police sergeant named Erica Hay was seen sharing a meal with an individual experiencing homelessness. Hay stated she was on her way to get breakfast when she spotted the unknown (consumer) homeless individual. She said he was sitting there by himself, so she decided to grab food and sit down and eat with him. She opined that no one should eat alone. She further explained that isolation is the worst part about being homeless. Hay addressed sustenance for this unknown homeless individual and, in so doing, also brought in a sense of safety and security, as well as belongingness (Kim, 2015).
Figure 3. Photo 3. Note. Pictured is Sergeant Erica Hay of the Ocala Police Department sharing a meal with an unknown homeless individual. Taken from Kim (2015).

Safety and Security Needs

If physiological needs are met, the second level of Maslow’s pyramid is safety and security. In order for effective approaches to work by law enforcement, they must address the safety and security of individuals experiencing homelessness. The Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has begun a process that matches law enforcement with filling a new role wherein law enforcement opts to find housing for the homeless, increasing the safety and security of individuals experiencing homelessness. Key to this component is that this study identifies with HUD to reach the most vulnerable populations: individuals experiencing homelessness for years and living with disabling conditions (Thompson, 2015).

Amber Will (2012) explains that criminalization of homelessness has increased due to compassion fatigue. Criminalization could only lead to mistrust of future law enforcement intentions; hence, the difficulty of law enforcement providing safety and security. However, Will (2012) identifies Broward County as being a successful solution by explaining how the Taskforce Fore Ending Homelessness and law enforcement help to
bridge the gap and bring about safety and security with the individual experiencing homelessness.

**Belongingness and Love**

This study also identifies with a major component in Maslow’s theory that deals with belongingness and love. Dr. Kory Floyd (2013), a social scientist, uses the term “affectionado” as what human beings are missing. He contends that we as a society suffer from a crisis of *skin hunger*, explaining that more Americans live alone than ever before, with one out of every four Americans not having a single person to talk to about important issues. Floyd explains that loneliness among American adults has gone up 16 percent in the past decade (Floyd, 2013).

While Floyd does not believe that skin hunger is a permanent condition, he does explain that the body’s *need* for food and water to survive is no different than the need for human beings to be more affectionate (Floyd, 2013). Moreover, according to the book *Born for Love: Why Empathy is Essential and Endangered* by Szalavitz and Perry (2010), the interdependence of empathy in human biology is inevitable. As the human species, we survive due to our ability to love (Szalavitz & Perry, 2010). These authors provide succinctly the very altruism that humankind must ensure human species survival through empathy.

Bridging the gap of the hopelessness and helplessness that individuals who are homeless can experience shows that within this study, the law enforcement officer is the first responder who can create empathy and utilize social services to reach collaboration and effectuate change. This very ingredient is where the bridging between law
enforcement, social services, and individuals experiencing homelessness begins to shape and mutual trust and affinity begin.

*Figure 4. Photo 4. Note.* Pictured is a police officer with the Houston Police Department washing the feet of an individual experiencing homelessness. Taken from Hlavaty (2016).

**Esteem Needs**

In the fourth stage of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, we begin to see a different need arise that does not have a physiological, safety, or belongingness needs. This need is instead one that is less noticeable, but very important for motivationally changing behavior; that is the need for Esteem (Maslow, 1943). Mark Horvath, a digital storyteller who himself was formerly homeless, created a documentary on invisible people. His focus was that individuals experiencing homelessness are invisible and therefore cannot be respected if they cannot be seen. His work in the social media era has changed the way people see the homeless in Los Angeles, California (Horvath, 2008).

Horvath’s documentary speaks to the theoretical element that law enforcement must shape in order to not just address a homeless problem, but rather highlight and advocate for it. This study is markedly directed toward the collaboration between social
services and law enforcement. Changing the way law enforcement views the homeless can bring about respect that might lead toward better advocacy with strong impacts in social service assistance.

This is where respect comes in and where programs like the Multi-Agency Homeless Taskforce in Broward County, an organization of municipal and county law enforcement who are homeless outreach specialists, have become a focal point of engagement in reaching out to the homeless to generate a positive relationship (Segal, 2015). This case study highlights these focal points as the nexus toward moving forward in advocacy and assessment so individuals experiencing homelessness can reach esteem by achieving their goals through on-going engagements and outcomes that lead to a better life.

**Self-Actualization**

Perhaps the foremost difficult process that is undertaken by law enforcement is a process that does not involve law enforcement. It is also a process that does not involve social services. Maslow’s (1943) theory explains that self-actualization is when someone reaches their full potential, self-fulfillment, and personal growth. This is by far the most subjective, and therefore can only be achieved by the individual. This case study provides essential probabilities that include the advocacy and process of law enforcement intervention and collaboration with social services to increase the likelihood of self-actualization by a person experiencing homelessness.
Law Enforcement Training

In appropriating law enforcement powers from arrest to protection, the advocacy role by law enforcement becomes essential. Similar outreach efforts in Broward County, like their civilian counterparts with the Taskforce Fore Ending Homeless Inc., both serve to share the same goals that keep individuals experiencing homelessness connected. Pusins noted that an individual experiencing homelessness is arrested, incarcerated, released and then rearrested, thus defining the cycle of homelessness (Police Chief Magazine Online, 2014). Ending this cycle means bridging the gap of resources to meet human needs and end recidivism in the criminal justice system by connecting individuals experiencing homelessness with social services and offering positive diversionary strategies.
Moreover, Pusins notes that at the Broward Sheriff’s Office, law enforcement officers receive specialized training where law enforcement officers learn to navigate the social services system when they are contacting individuals experiencing homelessness. Combined with what Pusins called the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT), a 40-hour mental health de-escalation training law enforcement officers receive (known as the Memphis Model), and a 40-hour Homeless Outreach Team Specialist course, they are better able to assist people who are experiencing homelessness (Police Chief Magazine Online, 2014).

An individual experiencing homelessness typically does not receive all their human needs of safety and security, which includes food, shelter, and clothing. Law enforcement serves as a conduit upon which services such as these can be better allocated in lieu of arrests, seeking to problem-solve rather than create more problems that usually stem from arrest. Maslow (1943) explains the necessity of bringing together safety and security as a fundamental value to human needs, and individuals experiencing homelessness are no different (pp. 370-396).

What is lacking in the system of law enforcement and social services is the directional level of trust necessary to bridge a system of care that does not just define law enforcement as enforcers of the law, but rather the front line of community policing and case management to individuals experiencing homelessness. The phenomenon is such that law enforcement, knowingly or not, are de-facto case managers to the homeless if they so choose to be.
The Diversion

According to Health Care for the Homeless Council Inc. (2002), law enforcement serves as part of a diversion into a shelter strategy, and is listed in their training curriculum as such. They shared that law enforcement possesses information on individuals experiencing homelessness and that the information they obtain from individuals can highlight who is in immediate need for shelter and healthcare (HUD, n.d.). Unfortunately, social services workers do not have the same 24/7 schedule as law enforcement and typically do not work weekends. Law enforcement therefore works best as a force multiplier for those systems, to apprise the collaborative nature of the updates and their follow-up considerations during the week.

Furthermore, this study recognizes that collaboration between law enforcement and social services may improve their communication through case management. Hence, this research highlights the empirical data derived through the collaborative, such as the Broward County’s Point-in-Time HUD requirement, to ensure effectiveness. By design, the overall nexus between law enforcement and social services underscore the successes that prove effectiveness. Ultimately, this study shows homeless rates, recidivism, and success as the epitome of what is learned through such collaborations that have been widely touted by HUD (2002).

Broward County law enforcement has been utilizing the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training as a subscribed model utilized by law enforcement to better interact with individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. This model, also known as the Memphis Model, explains a significance in which law enforcement reduces arrests by diverting
individuals who are mentally ill into receiving mental health related services (University of Memphis, 2017).

The Memphis Model for CIT was created after a 1987 incident in Memphis, Tennessee, that involved a person with mental illness who had been threatening people with a knife. Police officers tried to get the person to put the knife down, but ultimately ended up having to shoot him, which led to the person’s death. Initially there was a racial undertone that created protests, and later, it led to recognizing ways to better work with individuals with mental illness. This request lent itself to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), who selected police, mental health professionals, universities, hospitals administration and church official members to try new a new approach (NAMI, 2017).

The new approach, and why it is important to the homeless outreach, is that over 22%, or 525 people experiencing homelessness in Broward County reported a serious mental illness in the 2016 Point-in-Time Count. Law enforcement, such as Broward County Sheriff’s deputies, who learn how to engage individuals with mental illness can provide other options that can help develop rapport and cooperation among the homeless to seek assistance (Broward Regional Health Planning Council, 2015; University of Memphis, 2017).

Social Conflict Theory

In order to materialize this case study into collaborative partnership examinations between law enforcement and social services, social conflict theory was taken into consideration due to the nexus of potential conflict between law enforcement and social services. Karl Marx, a sociologist, shared that individuals and groups communicate due
to conflict rather than an agreement. Marx espouses that conflict leads to everlasting changes in societal structure and the total system goes under the same transformation (Coser, 1957, p. 200).

It is the total system transformation that Marx’s theory emphasizes as the underpinning cause of conflict between social services and law enforcement. The identification of roles between the two are hardly comparable until both parties seek the same denominator of outcomes in helping the homeless; however, they do so in two very different ways. Marx refers to this as the latent strain, which means that while cordial in nature and discourse, it can also maintain disdain and malcontent for each other’s role (Coser, 1957, pp. 200-202).

The Marxist view provides a struggle between role and responsibilities of social services and law enforcement. Whereas law enforcement can enter into the role of social services through similar outreach efforts, the same cannot be true for social services. Marx explains that in conflict there are those who benefit, those who can suffer, and those who dominate at the expense of others. Although there was no research indicating a law enforcement domination or the suffering of a social services stakeholder, the potential for such conflict is plausible and cause latent strain (Schaefer, 2011, p. 14; Coser, 1957, pp. 200-202).

Marx theorized that human beings are prone to conflict over scarce resources such as power, power in terms of social services having the ability to get their job done with some of that power being utilized by law enforcement. This power struggle, although not inherently identified throughout this case study, still has influential properties that can
affect any organization trying to undermine the resources of another (Schaefer, 2011, p. 196).

**Conflicutive Barriers**

The encroachment elements between law enforcement and social services highlight the latent conflicts that have loomed primarily due to positional roles and responsibilities (Patterson, 2008). Funding between groups, and where that funding is placed, resonates in the social services arena whereby their functions serve specifically to the role of social worker, while law enforcement usurps social service roles in its involvement with the homeless and therefore may also be in a position to claim similar funding.

Identifying where law enforcement ends and social services begin can be a distinction of roles and responsibilities. Law enforcement officers are not social workers and social workers are not law enforcement officers, yet intuitively, they are professions that help human beings daily. Hence, it is this common denominator that places both professions in a unique position to collaborate because they both have a nexus to the paradigm of homelessness and ultimately to case management.

It is here with case management that divergent opinions loom. According to Health Care for the Homeless’ *Healing Hands* publication (2007), case management is an integral part of mental health care; it is a way to build a relationship with someone experiencing homelessness and collaborate on a problem-solving approach. For law enforcement, building the relationship with someone experiencing homelessness is just as
important. Law enforcement seeks to also problem-solve in order to reach the similar
goals of social services (Police Chief Magazine, 2014).

So, why use law enforcement? This was a question the Houston Police
Department was asked regarding their Homeless Outreach Team program that shares
similar attributes as Broward County. Sergeant Stephen Wick, who heads up Houston
Police Department’s Homeless Outreach Team, shared that it is important that the
homeless have advocates within the police department (Segarra, 2015). Moreover, he
shares that the police have access to records that non-profits do not. This can help when
social services struggle to help individuals who cannot identify themselves or believe
they are someone else – usually due to mental illness. Wick further explains that law
enforcement is “well-equipped” to go into unsafe areas that social service case managers
do not venture into. This includes camps and streets that can be potentially dangerous
(Segarra, 2015).

Of course, when one examines the law enforcement functions, it cannot go
without question that the functions of the police can be obscured by its historical
processes of arresting the homeless for violations of the law. In fact, Wick points out that
he and his team thought they would have resistance by the homeless and that they would
be the hardest to gain trust from. However, Wick said that it was not hard to get the
homeless to trust law enforcement; rather, it was the (social service) providers that did
not trust law enforcement. In fact, Wick suggests that providers think the police are
simply out to sweep tent cities and arrest people. Wick said that over time their Homeless
Outreach Team gained the trust of the community, which is similar to Broward County’s Homeless Outreach Team model (Segarra, 2015; Police Chief Magazine, 2014).

Figure 6. Photo 5. Note. Pictured is Officer Jamie Giraldo with the Houston Police Department speaking to a man about going to a local hospital. Taken from Pinkerton (2013).

Hence, law enforcement finds itself trying to determine what kind of course of action can be the most palatable without the conflict of social services seeing law enforcement as unhelpful. This unhelpfulness is generally the result of a temporary resolution approach that causes an arrest rather than a permanent problem-solving collaboration. Moreover, social services can see the added benefit of devolving their own power to share a succinct method of engaging the homeless population with appropriate actions through the use of law enforcement collaboration and involvement— including the force multiplier element on a 24/7 basis, which means more contacts and more engagements as a result.
Conclusion

The objective in the interrelationship between law enforcement and social services is to end the cycle of homelessness by helping individuals experiencing homelessness recapture and regain their lives. A January 2014 statistic showed that in a single day in the United States, there are 578,424 people who are experiencing homelessness. Understanding the state of homelessness from a macro to micro level helps to establish the scope in Broward County, which accounts for 6.6% of Florida’s homeless population.

The Broward County government agency that oversees homelessness is known as the Homeless Initiative Partnership (HIP). Based on their funding, there is approximately $300 a month that could be associated with any one of the reported individuals experiencing homelessness. Based on the needs of the chronically homeless, the supportive housing model with intense case management, which includes mental health services, reduces the likelihood of re-entry into homelessness and thereby places HIP in a better position to end the cycle of homelessness.

Another program used by HIP is a street outreach program. It is this very program that the gap of the social services is identified as their most difficult process, because it involves a Crisis Response System. Street outreach is used for screening, known as engagement services. According to the TaskForce Fore Ending Homeless Inc. (n.d.), pairing the formerly homeless with law enforcement is an effective way to lessen criminalization of the homeless and connect them to social services to effectively end their cycle of homelessness.
The Human Needs Theory is an area where law enforcement has been able to identify with gaining the trust and cooperation of individuals experiencing homelessness. Law enforcement as first responders are generally in contact with the homeless most often. This contact often lends itself to an opportunity to conduct assessments, or likewise human engagements.

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has begun a process that matches law enforcement with filling a new role wherein law enforcement opts to find housing for the homeless, increasing the safety and security of individuals experiencing homelessness. Bridging the gap of the hopelessness and helplessness that individuals who are homeless can experience shows that law enforcement can create empathy and utilize social services to reach collaboration and effectuate change that can end the cycle of homelessness.

Crisis Intervention Team (CIT), a 40-hour mental health de-escalation training law enforcement officers receive (known as the Memphis Model), and a 40-hour Homeless Outreach Team Specialist course are classes the Broward Sheriff’s Office Homeless Outreach Team attends. These courses provide the kind of engagement training to equip law enforcement on how to help individuals experiencing homelessness.

What is lacking in the system of law enforcement and social services is the directional level of trust necessary to bridge a system of care that does not just define law enforcement as enforcers of the law, but rather the front line of community policing and case management to individuals experiencing homelessness. To be effective, law enforcement works best as a force multiplier for social services in order to have a larger
outreach footprint and provide updates to the collaborative on the progress made through these contacts. Collaboration between law enforcement and social services helps to improve their communication through shared case management.

In Marx’s Social Conflict Theory, individuals and groups communicate due to conflict rather than agreement. Marx’s theory highlights the underpinning cause of conflict between social services and law enforcement. Marx refers to this as the latent strain, which means that while cordial in nature and discourse, it can also maintain disdain and malcontent for each other’s role. Whereas law enforcement can enter into the role of social services through similar outreach efforts, the same cannot be true for social services. Marx theorized that human beings are prone to conflict over scarce resources such as power. Encroachment elements between law enforcement and social services illustrate the latent conflicts that have loomed primarily due to positional roles and responsibilities. Law enforcement officers are not social workers, and social workers are not law enforcement officers.

As noted earlier, the police have access to records non-profits do not. They are able to go into areas where social services would not go alone. As demonstrated in Houston, it was not gaining the trust with the homeless law enforcement had trouble with, rather it was social service providers that did not trust law enforcement.
Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

Chapter Introduction

The research and design methodology is a qualitative case study. It is provided to examine the phenomena of individuals experiencing homelessness in Broward County and improve communication between law enforcement and social services in implementing case management to end the cycle of homelessness. The whole purpose is to define the specific roles, responsibilities, and recommendations for improving case management through law enforcement and social services and investigate what ways are amiable to improving communications.

In order to do this, three specific areas will focus on: how can collaboration between law enforcement and social services can improve their communication; what the impact of the collaboration means to reduce criminal recidivism among individuals experiencing homelessness; and what impact does law enforcement have, utilizing social services case management systems when conducting homeless outreach.

The reason a case study is being used is due to the study of a phenomena from the perspective of what research has shown in the past few years of the role of law enforcement agencies and social services in ending the cycle of homelessness. The findings are intended to provide information that is gleaned historically from law enforcement and social services through an organizational analysis and correlation to the research in answering the research questions and pointing out the phenomena (Lapan, Quartaroli, & Riemer, 2011, pp. 3-6).
Research Design

This case study research design is based on Robert Yin’s (2014) content analysis and partially supplemented by Stephen Lapan et al.’s (2011) qualitative research methods. A research design is the logic that links the data to be collected. In order to navigate through the various interventions and assist with the deconstruction and reconstruction of varying phenomena in homeless outreach, a qualitative content analysis approach has been used. Content analysis was selected due to the wide array of documentation that has been written on homeless outreach, law enforcement, and social services.

The qualitative case study is designed to uncover the means of the phenomena discovered by attributing meanings to the findings. This involves interpretive research to understand the meaning and value of the information discovered through law enforcement involvement with social services and includes an etic perspective. The etic perspective is meant to synthesize the case study findings as culturally neutral from an outside researcher evaluation (Lapan et al., 2011, pp. 6-12). Yin’s (2014, pp. 29-36) Five steps was utilized in this case study for content analysis:

1) A case study’s questions;
2) Its propositions, if any;
3) Its unit(s) of analysis;
4) The logic linking the data to the propositions; and
5) The criteria for interpreting the findings.
As Yin (2014) explains, the first three steps used in this research is part of the data collection methodology and the last two steps are used as the data analysis method.

**Data Collection**

**Study Questions**

This study narrowly focused on three research questions:

1) How can collaboration between law enforcement and social services improve their communication?

2) What is the impact of the collaboration to reduce criminal recidivism of individuals experiencing homelessness?

3) What is the impact of law enforcement utilizing social service case management systems in homeless outreach?

The questions involve a *theoretical framework* (Lapan et al., 2011) and *theoretical propositions* (Yin, 2014, p. 37) to include past and current relationships between law enforcement and social services to better understand their communication; what impact law enforcement has in reducing the recidivism of individuals experiencing homelessness; what is interchangeable between law enforcement and social services; and what the impact is when law enforcement utilizes social service case management systems to conduct homeless outreach (Yin, 2014; Lapan et al., 2011, pp. 246-249).

**Propositions**

This case study examines the holistic impact homelessness has had on law enforcement, local government, local communities, area businesses, advocates for the homeless and individuals experiencing homelessness. It addresses what a prolonged
conflict means, trying to end the cycle of homelessness with stakeholders and ways in which solutions have been, and are, being developed to increase effective approaches overall.

The propositions include: law enforcement effectively reducing recidivism of individuals experiencing homelessness via its homeless outreach program, citing a comparison case study of the Broward Sheriff’s Office and the Houston Police Department; law enforcement communication with social services being effective enough to help individuals experiencing homelessness; and case management by law enforcement, a new phenomenon of policing for individuals that are homeless, as an extension of social services.

Units of Analysis

The units of analysis are based on Yin’s (2014, pp. 103-132) view of archival records as a source of evidence by extrapolating data from government public use files, service records, organizational records, and survey data. In order to establish what archival records would be researched, criteria were established for selection purposes. The criteria for this case study’s archival records include: it must be exclusive to Broward County or the City of Houston and/or involve homelessness and law enforcement engagement nationally; must provide data sets during 2014 through 2017; must include jail population data; and must have criminal recidivism data.

The materials for analysis include obtaining records from historical information pertaining to Broward County. These Broward County records and reports indicate the relationships between stakeholders to include: the Sun-Sentinel newspaper; the Broward
County jail population numbers; the Broward Regional Health Planning Council statistical reporting data by a civilian homeless outreach team; the Broward Sheriff’s Office Homeless Outreach program data; HUD reported data for Broward County; Houston Police Department Homeless Outreach; published data as outlined in the literature review on criminalization and homelessness; and public forum meeting minutes and collaborative assessment tools from the Broward County Homeless Initiative Partnership (Yin, 2014, pp. 103-132; Lapan et al., 2011, p. 252).

A major component of the case study examines and identifies with the reporting information provided by the HUD Point-in-Time (PIT). The PIT is a count of sheltered and unsheltered individuals that are experiencing homelessness on a single night in January. Continuums of Care throughout the country provide this annual count of persons in emergency shelters, transitional housing, and in Safe Havens. While the count is planned and coordinated, it is generally completed once every other year, although Broward County does their count every year (HUD Exchange, 2014).

This study utilizes the counts over the past three years, since there is no other reliable data that exists beyond this timeframe that encompasses the purposes of this case study. Moreover, this study surmises reported data through the Broward County’s Homeless Initiative Partnership and the Broward County jail population concerning individuals who are listed as “at large,” specifically as it relates to no home address. The audience for this case study are academic scholars, social service executives, law enforcement executives, and federal stakeholders in policy-making for HUD. Questions drive this research to investigate the identified segments in the research questions as part
of the data collection process and to determine overall effectiveness between law
enforcement and social services collaboration as an outcome in ending the cycle of
homeless (Yin, 2015; Lapan et al., 2011, pp. 244-246).

Data Analysis

Linking Data to Propositions

An instrument has been developed to measure how law enforcement and social
services collaboratively end the cycle of homelessness. This will include the correlation
of timelines and outcomes to determine what change has occurred to reduce
homelessness through law enforcement and social service collaboration in Broward
County. This was done by checking the numbers between each year through a macro
perspective in the county through the Point-in-Time Count and the Broward County jail
population. This is an important element, as this study seeks to reveal if there is in fact a
causal link between these findings and homeless outreach by law enforcement. Yin
(2014) points out that using an instrument increases the reliability of the case study
research (p. 48).

The data received was processed to find agreements among the evidence collected
from multiple sources. This process was used to validate findings within the data and to
identify discrepancies. Discrepancies were handled by cross-checking through other
linked resources and information from other stakeholders who utilized similar data (e.g.
HUD). This occurred until saturation was reached (Lapan et al., 2011, p. 253).
Pattern Matching

Yin’s (2014) data analysis of pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, and a logic model from the Broward Sheriff’s Office was utilized in this research. Yin explains that pattern matching “compares an empirically based pattern…with a predicted one made before you collected your data” (pp. 143-147). This is based on what Yin (2014) refers to as rival independent variables as a pattern. The rival independent variables are meant to rival theoretical propositions to include if law enforcement can in fact lessen homelessness and lower recidivism, collaborate with stakeholders, and case manage through their outreach efforts in conjunction with social services without creating a turf war type of conflict where the struggle focuses more on power than on outcome (pp. 143-147).

Explanation Building

The second data analysis is explanation building. Yin (2014) proffers this to explain why a phenomenon stipulates to a presumed set of causal links about how or why something happened. In the case of homeless outreach, an examination into the involvement of law enforcement into homeless outreach may reflect critical areas of policy and process into the theoretical proposition. Hence, through this effort, a recommendation of practice may be evident for future policy-making decisions (Yin, 2014, pp. 147-150).

Time-Series Analysis

The third data analysis that was used is time-series analysis. Yin (2014) describes this analysis as “directly analogous” to experiments. Time-series analysis indicates
intricate and precision patterns using time to lay the foundation for providing the conclusions for the case study. This helped in identifying trends over the three-year period to show a before-and-after effect based on law enforcement involvement in homeless outreach and social services (Yin, 2014, pp. 150-154).

This case study is based on examining time and change based on the approaches utilized by law enforcement in Broward County; it has been compared to the Houston Police Department for the same time periods, since this is the only other law enforcement agency providing similar sets of data comparison to the Broward Sheriff’s Office. A statistical technique, as espoused by Yin (2014), will include a chronological sequence, which allow the researcher to “trace events over time” using both agency areas to show if any trends occurred due to law enforcement homeless outreach based on the three-year time period (Yin, 2014).

Logic Model

In the final set of analysis, a logic model was utilized from the Broward Sheriff’s Office to show a “cause-effect-cause-effect” pattern. Yin (2014) explains that logic models operationalize a complex chain of occurrences or events over an extended period of time, whereby variables are identified to become independent variables, which will allow for pattern matching of empirical data from observed events (those reported by law enforcement through published record) and theoretically predicted events. Conceptually, the logic model in this research is meant to show the promoted idea of law enforcement in Broward County conducting homeless outreach and what actual outcomes occurred
during the three-year period, e.g. whether or not the certain outcomes or a sequence of outcomes occurred, as was intended (Yin, 2014, pp. 155-163).

Specifically, the logic model breaks down three areas of outcomes: immediate, intermediate, and ultimate outcomes. This is based on Joseph Wholey’s (1979) work cited by Yin (2014) on evaluation assessment. The immediate outcome in the logic model shows what occurred with the onset of law enforcement involvement in homeless outreach; the intermediate shows the effect of that involvement and satisfies the process identified by the Broward Sheriff’s Office; and the eventual outcome was conceptualized to determine long range effects. This ultimately can help to determine applicability to make policy-decisions on the viability of the program (Yin, 2014).

Criteria for Interpreting the Case Study Findings

Yin (2014) explains that a major and important strategy is to identify where statistical analyses are relevant. Conventionally, the quantitative data extrapolated from the statistical data published by the Broward Sheriff’s Office and the Houston Police Department was evaluated to determine if there is in fact a statistical significance (Yin, 2014, p. 38).

Criteria One: Law Enforcement Homeless Outreach Program in a Three-Year Period

Criteria Two: Number of Law Enforcement Contacts with Individual Experiencing Homelessness within a Three-Year Period.

Criteria Three: Number of Law Enforcement Referrals and/or Placements with Individual who is Homeless within a Three-Year Period.
Criteria Four: Jail Data of Incarceration for Individuals Claiming to be At Large within the Three-Year Period.

Criteria Five: HUD Funding over a Three-Year Period to the Broward Sheriff’s Office and Houston Police Department.

Purpose of Criteria for Interpreting Case Study Findings

The purpose of the criteria is based on the necessary elements required to show any statistical significance by law enforcement conducting Homeless Outreach to lessen recidivism in the jails and increase social services. The cause and effect can only be measured statistically, as no published data can be complete without its comparison within Broward County and a similar city of size and population, such as the City of Houston. Nationwide data is scarce, as the phenomena of law enforcement homeless outreach data has limited publication.

First, the study must show that there is in fact a homeless outreach program by the Broward Sheriff’s Office and Houston Police Department and that it has been running for at least three years to encompass the purpose of this study. Second, the law enforcement agencies must have published data to support contacts with individuals experiencing homelessness. Third, the law enforcement agencies must have published data for referrals and/or placements within the same time period. Fourth, the jail data population must be data from each law enforcement agency to determine the recidivism factors based on the “at large” criteria within the same time period. Fifth, the funding from HUD to the respective counties of each law enforcement agency will measure if funding is increased, lowered, or the same within the three-year time period (Yin, 2014).
This study also includes rival explanations, which is purposely being done to address explanations for the phenomena. Some explanations researched are discussed and rejected as a way to increase the strength and validity of this case study. This strategy is an incorporation of Yin’s (2014) challenge when enumerating the data to begin justifying the phenomena (p. 140).

This case study helps to bridge the gap where the phenomena of law enforcement working as de-facto social workers are in the field as homeless outreach specialists who provide an additional force multiplier in the social services system of care. The advent of lawsuits and the lack of training has left law enforcement unable to fully grasp human issues as it relates to the plight of individuals experiencing homelessness. Perhaps when we consider the ultimate goal of ending the cycle of homelessness, it must first be addressed by those who are empowered to affect that cycle of homelessness.

**Conclusion**

The research and design methodology for this case study is a qualitative case study. It is designed to examine the phenomena of individuals experiencing homelessness in Broward County and improve communication between law enforcement and social services in implementing case management to end the cycle of homelessness. There were three specific areas identified for the case study that include: how collaboration between law enforcement and social services can improve their communication; what the impact of the collaboration means to reduce criminal recidivism among individuals experiencing homelessness; and what impact does law enforcement have utilizing social services case management systems when conducting homeless outreach.
The study of this phenomena was based on a time-series analysis of the years 2014, 2015, and 2016 by law enforcement agencies and social services in ending the cycle of homelessness. These agencies include the Broward County Sheriff’s Office and the Houston Police Department as a comparative case study, as both these agencies have homeless outreach programs and similar demographics.

The case study research design was based on Yin’s (2014) content analysis and partially supplemented by Lapan et al.’s (2011) qualitative research methods. Yin’s Five steps were utilized in this case study to include: A case study’s questions; its propositions, if any; its unit(s) of analysis; the logic linking the data to the propositions; and, the criteria for interpreting the findings. This case study examined the holistic impact homelessness has had on law enforcement, local government, local communities, area businesses, advocates for the homeless, and individuals experiencing homelessness. The results include the law enforcement phenomena, which is effectively showing reductions of recidivism of individuals experiencing homelessness via its homeless outreach program.

A major component of the case study examines and identifies with the reporting information provided by the HUD Point-in-Time (PIT). This study utilizes the counts over the past three years (2014, 2015, and 2016), since there is no other reliable data that exists beyond this timeframe that encompasses the size, scope, and purposes of this case study. This study surmises reported data through the Broward County’s Homeless Initiative Partnership and the Broward County jail population concerning individuals who
are listed as “at large,” specifically as it relates to no home address. The data received was processed to find agreements among the evidence collected from multiple sources.

Yin’s (2014) data analysis of pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, and a logic model from the Broward Sheriff’s Office were utilized in this research. Five criteria were needed to fully materialize the research findings, which included: the police agencies had to have a homeless outreach program; they had to have published numbers of contacts within a three-year period; the police agencies also needed to have published referrals and/or placements; jail data of incarceration for individuals claiming to be at large within the three-year time frame; and HUD funding over the three year period for the Broward Sheriff’s Office and Houston Police Department.

Ultimately, this dissertation provides case study information that collaboratively creates the condition where dependencies are interrelated between the social service networks and that of law enforcement partnerships. If it were not for the advent of an idea that bridges the gap between law enforcement and social services, Broward County would be a place largely populated by individuals who are homeless, without a probable solution.
Chapter 4: Findings

Chapter Introduction

To understand the findings of the kind of phenomena discovered in the research using Yin (2014) and Lapan et al.’s (2011) content analysis and qualitative research methods respectively, a breakdown of the historicity and propositions are necessary to explain the backdrop of the system in place from both a law enforcement and social services perspective. Furthermore, the relationships meant to establish collaboration are the phenomenological byproduct of the outcomes discovered.

The findings revealed that costs associated with high utilization of services factor into the byproduct that this research identifies in terms of a cost-saving approach. This also benefits individuals experiencing homelessness, as they would be receiving social services from this cost-saving approach. The findings are thereby the means to explain the differences between the Broward Sheriff’s Office and Houston Police Department to find agreements or differences in their results. Findings from the data of the Point-in-Time Counts are the foundation for the research and is associated with the comparison to determine what outcomes have occurred. These data sets include the importance of contacts, placements, and referrals, as well as ratios of the homeless population and incarceration rates in Broward County.

Historical Framework and Propositions

The findings begin with the historical framework and propositions (Yin, 2014; Lapan et al., 2011). Broward County established a Homeless Outreach Team in 2013, a process only started after a new sheriff, Scott Israel, was elected. As an established
Homeless Outreach Team, the Broward Sheriff’s Office sought to increase participation on established boards that have historically been exclusive to social services. The boards include the Broward Behavioral Health Coalition, also known as the managing entity, which covers mental health costs for the uninsured, and the Continuum of Care Board, where outreach dollars for the homeless are appropriated (Broward Sheriff’s Office, 2017).

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) in Florida provides funding for Managing Entities. The Managing Entities are DCF departmental contracts for behavioral health services under regional systems of care. The Managing Entities do not provide for the care directly; however, they do fund specific programs that address behavioral health needs throughout the State (Department of Children and Families, 2014). This is important because this organization funds mental health and substance abuse dollars typically for individuals without insurance. The Managing Entity in Broward County is the Broward Behavioral Health Coalition, and a member of the Broward Sheriff’s Office sits on the board.

The Continuum of Care (COC) board in Broward County serves as an advisory board to the Broward County Board of County Commissioners. The COC board is made up of local community stakeholders, which include various social service providers, advocates for the homeless, city officials, and law enforcement. The COC board establishes “joint homeless assistance” and the Homeless Initiative Partnership (HIP) with private organizations and cities within Broward County (Broward County, n.d.; Broward County, 2017). The Broward Sheriff’s Office also sits on this board as well.
An examination into the relationships between law enforcement and social services was unknown. There was no research to indicate the overall effect law enforcement had on social services and the effect social services had on law enforcement pertaining to the feelings of the relationship. What was found was that in the framework, the Broward Sheriff’s Office created an environment where communication could be harnessed by working together on the boards that allocate funding and that they would have a vote.

Through the relationship, the Taskforce Fore Ending Homeless Inc., a non-profit which provides street outreach in the County, was a focal point for how the Broward Sheriff’s Office’s Homeless Outreach Team received much of their partnership in conducting street outreach. The Taskforce served to provide similar services to the Broward Sheriff’s Office, with the exception of what Sergeant Wick from the Houston Police Department considered unsafe areas for social workers. These unsafe areas are where unmet needs of outreach within Broward County can occur and where gaps exist.

Interestingly, the interchangeability of the Broward Sheriff’s Office Homeless Outreach Team and that of the Taskforce Fore Ending Homeless Inc. was that they both conduct assessments of the homeless and help to determine eligibility for various programs available to the homeless. This impacted how the Broward Sheriff’s Office conducted itself, as the Broward Sheriff’s Office utilizes a system that is similar to the system used by the Taskforce Fore Ending Homeless Inc., known as the Homeless Management Information System (Broward County, 2013).
When the Broward Sheriff’s Office purchased the Homeless Management Information System for Broward County in 2013, it also led to a seat at the table – no historical data shows where the Broward Sheriff’s Office was represented before 2013. The purchase of the system, at $350,000, led to an integrated system that allowed all of the social services community to utilize and conduct assessments. This system enabled the Broward Sheriff’s Office to work closer with social service partners in conducting assessments (Trischitta, 2014).

In examining the holistic impact of homelessness in Broward County, it was found that the homeless affect calls for service by first responders due to complaints from citizens. The citizens complain about the homeless conducting life-sustaining functions, as well as suspicious activity. The homeless complain about being harassed by law enforcement and citizens. However, when looking past the common causalities, the bigger picture of homelessness is that the cycle they live in on a daily basis that continues to keep them from a real quality of life.

This research found that the homeless will either end up in jail or hospitalized on a regular basis, some even known as the high utilizers of the system (generally the chronically homeless), costing taxpayers more than it would cost if they simply had a roof over their head and case management at home. The problem has been how to help those who do not want help: the homeless who are by HUD definition chronic and need housing.

A cost-effective solution is permanent supportive housing, which is funded by the federal government, and provides affordable housing, health care services, and other
supportive services to individuals and families. Generally, permanent supportive housing is used for the homeless who meet the federal definition of chronically homeless (National Health Care for the Homeless Council, n.d.). HUD defines a chronically homeless person as an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. To be considered chronically homeless, persons must have been sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., living on the streets) and/or in an emergency homeless shelter during that time (HUD, 2014).

Originally, this case study questioned the significance of funding for social services to determine if the issue was just not enough money to help the homeless. However, the case study showed instead that what was limiting was not the amount of funding for social services, but rather the amount of case management for street outreach engagements. This means that the issue in Broward County was not that they did not have money or support, but rather that it was trying to get individuals who experience homelessness off the street and into recapturing and regaining their life again.

Moreover, what was interesting in this case study was that it was not case management that was hard to implement for those who are experiencing homelessness, but rather it was that the relationship needed to establish trust to serve as a catalyst for individuals who are homeless. This particular area of interpersonal skills provided a tool that law enforcement and social services could use to influence an individual experiencing homelessness to accept services. This is why picking the right law
enforcement officers to do the actual outreach is important, as care and compassion are
necessities to make the outreach work.

A pressing phenomenon this case study uncovered was that the Houston Police Department and the Broward Sheriff’s Office shared something in common: they both created relationships with their homeless population. Seemingly, the relationships between law enforcement and the homeless in both of these departments served as a driver. Both the Houston Police Department and the Broward Sheriff’s Office cite the relationship building as part of their ability to help the homeless successfully get off the streets.

*Figure 7. Photo 6. Note.* Pictured are Officers Jamie Giraldo with the Houston Police Department and Chad Prigmore standing in front of a Homeless Outreach Team van from the Houston Police Department. Taken from Garcia (2013).

**Point-in-Time Counts**

To fully materialize this research and determine effectiveness, the time-series analysis remained constant to cover the full years of data analysis: 2014, 2015, and 2016.
However, the year 2013 was utilized as a starting point of the initial data set because it was when the Broward Sheriff’s Office started their program. Both departments are involved with the Point in Time Count in their respective areas and both departments have law enforcement officers conducting homeless outreach.

The purpose of this data is to presume that a city or county that employs a homeless outreach team may be more effective than not having one. This case study utilizes the time unit analysis for the years 2014, 2015, and 2016. This would ensure that the data reviewed was consistent with full years from each department. Additionally, since Houston Police Department started their program in 2011 and the Broward Sheriff’s Office started theirs in 2013, it was just as important to know what the Point-in-Time data looked like during the same years before analyzing what their homeless population looked like afterward. Using the Point-in-Time data in 2013, the City of Houston had 6,359 individuals that were homeless, and Broward County had 2,810. These numbers include both sheltered and unsheltered individuals (Broward Regional Health Planning Council, 2013; Coalition for the Homeless, 2017).

In 2014, after the Homeless Outreach Teams in both departments were employed, the City of Houston’s homeless population dropped from 6,359 to 5,351 (16% drop) and Broward County dropped down from 2,810 to 2,766 (1.5% drop). Subsequently, in 2015, the City of Houston dropped from 5,351 to 4,609 (14% drop) and Broward County dropped from 2,766 to 2,615 (5.5% drop). By 2016, the City of Houston dropped from 4,609 to 3,626 (21% drop) and Broward County dropped from 2,615 to 2,302 (12% drop) (Broward Point in Time, 2015; Coalition for the Homeless 2017).
Table 1

Comparisons via the Point-in-Time Count

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Houston Police Department</th>
<th>Broward Sheriff’s Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>6,359 homeless individuals</td>
<td>2,810 homeless individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>5,351 (16% drop)</td>
<td>2,766 (1.5% drop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>4,609 (14% drop)</td>
<td>2,615 (5.5% drop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>3,626 (21% drop)</td>
<td>2,302 (12% drop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall drop: 43%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Overall drop: 18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What does this all mean? It means that between the years analyzed, the City of Houston lessened their homeless population by 43% and Broward County lessened their homeless population by 18%. These are tremendous numbers, compared to the national average of just 10% during the same time periods: 610,042 to 549,928 nationally (Project Home, 2016; National Alliance on Ending Homelessness, 2016).

Contacts, Placements, and Referrals

The effectiveness of the Homeless Outreach by the Houston Police Department and the Broward Sheriff’s Office is also measured by how many contacts, placements and referrals were made. Just as in the Point in Time, the years of 2014, 2015, and 2016 will also be analyzed for comparison. Additionally, the data is considered duplicated since homeless contacts of the same individual can occur, as can referrals.

In 2014, the Houston Police Department made 2,416 contacts with individuals who were homeless, made 4,537 referrals, and placed 194 homeless individuals into housing with the help of social services. In 2015, they made 3,881 contacts with individuals who were homeless, and made a huge increase in providing 12,899 referrals,
which clearly shows a duplicated effort on behalf of the department to reach the same individuals who are homeless more than once; they also had 301 housing placements. In 2016, they made 5,264 contacts with individuals who were homeless, made a huge increase in duplication efforts to provide 14,012 referrals, and had 341 housing placements (Houston Police, 2014; Houston Police, 2015; Houston Police, 2016)

Table 2

Contacts, Placements and Referrals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Contacts</th>
<th>Placements</th>
<th>Referrals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2,416</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>4,537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>3,881</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>12,899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>5,264</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>14,012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

Contacts, Placements and Referrals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Contacts</th>
<th>Placements</th>
<th>Referrals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2,669</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2,593</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Broward Sheriff’s Office did have not statistics on referrals – just placements.

In 2014, the Broward Sheriff’s Office made 789 documented contacts with individuals who were homeless and a combined 152 placements with the help of social services. In 2015, the Broward Sheriff’s Office made 2,669 documented contacts with individuals who were homeless and a combined 418 placements with the help of social services. In 2016, the Broward Sheriff’s Office made 2,593 documented contacts with individuals who were homeless and a combined 352 placements with the help of social services. (Broward Sheriff’s Office, 2017).
HUD Funding

To better track effectiveness based on funding, it was discovered that both agencies in their respective counties received more than their previous year based on 2014, 2015, and 2016 data. In 2014, the Houston area incorporating Harris County received $23,037,803; in 2015, they received $32,098,014; and in 2016, they received $33,233,058. In Broward County, there was subtle growth in 2014 of $10,256,442; in 2015, they received $10,376,919; and in 2016, they received $10,740,809 (HUD, 2014; HUD, 2015; HUD, 2016).

Table 3

**HUD Funding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Houston Police Department</th>
<th>Funding Amount</th>
<th>Broward Sheriff’s Office</th>
<th>Funding Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year</strong></td>
<td><strong>2014</strong></td>
<td><strong>2014</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$23,037,803</td>
<td>$10,256,442</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$32,098,014</td>
<td>$10,376,919</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$33,233,058</td>
<td>$10,740,809</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instrument of Effective Data

While the data from the Point-in-Time Count was considered a measurement of success in seeing the rates of the homeless population nationally dropping in the United States, another form of measurement was also needed to confirm if the jail population in Broward County was commensurate with the 18% decline in homelessness since 2013.
To do this, public use files were utilized to determine what the arrest population was of 2013, compared to when the Homeless Outreach Team went into full effect.

In 2013, the total number of individuals claiming to be “at large” at the Broward Sheriff’s Office jail was 2,483; in 2014, there were 2,415; in 2015, there were 2,267. By 2016, the jail population of individuals claiming to be “at large” (no fixed address) at the Broward Sheriff’s Office jail was 1,954. This reflects a 21% drop in reported at large, or otherwise homeless, reported individuals from 2013 until 2016 and is commensurate with the decline in homelessness in Broward County (Broward Sheriff’s Office, 2017).

Table 4

Instrument of Effective Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Point in Time Count</th>
<th>At Large Jail Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2,766</td>
<td>2,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2,615</td>
<td>2,267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2,302</td>
<td>1,954</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pattern Matching

In order to determine pattern matching, it has to first ensure that the data from the jail was not intermingled with the data for individuals claiming to be at large. While the jail population in Broward County could have gone up or down during the three-year timeframe, the at large data was the only reliable data that could show if someone had no
known address. This was important because there is no published, publicly available research found in Broward County jails that indicates if someone was in fact homeless during incarceration.

Hence, data that would show total jail populations and changes to the population would not be consistent with at large data; thus, the prediction of the pattern matching of the data was ultimately designed to show what actually exists versus what might be seen as total jail data differences in the same given timeframes. Ultimately, the pattern match was designed to take at large published data from the Broward County jail to show increases or decreases of that total number. With these total numbers, it was then matched with the consistency of the homeless population to determine a cause and effect. (Broward Sheriff’s Office, 2017).

**Explanation Building: Cause and Effect**

In order to realize the phenomena of the at large data within the timeframe, it was determined that the decreasing numbers of the reported jail data coincided with social service dollars. While homelessness decreased in Broward County, and those claiming to be at large also decreased, the social service dollars entering into the Homeless Initiative Partnership of Broward County’s Continuum of Care increased.

The emphasis of the findings is that Broward County increased its funding into the Homeless Initiative Partnership as Point-in-Time data and at large data went down for the homeless population. This means the cost of jailing the homeless for minor criminal offenses goes down and the diversion to social services increases. This increase in social
services dollars indicates housing more individuals who are homeless, while also helping to reduce recidivism by those receiving assistance.

An explanation of the phenomena is that a person who is homeless has less of a chance of being arrested while housed, and that diversion from Broward County law enforcement into social services in lieu of jail increases the chances that the homeless will receive the type of assistance they need to move from their current situation into a better one (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2010).

![Comparison of Homeless Arrests, Point in Time, and Homeless Initiative Partnership Dollars](image)

Figure 8. Comparison of Homeless Arrests, Point in Time, and Homeless Initiative Partnership Dollars

**Logic Model**

In order to conceptually examine the idea of law enforcement conducting homeless outreach and its outcomes, a logic model was designed based on three areas and outcomes: immediate (short-term), intermediate (medium-term), and ultimate (long-term). In the immediate, Broward County established a Homeless Outreach Team that was initially started by the Broward Sheriff’s Office in 2013. In the intermediate, the
The assumptions in the logic model are meant to show that first responders, such as law enforcement, can reduce the homeless population through the social service initiatives in place. The external factors include reducing the homeless population by balancing public safety with homeless outreach, which needs support from the social services stakeholders to become effective in helping homeless individuals.

**Figure 9.** Broward Sheriff’s Office Homeless Outreach Logic Model. *Note.* Taken from Broward Sheriff’s Office (2017).
Population and Percentage Ratio

In order to understand the phenomena, both the Houston Police Department and Broward County were analyzed for any similarities and differences. What this case study found was that, as noted above, both communities have significant homeless populations, both are multicultural, as provided by their local and federal government statistics, and both have collaborations between law enforcement and social services to address homelessness (City of Houston, 2017; US Census Bureau, 2016).

As reported by the US Census Bureau in 2016, the Broward County, Florida, population is estimated to be 1,909,632 and the Houston, Texas population is estimated to be 2,303,482. When identifying the data from a statistical vantage based on the year 2016, Houston had .16% of their population homeless, as opposed to .14% in Broward County. This is significant because it means that per-capita the Homeless Outreach Team in Broward County has less homeless reported even though Houston had a much larger drop of their homeless population by population size (US Census Bureau, 2016).

![Population and Percentage Ratio](image)

*Figure 10. Population and Percentage Ratio*
Conclusion

In the framework, Broward County established a Homeless Outreach Team in 2013. The Broward Sheriff’s Office sought to increase participation on established boards that have historically been exclusive to social services. The Broward Sheriff’s Office sought to increase participation on established boards that have historically been exclusive to social services. The boards include: the Broward Behavioral Health Coalition, also known as the managing entity, which covers mental health costs for the uninsured, and the Continuum of Care Board, part of Broward County’s Homeless Initiative Partnership.

Managing Entities do not provide for the care directly; however, they do fund specific programs that address behavioral health needs throughout the State. The Continuum of Care (COC) board in Broward County serves as an advisory board to the Broward County Board of County Commissioners. These boards are the advisory funders for the services that the homeless population benefits from. There was no research to indicate the overall effect law enforcement had on social services and the effect social services had on law enforcement pertaining to the feelings of the relationship. However, through the relationship, the Taskforce For Ending Homeless Inc., a non-profit organization that provides street outreach in the County, was a focal point for how the Broward Sheriff’s Office’s Homeless Outreach Team received much of their partnership in conducting street outreach. The Broward Sheriff’s Office Homeless Outreach Team and the Taskforce For Ending Homeless Inc. both conduct assessments of the homeless and help to determine eligibility for various programs available to the homeless. The
Houston Police Department and the Broward Sheriff’s Office measured how many contacts, placements, and referrals were made.

The homeless affect calls for service by first responders due to complaints from citizens. The citizens complain about the homeless conducting life-sustaining functions, as well as suspicious activity. This research found that the homeless will either end up in jail or hospitalized on a regular basis, with some even known as the high utilizers of the system (usually the chronically homeless), costing taxpayers more than it would cost if they had received supportive housing. A cost-effective solution is permanent supportive housing, which is funded by the federal government, and provides affordable housing, health care services, and other supportive services to individuals and families. This case study shows that it was not limited funds in social services, rather, it was a lack of case management for street outreach engagements.

Moreover, what was interesting in this case study was that it was not case management that was hard to implement with those who are experiencing homelessness, but rather it was that the relationship needed to establish trust to serve as a catalyst for individuals who are homeless. Both the Houston Police Department and the Broward Sheriff’s Office cite the relationship building as part of their ability to help the homeless successfully get off the streets.

This case study shows that the process produced positive results. In fact, the City of Houston lessened their homeless population by 43% and Broward County lessened their homeless population by 18%. These are tremendous numbers compared to the
national average of just 10% during the same time periods. Moreover, the jail population in Broward County was commensurate with the 18% decline in homelessness since 2013. In order to realize the phenomena of the at large data within the timeframe, it was determined that the decreasing numbers of the reported jail data coincided with social service dollars. The emphasis of the findings is that Broward County increased its funding into the Homeless Initiative Partnership as Point-in-Time data and at large data diminished for the homeless population.

The assumptions in the logic model are meant to show that first responders, such as law enforcement, can reduce the homeless population through the social service initiatives in place. When identifying the data from a statistical vantage based on the final year of 2016 year, Houston had .16% of their population homeless as opposed to .14% in Broward County.
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Chapter Introduction

This case study explored the impacts of law enforcement and social services as a collaborative in case management, social service systems, and reducing recidivism among the homeless population. What was found was that law enforcement training and communication was improved through collaborative stakeholder relationships between the social services community and law enforcement.

An example of the Broward Sheriff’s Office’s commitment to the program with the social service stakeholders was when Sheriff Scott Israel used law enforcement trust fund money from his agency to purchase the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for social services. This ultimately led to a nexus between the Sheriff’s office and social services. This also appears to be the catalyst on how the process got started because it showed an interest in how law enforcement was serious about being able to work with social services, so much so they purchased a much-needed system for the County (Broward County, 2013).

Law Enforcement Training

The pragmatic approach was introducing the Homeless Outreach Team Specialist training program for law enforcement. This was a huge success with law enforcement in Broward County generally, and more specifically with the Broward Sheriff’s Office, which won a 2014 Civil Rights Award from the International Association of Chiefs of Police (Trischitta, 2014). It also represented what the Houston Police Department has also been doing with their Homeless Outreach Team program. They, too, had a training
mechanism in which to educate law enforcement on the plight of the homeless and explain the assessment and services (Balke, 2015).

The training itself serves as the impetus toward the goal of introducing law enforcement as a palatable way to address homelessness. The course design in Broward County includes Homeless Outreach Team Specialists and social service experts training law enforcement officers in a 40-hour course. The course curriculum includes how to teach law enforcement on responding to individuals who are homeless and following up with them. They also become familiar with social services, the continuum of care, and the homeless population in their cities (Broward Chiefs, 2017).

The advent of training appears to be the buildup and the drive between connecting law enforcement into the social services arena. This connection leads these groups to talk on a regular basis to guide outcomes on both sides. By all accounts, it appears to have opened the communication window that enables law enforcement to connect with social services in a way that provides inclusiveness and shared conceptual values in their combined efforts to help homeless individuals.

It is not uncommon for law enforcement to work with social services; throughout this research, we have seen numerous police departments involving themselves in the plight of the homeless. Police departments in San Diego, Houston, and Minnesota have all emerged as conductive leaders in the law enforcement world to show that the role of law enforcement is directly connected to the people it serves, which includes the homeless population.
To that end, law enforcement has utilized key aspects of the human connection to include the interpersonal skills that would otherwise be needed in other types of community interaction. This concept is generalized through the use of interpersonal skills necessary to effectuate building relationships between law enforcement and the social services community. Research has shown where relationships were necessary to enable law enforcement to conduct more immediate assistance requests through common goals shared between these groups and the multiple contacts needed with individuals who are homeless (Schutt, Garrett, & Blankeney, 1992, p. 40).

While communication appears to be the undertone of the dynamic, it is deeply rooted within the interrelationships for such development. Maslow (1943) shares that the safety and security aspects are necessary for communication. This holds true with the social services community as they, too, rely on the words of law enforcement to use their power to help the homeless and not use it to arrest the homeless. When shared goals are common between parties, the process of inclusion is greater (Shore, Randel, Chung, Dean, Ehrhart, & Singh, 2010; Maslow, 1943).

**Collaboration: Law Enforcement and Social Services**

Wilmot and Hocker (2011) define collaboration as “a high level of concern for one’s own goals, the goals of others, the successful solution of the problem, and the enhancement of the relationship” (p. 168). Essentially, each party finds a cooperation theme in which to connect with another—a win-win. Wilmot and Hocker (2011) defines a compromise as “some gains and some losses for each party” (p. 163). Essentially, there is always a loser in a compromise—win-lose. Law enforcement wants to win inasmuch as
social services does to help the homeless population. This is a shared goal that is necessary to bring about the kind of change that allows both parties to collaborate and not compromise on the common denominator in the process of helping the homeless population in their respective communities.

In conflict theory, Karl Marx highlights that latent strain, while cordial in nature and discourse, can also maintain disdain and malcontent for each other’s role (Coser, 1957, pp. 200-202). The contempt may be short-lived, considering collaborative roles and responsibilities that enable law enforcement to produce force multiplying results as de facto case managers on behalf of social services. Case management alone highlights a much more potent engagement because it increases the ability to identify, assess, and refer through an interpersonal approach by law enforcement with individuals who are homeless. It also serves as the advocacy necessary to ensure better outcomes can be met with positive results.

Collaboratively, social services seek to reduce and essentially end homelessness. This was the case of Broward County through their ten-year-plan, A Way Home. Additionally, Broward County law enforcement seeks to also end homelessness through engagement. When combined, both parties are seeking the same outcomes and therefore have a common goal. When a common goal is identified, the communication for the outcomes are such that neither part can conflict on outcome, but rather on process (Jones, 2013; Homeless Initiative Partnership, 2013).

The findings in this case study suggest that the process is identified to create inclusiveness that ultimately provides law enforcement a seat at the social services table.
This seat is the impetus of collaboration because it directly involves law enforcement and stakeholders combined. This also lessens or destigmatizes law enforcement’s role in their ability to bridge a communications gap. While ostensibly the results are necessary to create collaboration, the outcomes from the Houston Police Department and the Broward Sheriff's office indicate the positive results that would otherwise have left the homeless without assistance. The Broward Sheriff’s Office saw what social services is about and how they function. Social services had the same opportunity when they saw the law enforcement side of things.

**Impact of Collaborations to Reduce Recidivism**

Law enforcement improves their communication by actually being at the social services table. Effective police agencies that sit on the boards for the homeless social services drive the voice of law enforcement inclusion. Sharing what works and what does not, and seeking ways to improve the overall process, is part of the improvement law enforcement and social services have taken and continue to take (Laurio, 2016). Connecting the outreach component of law enforcement into the communication with social services drives the process of inclusion and improving communication processes that can influence and generate appreciation and acceptance of the dogmatic intricacies of effective homeless outreach.

Social justice requires community partnership, and the advent of law enforcement inclusion and collaboration within the social services realm is telling of the overall reduction in homeless related arrests. When Broward Sheriff Scott Israel got elected as Broward County’s Sheriff, he sought to change the process of law enforcement
approaches when he commented that “homeless people are not problem people, but rather people with problems” (WPLG, 2013). This indicated a cultured message and approach toward enhancing the public safety agency to change and alter its methods in the most humanistic manner possible.

This kind of change brings law enforcement and social services together to not only help the homeless, but also to reduce their likelihood of incarceration and the overall criminal justice processes. Collaboration allows law enforcement more options to use instead of resorting to arrest. It allows for diversion to take place. When law enforcement has leverage to provide options, it enables another set of powers that do not necessarily have to lead to the criminal justice system. This has been distinguished by the way in which law enforcement and the criminal justice system define their roles as part of reducing recidivism while at the same time providing for stakeholder relationships so that the result is a better and more productive community partnership.

In fact, the Houston Police Department took on similar approaches in recognizing the importance of social services first. Ideally, this change in thinking from both agencies resulted in making arrest the last option over all other additional services available. Captain Scott Russell from the Broward Sheriff’s Office shared in a Sun-Sentinel (2017) article that law enforcement officers should “make an arrest a last resort and instead try to provide more tools, [and] resources, to help that person.” It meant that law enforcement, especially the Homeless Outreach Team Specialists, could offer better opportunities to resolving a matter without having to make arrest the first option (Barszewski, 2017).
While the typical role of law enforcement is to enforce the law, it is the “leverage” of the law that is exacted often on the approaches to reduce recidivism. This leverage is the extension of what ultimately requires law enforcement to truly balance out their enforcement with their humanitarian side. To that end, law enforcement can struggle with the choice of making arrests that only promote a one-sided attempt at enforcement, or choose to align with social services to impact collaboration and end the cycle of homelessness.

Pursuant to the findings, it was clear that when social services and law enforcement integrated their approaches, there was a set of collaboration that ultimately took place. When law enforcement has leverage to provide options, it enables another set of power that does not necessarily have to lead to the criminal justice system. This has been distinguished by the way in which law enforcement and the criminal justice system define their roles as part of reducing recidivism.

Additionally, the ways in which law enforcement provides leverage is through a process known as a pre-diversion. The pre-diversion for law enforcement is a concept adopted by the Pinellas County Sheriff’s Office, where a person who would otherwise be arrested for certain offenses is diverted from that arrest on the street and given an opportunity to go into a program (Police Foundation, n.d.). Similarly, cases have also included defendants who are brought before a judge and given leverage to make almost the same type of decisions to dictate their future. However, this leverage by law enforcement is immediate and avoids entering into the criminal justice system altogether (Lerner-Wren, 2015).
Yet, if someone who is homeless enters into the criminal justice system, there are other options available. For instance, the Broward Sheriff's Office offers an internal system that provides treatment to inmates within the jail system. One of the programs provided is known as substance abuse program or SAP, as well as a life skills program, both of which are meant to target criminogenic factors that results in the inmate’s incarceration (Broward County Sheriff’s Office, 2017). Ideally, with law enforcement having these kinds of options to create connections within the jail, it allows them to choose leverage that either involves diversion from the street or, in the jail cases, intervention. If possible, intervention is when law enforcement chooses to effectuate an arrest and intervenes thereafter by working with the jail to refer the arrested person to a treatment service that may help reduce future recidivism as a result.

It is important to understand that there is a difference between diversion and intervention. The impact of the collaborative is such that by having law enforcement maintain access to individuals who are homeless, the programs and housing in lieu of jail becomes a problem-solving approach that reduces recidivism. At the same time, knowing that the homeless cannot always expect a get-out-of-jail-free card when they break the law, there are times where arrests may be required. When that happens, using the same model from the Broward Sheriff's Office, it is the jail’s turn to provide a similar catalyst toward treatment of an individual who was arrested and is homeless.

Had it not been for the collaborations in place, it would be much more difficult for law enforcement officers to connect with social services and expedite the needs of the homeless in diversionary and intervention type-situations. Moreover, the impact is very
clear when the numbers have reflected the kind of outcomes that show less homeless on
the street and more money into social services and Broward County.

**Impact of Law Enforcement and Social Service Systems**

In 2013, the Broward Sheriff’s Office purchased the Homeless Management
Information System (HMIS). This system, which was purchased out of law enforcement
trust fund money by a sitting Sheriff, highlights the reallocation of funds that are
traditionally law enforcement related funds into a social services program. This purchase
created a stronger relationship by the Broward Sheriff’s Office to social services by
purchasing a much-needed service that addresses homeless Outreach at a countywide
community-centric level.

In 2014, the Broward Sheriff’s Office Homeless Outreach Team Specialist
deputies conducted homeless outreach assessments using HMIS. These deputies would
conduct assessments while on patrol to quickly determine what a person who is homeless
has received or needs to receive. The assessments are a measure to determine benefits.
The sooner it is discovered what a person who is homeless has or has not received, the
sooner it allows deputies to conduct a narrow and more focused approach on what the
needs are for the individual that is homeless (Broward County Sheriff’s Office, 2017).

This type of operationalization is like that of the Taskforce Fore Ending Homeless
Inc., as it provides an assessment for those who are homeless. By including law
enforcement in similar functions during street outreach, the utilization of social service
case management systems provides a force multiplier that can easily include more
assessments on homeless individuals. Being that law enforcement runs 24-hours a day,
seven days a week, the impact is greater due to the different times and situations where law enforcement may find individuals who are homeless. This is in addition to the unsafe areas that law enforcement enters. Moreover, it is not uncommon for calls for service to come into law enforcement regarding individuals who are homeless by citizens and local area businesses.

Hence, the inclusion of law enforcement brings together additional actors who can play a role in the reduction of homelessness. It adds to an already developed system by increasing the amount of contacts made and the number of referrals through an on-going systematic process. Moreover, it allows law enforcement to engage in a positive role in helping homeless individuals. While not all law enforcement officers can engage in the same way, proper training and a willingness to be part of the social services paradigm can help in selecting law enforcement officers who want to help and are willing to take the challenge to make a difference in a homeless individual’s life.

**New Perspective for the Broward Sheriff’s Office**

This case study revealed that interestingly, the Broward Sheriff’s Office did not know how purchasing the HMIS would lead to a seat at the social services table. They learned that homeless outreach and mental health provides a diversion opportunity for homeless individuals; it lessens citizens’ complaints; provides the homeless with therapeutic opportunities; and saves taxpayer dollars.

The Broward Sheriff’s Office also recognized the correlation between less arrests leading to more social service usage. They learned that case management systems between law enforcement and social services expedites the help needed for the homeless.
They also learned that engagement through both social services and law enforcement are effective, especially in unsafe areas where social services will/cannot go.

**Conflict Resolution Nexus**

This case study teaches us that collaboration and compromise impact conflict resolution. It teaches us that the impact of providing homeless outreach can change law enforcement and social services approaches to seek collaboration over conflict and that working together reduces recidivism and effectively saves more lives.

Conflict between parties vying for power over roles and responsibilities does not lead to the successful outcomes that both parties seek. A compromise by either party produces negative results that can be further exacerbated by social services taking back powers only afforded to law enforcement through social services, which include assessment tools and contacts. Law enforcement can take back their force multiplier to help social services increase their outreach and case management. A collaboration that identifies each other’s strengths in the process can lead to successful outcomes that both parties can accept.

Moreover, the nexus teaches us that training law enforcement how to do social services, like de facto case managers, has proven to be an effective method and model. It also teaches us that research into the practices of the Broward Sheriff’s Office and the Houston Police Department are necessary to show how collaborations between different roles and responsibilities can be focused on outcomes, leaving only conflict on process, which can also be collaborated on to ensure the interests over the positions are met.
Limitations

Some of the limitations discovered throughout this case study was that it mainly provided research afforded to Broward County and the City of Houston as their ways and means of handling homelessness. This research did not source how techniques and skills were evolved from the specific agencies provided. It was also limited in general categories related to homelessness, as each individual experiencing homelessness has their own personal reasons for why they became homeless. Furthermore, this study focuses on individuals who are, by Florida’s legal definition, an adult of 18 years of age or older and not unaccompanied youth/minors. However, this by no means removes the fact that homeless children also are part of the equation in addressing homeless outreach.

Recommendations

Agencies

Social service agencies and law enforcement agencies are unique in their respective missions. Social service agencies should consider putting aside the differences of roles and responsibilities and focus on the elements that can best serve their interests. This case study found that law enforcement integration into a homeless outreach team boosted the outcomes as a force multiplier for social services. Asking specially trained law enforcement officers in homeless outreach to assist in assessment gives a greater reach to the social service agencies in meeting a shared outcome that both agencies can agree is needed, e.g. lessening recidivism among the homeless and increasing their social services.
Law enforcement agencies must understand that there are concerns related to the impacts that can lead to power struggles about responsibility. It is recommended that if a law enforcement agency seeks to create a homeless outreach team, it should, at a minimum, contain specific elements found in this research. These elements include sitting on social service boards, conducting site visits, learning how the local system works and how it is funded, and coming into the process to collaborate, not to get into a turf war or claim similar funding. Moreover, a success that is matched by shared outcomes can ultimately provide a process that both parties can agree with.

**Further Study**

Although this is a phenomenological content analysis and qualitative case study, it did not include direct interviews with social services and law enforcement stakeholders to understand the experiences and suggestions between each group. A future recommendation would be that this research include data from individuals who are involved with social services doing homeless outreach and law enforcement agencies who are involved with homeless outreach.

Additionally, a quantitative case study that is based on other law enforcement and social service collaborations in other areas would provide clarity of successes in areas not researched in this case study. Areas like San Diego and Central Minnesota would be places that are potential sources of outcome data that has not been publicly published for review.

Another area that is perhaps the most important in terms of humanitarian reasoning is the study of the morbidity of individuals experiencing homelessness.
According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2016), compared to the general populace, the homeless are prone to greater risks of infections and chronic illness, poor mental health, and substance abuse. Many are also victims of violence usually before and during their bouts with homelessness. Hence, the homeless have a mortality rate that is between “four and nine times higher than those who are not” (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016, n.p.).

Why this is important is that research to determine success begs the question: are we helping more than are dying, or can the deaths influence the lower overall numbers? This case study did not have published data available for the morbidity of the homeless population. It would be incumbent on policy-makers to consider this type of research in tandem with the successes of homeless outreach through the collaboration of social services and law enforcement.

**Conclusion**

The pragmatic approach was introducing the Homeless Outreach Team Specialist training program for law enforcement. The training itself serves as the impetus toward the goal of introducing law enforcement as a palatable way to address homelessness. The advent of training appears to be the buildup and the drive between connecting law enforcement into the social services arena. This connection leads these groups to talk on a regular basis to drive outcomes on both sides.

It is not uncommon for law enforcement to work with social services; throughout this research, we have seen numerous police departments involving themselves in the plight of the homeless. The concept is generalized using interpersonal skills necessary to
effectuate building relationships between law enforcement and the social services community. Law enforcement uses their power to help the homeless and not to arrest the homeless. Essentially, law enforcement wants to create a win-win outcome, because social services do help the homeless population. The leverage also enables law enforcement to produce force multiplying results as de facto case managers on behalf of social services. Collaboratively, social services seek to reduce and essentially end homelessness.

The findings in this case study suggest that the process used by the Broward Sheriff’s Office was identified to create inclusiveness that ultimately provides law enforcement a seat at the social services table. This seat is the impetus of collaboration because it directly involves law enforcement and stakeholders combined. The Broward Sheriff’s Office saw what social services is about and how they function. Social services has the same opportunity when they see the law enforcement side of things. Hence, law enforcement improves their communication by being at the social services table.

Connecting the outreach component of law enforcement into the communication with social services drives the process of inclusion and improving communication processes that can influence and generate appreciation and acceptance into the dogmatic intricacies of effective homeless outreach. The advent of law enforcement inclusion and collaboration within the social services realm is also influential to the overall reduction in homeless related arrests. Collaboration allows law enforcement more options to use instead of resorting to arrest, which provides leverage and allows for diversion to take place.
When law enforcement has leverage to provide options, it enables another set of power that does not necessarily have to lead to the criminal justice system. In fact, the Houston Police Department and Broward Sheriff’s Office took similar approaches in recognizing the importance of social services first. Ideally, this shift from both agencies resulted in making arrest the last option over all other additional services available.

While the typical role of law enforcement is to enforce the law, it is the leverage of the law that is exacted often on the approaches to reduce recidivism. Pursuant to the findings, it was clear that when social services and law enforcement integrated their approaches, there was a set of collaboration that ultimately took place. The ways in which law enforcement provides leverage is through a process known as a pre-diversion.

Preferably, with law enforcement having these kinds of options to create connections within the jail, it allows them to choose leverage that either involves diversion from the street or intervention in jail cases. Had it not been for the collaborations in place, it would be much more difficult for law enforcement officers to connect with social services and expedite the needs of the homeless in diversionary and intervention type-situations.

In 2013, the Broward Sheriff’s Office purchased the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). This allowed deputies to conduct assessments while on patrol to quickly determine what a person who is homeless has received or needs to receive. By including law enforcement in similar functions during street outreach, the utilization of social service case management systems provides a force multiplier that can easily include more assessments on homeless individuals.
The Broward Sheriff’s Office also recognized the correlation between less arrests leading to more social service usage. They learned that case management systems between law enforcement and social services expedites the help needed for the homeless. The inclusion of law enforcement brings together additional actors who can play a role in the reduction of homelessness. It adds to an already developed system by increasing the amount of contacts made and the number of referrals through an on-going systematic process. Moreover, it allows law enforcement to engage in a positive role in helping homeless individuals. While not all law enforcement officers can engage in the same way, proper training and a willingness to be part of the social services paradigm can help in selecting law enforcement officers who want to help and are willing to take the challenge to make a difference in homeless individuals’ lives.
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