



City of Lawton

Lawton City Hall
212 SW 9th Street
Lawton, Oklahoma
73501-3944

Homeless Action Committee

Agenda

Monday, August 11, 2025

2:00 PM

Lawton City Hall
Wayne Gilley Conference Room
(Behind Auditorium)

Recommending Body

"Official action can only be taken on items listed on the agenda. As a recommending body, the Committee may review and discuss agenda items, propose and enact floor amendments, and then choose to make a recommendation to the City Council or provide direction to the City Manager. The Committee may also defer items for further review, refer matters to the City Attorney, or send items to standing committees, boards, commissions, or authorities for additional study. In some cases, items may be postponed to a later date or removed from the agenda entirely."

Meeting Called to Order

Statement of Compliance with Oklahoma Open Meeting Act, 25 O.S. 301-314

Roll Call

Introduction of Guests

Business Items

1. Consider approving the minutes of the May 29, 2025, and June 5, 2025, meetings.
2. Consider removing the evaluation of panhandling from the Homeless Action Committee as a safety issue that does not fall under the purview of this committee.
3. Receive a report from Brenda Spencer-Ragland regarding the importance of Case Management in dealing with the homeless population and take action as deemed necessary.
4. Receive a report from Bernita Taylor regarding ongoing efforts taken by the Lawton Housing Task Force to mitigate homelessness within the community and take action as deemed necessary.
5. Receive a report from the Salvation Army and its affiliated partners on the Engage Program addressing chronic homelessness, and take action as deemed necessary.

6. Receive a report from the Lawton Police Department on Mental Health Response Training, including strategies for engaging the homeless population within the community.
7. Receive a report from the Lawton Police Department on current sex offender registration statistics within city limits, to include an overview of the publicly accessible Safety Zone Map available on the City's website and take action as deemed necessary.
8. Receive a presentation from Grandeur of Grace outlining their program to provide transitional housing and support services for registered sex offenders and take action as deemed necessary.
9. Discuss strategies for using CDBG funds to reduce homelessness among current Lawton residents without creating new programs or facilities that could unintentionally attract individuals from outside the community and take action as deemed necessary.

Adjournment

The City of Lawton encourages participation from all of its citizens. If participation at any public meeting is not possible due to a disability, notification to the City Clerk at (580) 581-3305 at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting is encouraged to make the necessary accommodations. The City may waive the 48 hour rule if interpreters for the deaf (signing) is not the necessary accommodation."



City of Lawton

Homeless Action Committee

Lawton City Hall
212 SW 9th Street
Lawton, Oklahoma
73501-3944

Minutes

Thursday, May 29, 2025

10:00 AM

Lawton City Hall
3rd Floor Conference Room

Recommending Body

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Meeting Called to Order

Chairman Booker called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. in the 3rd floor conference room of City Hall.

Statement of Compliance with Oklahoma Open Meeting Act, 25 O.S. 301-314

Chairman Booker confirmed with Bransetter that the meeting notice and agenda were posted in compliance with the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act.

Roll Call

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Stan Booker, Allan Hampton, Bob Weger, Sherene L. Williams, Bernita Taylor (Non-Voting), Melissa Simms (Non-Voting)

ABSENT: Terri Lee (Non-Voting)

OTHERS PRESENT: Julia Mantzke, City Council Relations Liaison; John Ratliff, City Manager; Tammy Huffman, City Manager's Office; Tim Wilson, City Attorney's Office; Tammy Bransetter, City Clerk's Office; Caitlin Gatlin, Communications and Marketing; Anthony Garibay & Heath Want, City Fire Marshall's Office; Gary Brooks, City Housing & Community Development; Larry Parks, City Community Enrichment Department; Charlotte Brown, City Community Enrichment Department; Jonathan Jernigan & Joe Hankins, City Department of Safe and Clean Neighborhood Services; Captain James Churchwell & Sergeant Ronald Dimmitt, Lawton Police Department; Tanna Vu,

Committee Alternate 3 Member; Whitley Brown, Intern with the Lawton Constitution; Captain Bryan Brinlee, Salvation Army; Sarah Svec & Alicia Scheall, Family Promise of Lawton; Debra Johnson, Interim Regional Director for the Comanche County Health Department

Introduction of Guests

Guests of the meeting introduced themselves.

Business Items

1. Consider approving the minutes of the April 1, 2025, meeting.

A copy of the minutes from the April 1st, 2025, meeting may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office upon request.

Motion by Weger, **Second** by Williams, to approve the minutes of the April 1st, 2025, meeting. **AYE:** Hampton, Booker, Weger, Williams. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

2. Review and discuss the proposed 2025 Annual Action Plan and take action as deemed necessary.

Gary Books, Housing and Community Development, provided background information on this item. A copy of the proposed 2025 Annual Action Plan may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office upon request.

Brooks said the plan that you see before you is a draft plan that includes the CDBG allotments with the allocations that were given to us on May 13th. Those amounts were slightly less than last year, but not a lot. It was just, I think maybe around \$10,000 in the CDBG and HOME was around \$45,000 less than last year - it wasn't anything substantial, so it left all the categories about the same. Brooks said I was kind of unsure where we were at, so I had left everything allocated as it was last year, and I made some adjustments yesterday to the amount of projects, but I hadn't really changed any of the projects.

Regarding public service organizations, Brooks said they're not actually listed. He said I do have all of those organizations as consultant organizations in the consultation piece of the action plan, but it doesn't designate them in that area as a public service organization receiving funds. Brooks noted that he found out yesterday that Teen Court would be accepting the YFAC grant rather than the PSO grant. Brooks said this will bring us down to eight organizations.

Brooks asked if there are any questions the Committee may have.

Mayor Booker noted that he just received the plan this morning, and he hasn't had a chance to really go through it. He asked what the deadline is for Council passage.

Brooks said we plan on putting it on the Council agenda for June 10th because it needs to be submitted by June 24th.

Mayor Booker said he believes Donalynn informed him there could be an extension.

Brooks said you can file for an extension.

Charlotte Brown, Community Enrichment Deputy Director, said the absolute drop-dead date before we lose funding is August 16th - it has to be submitted by then, and if it's not, then we lose our funding.

Mayor Booker said so we've got until August 16th. While the first deadline is June 24th, he asked staff if extensions are typically granted.

Brown said most of the time, yes.

Mayor Booker said because I didn't put the continuum of care report on this either, I'd like to have a meeting next week - that gives us time to review this, and we can have a little more educated discussion. He said if the committee members are okay with that, I'll have Julia get with everybody and find the time that works. Mayor Booker said you're obviously free to call Gary and ask questions individually, but this will give us a little better discussion. He said we will try to meet that deadline of June 10th, and he asked that a placeholder item be put on the Council agenda for June 10th.

Mayor Booker asked Committee members if they have any questions regarding the plan.

John Ratliff, City Manager, asked if there is a place in the plan that shows all the recommended allocations listed on one page.

Brown said no, but we can create that.

Ratliff asked staff to include this list in the next presentation of the plan.

No action was taken on this item.

3. Discuss the current method in which applications for CDBG funding are evaluated, and discuss methods for future evaluation of applications to be presented to the City Council for final approval.

Chairman Booker said this item has two points to it. One point is the 15% that can be allocated to Public Service Organizations, and the other 85% is for capital requests. He asked staff to start by explaining how the PSOs are chosen.

Brooks said we get their applications if they qualify. Most of the PSOs are prior year PSOs. We've been selecting them based on if they qualified before and can deliver their grants adequately, which most of them do. He said there's not been a long line of

people wanting to be a PSO. He said he believes one of the complaints made by the Council is that it's primarily been the same group of PSOs, although there have been some that have left and come back. Brooks said he'd like to say that the measurements and metrics for the PSOs are actually in the paper at the end of the year report that's approved by Council.

Chairman Booker asked for clarification that there are measurable metrics or outcomes for the organizations.

Brooks said yes - they are based on what each organization believes they're going to have and what they have at the end of the year. He said I've been following the regular reports that came from the past, but I don't know that it has always included the details on those metrics - that's something I should include in the future.

Brooks said we have a really solid working group. However, one of the points raised at the Council meeting was that they might not be performing as well as they should. Still, I believe that while their organization hasn't expanded in size, the workload has increased significantly — especially in terms of the number of homes and people they serve, and the variety of situations they handle, as mentioned by this group. Given that, Brooks said he thinks there are more people on the streets and more in need of assistance. So when these organizations fall short, it often comes down to a numbers game — the organizations do what they can with the resources they have. He said the numbers are not finite - they can increase and improve, but there's still a limit on that.

Chairman Booker said what we're looking for here is that there are measurable metrics. He asked if he's correct in stating that there is a report at the end of the year on those measurable metrics, and it's really just that that level of detail never gets to the Council. He said he thinks there's a lot of misunderstanding of what he's looking for. Chairman Booker said what I'm looking for, and he thinks what the elected officials are also looking for is the biggest bang for the buck. He asked staff where we can get the biggest bang for the buck to deal with the homeless issue. That's really what we're trying to figure out - we have a responsibility to citizens to make sure that we're getting the biggest bang for the buck to maximize taxpayer value.

Chairman Booker said he also wants to know how the application process works for capital requests. He said while we're on the PSOs, I feel like with the time situation the way it is, we probably need to look at just continuing this next year the same way we did this year. He said let's start building our plan for next year and determine if we want to change it. Chairman Booker said what we may find is that it's already a good system, and it's working like it's supposed to. He said I would be great with that, but I don't think that's the perception of some of the individuals I've had conversations with.

Hampton said basically a long-term plan is probably necessary so that we can build on what we do this year. He said he believes this is what Chairman Booker is alluding to.

Brown said it is time for us to start looking at the next five-year consolidated plan as well

- the five-year overall plan is what breaks down into the annual action plan. She said we're currently entering year five, so it's time to start moving into the next segment.

Chairman Booker asked for more details regarding how the plan is prepared.

Brown said the Consolidated Plan is a five-year plan. For this plan, surveys are conducted and there's a list of projects that we work together with the PSOs and the community to figure out what they believe the needs are of Lawton. She said this five-year plan is what we foresee will be the needs in the next five years.

Brooks said the surveys assess the top ten needs for the City of Lawton. Staff must then go through all the projects to determine which project(s) fit the needs of the City of Lawton and the community. Then, the City will make a final decision on what those projects can be. Brooks said the funding for the staff in our office is done, and four people is about all the staff funding that we have.

Chairman Booker said I think we just kind of need consensus, and I've told you that I'm kind of thinking we need to look ahead, and that we need to probably stick with the same plan on public service organizations. He said I'm really excited to hear we have measurable metrics - we may want to look at those and may want to make some changes.

Chairman Booker inquired about the process for making capital requests.

Brooks said capital requests are usually in CDBG and those fall under generally larger projects.

Chairman Booker asked if it's allowable for a local service provider to submit a request for capital funding for a portion of their building or for a remodel. If so, he asked how they would go about doing this.

Brown said they would submit a request, but I don't know that we have an actual application process. Once a request has been submitted, Brown said we would then have to look at funding to see if we have funding available and that it would meet our requirements.

Chairman Booker said that the City of Lawton is responsible for ensuring the requestor does what they say they're going to do, or we as the city have to pay the money back. He said that's where we've ran into trouble - with monitoring.

No action was taken on this item.

4. Consider recommending to the City Council approval of a Professional Services Agreement between the City of Lawton and AJ Griffin for advisement on the Annual Action Plan and the creation of metrics for Public

Service Organizations, as well as improving housing opportunities and expanding housing supply in the City of Lawton.

Chairman Booker provided background information on this item. He said I really think this item was supposed to say the five-year plan instead of the annual action plan, and the idea is to get a third party to look into what we're doing with a fresh set of eyes. Chairman Booker said I think my observation is, the numbers continue to go up. I know they do everywhere, but that doesn't mean a fresh set of eyes. He said Dr. Griffin is the expert that the Oklahoma Municipal League goes to on homeless issues.

Chairman Booker said the challenge we've run into is using funds from this year's CDBG, and next year we'll only have six thousand that we could use for this. So, if the idea of hiring a third party to have a professional, outside set of eyes to look at this is appealing to the Committee, we could direct the City Manager to work with her on either negotiating or reducing the scope to meet our budget constraints.

Hampton noted that he likes the idea of hiring a professional from the outside to take a look at what we're doing and give us an evaluation on some of the areas that we might change, or even some of the areas we might enhance to better prioritize our plan. He said he thinks this is a great idea.

Taylor asked if Dr. Griffin would be creating metrics for the Public Service Organizations.

Chairman Booker said this was one of the things she had offered to do, but I don't believe it was listed in the agreement she sent. However, this is something we have talked about. We have sent her the information we have, and we haven't heard back from her yet. There is potential for having her do this, if it's needed.

Taylor asked if this would be for all Public Service Organizations, or just those under CDBG.

Mayor Booker said it would just be for the PSOs under CDBG.

Weger noted that it would be good to have Dr. Griffin look at this matrix of viewing the application process. While it continually increases, the funds are what they are, so that's going to require a more thorough review of who's meeting those expectations and parameters the city has set forth - just because they apply doesn't mean they're going to be accepted. Weger said I think having a third set of eyes would be very helpful.

Ratliff said I think what we're really getting at here, based on the Committee's comments, is program evaluation - we want the biggest bang for our buck. He said metrics are a piece of that, but there are other things that go into that as well.

Mayor Booker said we're talking about the five-year consolidated plan and developing that. The numbers should be increasing, so let's get an extra set of eyes that sees

homelessness across the state and has insight regarding what works, what doesn't, etc.

Taylor said it also looks better for your grants - we're going to be going for municipal grants and things. We have a professional that does that for you, and all you have to do when you want to use that in your grant is take that report and stick it in there and work off of those numbers to build a better case for your grant.

Simms said it would be helpful to see what metrics we have available that we're already collecting, and then review the proposed agreement from her just to make sure that it is useful.

Chairman Booker said judging from that, I think what we need to do is direct the City Manager to negotiate within our budget constraints for help from a third party, or an outside set of eyes, in developing our five-year consolidated plan.

Taylor asked if Dr. Griffin will work with what we're already doing to develop her plan.

Chairman Booker said I believe so, but this would be a question for Ratliff.

Ratliff said we can direct Dr. Griffin to to coordinate with PSOs to make sure that the metrics make sense.

Motion by Hampton, **Second** by Williams, to direct the City Manager to work with Dr. Griffin on setting up a plan that will fit our budget. **AYE:** Hampton, Booker, Weger, Williams. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

5. Discuss ongoing safety and accessibility concerns caused by panhandling in roadways and on sidewalks, and consider directing the City Manager to enforce Lawton City Code as it pertains to unlawful panhandling.

Chairman Booker provided background information on this item. He said panhandling is increasing, and I don't think you need the phone calls I've received on this to know that panhandling is increasing. There's one in particular that's very disturbing - we have a sign that says "donate here instead of to the panhandlers", and they panhandle right underneath that sign with their baby. We have another one that sits right on the edge of the road at Homestead and Cache, blocking the handicap ramp. She's handicapped herself. It's been suggested to me that she's being forced to do that, but nobody has proof of that.

Chairman Booker said there are safety concerns with panhandling, and the phone calls I get have all been stating that we've got to get a grip on this panhandling - it's getting out of control. He said from what I understand, the money would be much better used if it was donated to one of our public service organizations to help with homelessness, rather than given directly to individuals. We need to discuss that and come up with direction.

Simms said we talked about this before when we were initially looking at the signs about having a QR code, so people could donate directly to a hub, and that wasn't really identified. They can kind of disseminate some funds similar to how the United Way does.

Ratliff said we distributed some QR codes on some brochures, which I know went out, but I do remember that discussion about the signs. He said I feel like there was a reason why we couldn't do it on the signs, and that's why we handed out the brochures. He said he will follow up on that.

Hampton said I think the issue was with picking up the QR code with your cell phone and the distance required to do so.

Sergeant Dimmitt, LPD, said it was because if you were further than the lane that was next to the sign, you couldn't pick it up on your phone.

Ratliff said yes, that's right.

Hampton said I think that's probably going to be the issue - making it as easy as possible when they're on the spot to get that information.

Chairman Booker asked Committee members if they have safety concerns.

Hampton said there is a lady at 17th Street and Gore Boulevard that sits at the curb with her legs out on the road all the time. He said this is a safety concern. He said he has been having some of these issues within his ward.

Sergeant Dimmitt said we do have numerous pedestrians that get hit yearly from walking out onto the road. He said I'm not saying they're all panhandlers, obviously, but the safety is that if they're walking through traffic to get to somebody handing them money, there is a chance the light turns green and somebody doesn't see them, and they end up in a fatal accident, or at least a serious bodily injury accident. He noted that if someone is sitting on the sidewalk, pedestrians may be forced to step into the street to get around them, which creates a safety concern. It's also an issue when they're blocking parts of the roadway.

Chairman Booker said being next to the road and blocking the roadway are concerns.

Williams said that there is a lady in a wheelchair that sits at 27th Street and Lee Boulevard where the old bakery used to be, and it creates a safety issue at that stop light. She noted that this is a high-traffic area.

Chairman Booker said another complaint he's had is in the area of Cleveland School.

Taylor asked what City Code currently says about this.

Ratliff said we've got an ordinance right on point for panhandling, and it talks about these things, such as public safety and keeping panhandlers off the streets. It also talks about panhandlers obstructing the sidewalk. So right now, all of those things can be cited.

Taylor asked specifically about the people that walk up to your car.

Sergeant Dimmitt said it depends on the location in which this occurs. If it's on private property, that falls back on the owners of the property. Under the ordinance, we can't enforce things on private property unless the owner of that property wants them removed for trespassing. At that point, we can go in, and we can cite them or arrest them. However, if a person feels fear, or that they're being harassed, we have that right also to come in and file charges for that, but there has to be some level of fear or of some type of verbal assault.

Chairman Booker asked if the answer to that is to be proactive about getting no-trespassing forms filled out the same way we do for camping, because that's coming up here in a minute - talking about camping on private property.

Sergeant Dimmitt said that is correct. He said previously, back in the 90s, we had signs that used to be in the parking lots that said "no trespassing after hours" and cited city code. Those were businesses that had already filled out paperwork with the city so that the police could come in and enforce those things. He said this did make it easier for the officers to enforce these issues.

Chairman Booker asked if it is legal to have "no-panhandling" zones.

Ratliff said yes - generally speaking, the courts have said that panhandling is free speech protected under the First Amendment. However, Ratliff noted that as long as the ordinance is content-neutral—meaning it doesn't regulate the message or type of speech—it can be valid if it's tied to a compelling government interest. In this case, that interest is public safety: keeping people out of the streets and protecting both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. So, you can do that as long as the ordinance remains content-neutral and is clearly connected to a legitimate government interest.

Chairman Booker asked if a "no-panhandling" zone can be called a "no-panhandling" zone.

Ratliff said I think it could, because you're not going after what they're saying - you're trying to protect people.

Chairman Booker said it would unnerve me if I was a parent to see this activity close to the school. He said it seems to me that making schools whatever we need to make them to relieve citizens of that anxiety is reasonable.

Ratliff said protecting children is definitely a governmental interest.

Sergeant Dimmitt said you could very easily articulate that if you have people panhandling, it makes the kids feel uncomfortable. He said you could very easily articulate that that is a safety issue for traffic and kids.

Taylor said you can just post no trespassing signs at childcare facilities and schools, which means if you don't have business here, you should not be on our property. Then, if somebody comes on the property, the principal can call LPD, and they can come out and take care of it.

Chairman Booker said he believes the citizens want panhandling restricted as much as possible. He said it seems like this Committee is in agreement that it's better that money goes to public service organizations providing services than directly to an individual, for multiple reasons. Chairman Booker said I would like to see the City Attorney bring back to us the things that we can do to be the most restrictive possible regarding panhandling, but we obviously don't want to break any laws. We want to consider safety, especially, and consider places where kids are because we've got the Kids First Initiative. We need to be doing everything we can to make families feel safe and kids feel safe.

Motion by Weger, **Second** by Williams, to direct the City Attorney to bring back to the Committee the things that we can do to be the most restrictive possible regarding panhandling, considering safety and considering places where kids are. **AYE:** Hampton, Booker, Weger, Williams. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

6. Consider recommending to the City Council approval of the 2025 Kids First: Homeless Action Plan.

Chairman Booker provided background information on this item. He said we began this some time ago, and we immediately found that we ran afoul of our priorities. He said if you'll remember, our priorities for funding were children. Number two was families with children, number three was families without children, and number four was single adults. Dr. Griffin recommended that we add victims of crime, and we want to cover that. Chairman Booker said since we've amended the Plan, it came to my attention that we didn't have language included in the Plan for the disabled. He said he thinks we need to combine numbers one and two on page six of the Plan and add the word disabled. So, what you would have is anything involving children, victims of crime (regardless of age), and the disabled.

Chairman Booker said that doesn't mean we're not going to think of something after we pass this through the City Council. If we do, we will have to come back and amend it. He said Tim did a great job of putting in a disclaimer that we're not trying to run afoul of any federal or state rules or regulations and that they supersede what we do.

Tim Wilson, Acting City Attorney, said on page eight, we added a section that references state law regarding zones of safety for children and sex offenders.

Chairman Booker asked Wilson to discuss the disclaimer.

Wilson noted that this is a work in progress - it's a growing document. Once we implement the Plan, we're hoping there are no hiccups, but you never know, so what we've added is on page 11. He said we added a non-discrimination provision stating that we can't and won't discriminate based on protected class. We also wanted to be in compliance with the Violence Against Women's Act for domestic violence. We also added language that says the City of Lawton recognizes that federal and state law frequently changes, and it's the intent of the action plan to comply with federal and state law. The provision of the Action Plan will be subject to and implemented to the extent allowed under applicable law.

Chairman Booker said obviously, we're not intending to violate anything, and if we do, it supersedes us. He asked the Committee for their thoughts about combining one and two and adding this in.

Taylor said with regard to number one, usually the age of young adults is 24 or younger. She asked if there is a reason why the Plan says 21.

Chairman Booker said I like 21, unless I understand why it needs to be 24.

Simms said this has to do with insurance coverage such as Medicaid.

Taylor said generally speaking, most nationwide services cover up to the age of 24. However, if we want to do 21, that's fine as well. She noted that even with homelessness, most of your grants for those transitioning and your housing goes from ages 18 to 24.

Chairman Booker asked if the ages of 21-24 is a high-risk area that we need to be concerned with.

Debra Johnson, Comanche County Health Department, said this is also a concurrence with neuroscience and the brain - your brain isn't fully formed until about the age of 24, and so there are also increased diagnoses for young adults of mental health crises. She said we know this is occurring in middle school and high school-age kids as well, but all of that culminates in those ages of "I need to enter society as an adult, and I may not have the support I need - I need a little bit of time to get my feet under here".

Chairman Booker said he's okay with changing the age to 24 based on the feedback given. However, he said he will leave this decision up to the Committee.

Hampton asked Captain Bryan Brinlee, Salvation Army, if they have people of this age staying at the Engage Community.

Captain Brinlee said yes - we currently have about six people of this age group staying there. He said he's also ran into people outside of the Engage Community that are below the age of 24 and don't have housing.

Taylor noted that they service up to the age of 24.

Chairman Booker said it will be a floor amendment to change the age to 24, and it will also be a floor amendment to combine number one and two on page six of the Plan and add disabled.

Chairman Booker said I'd like Tim to talk about the changes he made to page 8 and explain what's been updated. Just to remind everyone, he said this issue originally came up when we discovered that homeless individuals had broken into a house and were living there. That situation led to two fire department calls, which prompted Councilwoman Hankins—now Hankins Booker—and me to go out and walk the area. We saw that there were kids living just across the easement. I recently received a report showing that 34 sex offenders are currently listing their address as 'homeless,' and that's really where this all started—from a need to protect children. Tim found some relevant information which we've added here, and I want to give him the opportunity to speak about it.

Wilson said we've added some language to Section 2C regarding homeless sex offenders, specifically those who fail to register. I think that's a key point—failing to register is against the law. We included this because when offenders don't register, they're denying families access to important information that would otherwise be beneficial in keeping their children safe. This ties back to why it's important for sex offenders to register—so families have access to that information. More specifically, there's a state statute in Title 21 of Oklahoma law that establishes a 'zone of safety' around schools, licensed daycare centers, playgrounds, parks, and the homes of sex crime victims. With limited exceptions, the law prohibits sex offenders from loitering within a certain distance of these areas. Wilson said I've added a reference to this statute here because our ordinance is essentially reinforcing that same zone of safety. Violating this law is a felony, meaning sex offenders who do so can be arrested and prosecuted. Because it's a felony, prosecution would fall under the jurisdiction of the District Attorney—not the city court.

Weger asked what can be done to make sure these sex offenders do register so that the families do have the information they need.

Chairman Booker said at the time that I was told there were 34 sex offenders, there were seven more that had failed to register and were awaiting sentencing. He noted the LPD must be looking for these individuals to be able to identify them. He highlighted page three of the Plan, which states that the city will not tolerate individuals who violate the law, putting our community and children at risk.

Sergeant Dimmitt said detective Donald Pauley's sole responsibility is ensuring that sex offenders are properly registered and tracking down those who are not. In addition, within our Special Operations unit, we have an officer dedicated specifically to handling pedophilia-related cases. He stays on top of these cases and works actively to get

offenders off the streets. We also work very closely with U.S. Marshals and recently conducted a large roundup operation in the city and across the county. That operation happened about two weeks ago and focused on verifying the locations of registered sex offenders. If someone was found to be in violation—such as failing to register—they were arrested. Given the manpower we have, we're doing as much as we possibly can. People are going to break the law, but as soon as we learn of a violation, Detective Pauley takes the case and moves quickly to either get the individual off the streets or ensure they're properly registered. Sergeant Dimmitt said the laws in place are strong and give us the tools we need—but we can only act on what we know. That's why public awareness is so important. The more the community reports, the more effective we can be in enforcing these laws. If someone knows of a registered sex offender living in a home or violating the law, we urge them to report it to us immediately so we can go and investigate it.

Captain James Churchwell, LPD, said sex offenders are required to check in with Detective Pauley on a monthly basis. They must physically come to the police department to do so. This check-in process is how we catch many people who fail to report or who are in violation of registration requirements. He noted that the Department of Corrections notifies us when a sex offender moves into the area or is planning to return. That information helps determine where they're allowed to live based on legal restrictions.

Debra Johnson, Comanche County Health Department, asked if the LPD can query utility accounts or tax data as far as coordinating with someone's address if they're not reporting.

Sergeant Dimmitt said we would have to first obtain a search warrant, and we have to have probable cause to justify the search warrant. We can't just issue a broad, catch-all search warrant to target everyone. We need to have prior knowledge or evidence of a specific violation before we can move forward with a search warrant based on probable cause.

Ratliff asked Sergeant Dimmitt to reach out to the Department of Corrections, since they manage the website and the interactive map. He said the map is helpful for tracking registered offenders with known addresses, but I don't believe it includes those who are homeless. One idea might be to have them display homeless offenders separately—either above or below the map—so people can still view their information and photos, even without a specific address. Right now, the pin drops work well for those with known residences, but I don't think there's any way to identify homeless offenders through the map.

Sergeant Dimmitt said he's tracking. He said he will get with them and then send Ratliff an email.

Chairman Booker said in the interest of time, I am going to ask that the Committee either recommend or don't recommend the plan with the floor amendments we

discussed of combining numbers one and two on page six and adding the word disabled, and changing 21 to 24 on age. He said if you feel like you need more time to review it, we can put it on next week's agenda.

Motion by Weger, **Second** by Williams, to move forward with the Plan with the amended changes as discussed by the Committee. **AYE:** Hampton, Booker, Weger, Williams. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

7. Receive a report from the Salvation Army and its affiliated partners on the Engage Program addressing chronic homelessness, and provide direction to the City Manager as needed.

Captain Brinlee gave a report on the Salvation Army's Engage Program addressing chronic homelessness.

Captain Brinlee said we had 84 engagements in April, which is amazing. The system is still being developed, but it's already showing results. We're successfully identifying and helping people experiencing chronic homelessness, getting them off the streets, and recording those efforts. It's a sign that the system is working, even in this early phase.

Captain Brinlee said last Monday, on Memorial Day, we held our first volunteer training session. The volunteer application process is thorough and includes an extensive background check, since volunteers will be working with vulnerable adults. Captain Brinlee said some of you in this room may have already received an application or may be interested in applying to work with individuals who are vulnerable or suffering from chronic homelessness.

Captain Brinlee said we collaborate with, or refer to, nearly every agency in town—many of which are listed as preferred partners. Any agency interested in working with the chronically homeless population can gain access to the Salvation Army program. If you or your organization have a specific service or area of focus, you can sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with us to move forward. It's very important to understand that only individuals or agencies who have been approved are authorized to work directly with the chronically homeless population.

Captain Brinlee said we've had a lot of people coming onto the property, and unfortunately, some of them are predators who claim to be acting in the name of the church, but their background check doesn't pass, which is a serious concern for us. That's one of our biggest issues right now. For this reason, Captain Brinlee said I've been tracking our police engagement, including background checks, arrests, and dispatch calls for the month of April. What I'm sharing here is just what I had recorded at my desk, but I'll let Officer Churchwell give a full report on the official stats that he has for April.

Captain Churchwell said since our last meeting on April 1st, there have been 52 calls to the Salvation Army. Of those, 17 were assault calls, 6 calls were regarding unwanted

guests and there was one drug-related call.

Captain Brinlee noted there were 4 arrests made. He said that place has become a gravitation for people that want to do harm for some reason, which works in our best interest, because it allows us to get people to do background checks. He noted that most of these individuals are not residents of the property. In fact, about 80% of them aren't homeless at all—they actually live in houses in the surrounding area.

Chairman Booker asked Captain Brinlee if he's saying that the people he's had to call the police on are not the people that are staying on the property.

Captain Brinlee said that's right - they're people that come there to visit that actually live in houses. These are individuals living in poverty, some of whom have histories of drug addiction and other serious issues. Some are involved in theft—stealing from people, taking pets or belongings—and we've even seen people abandoning their own animals on the property. Captain Brinlee said there have been major issues, and as of now, we've banned all pets from the property moving forward. Some individuals experiencing homelessness have had serious concerns about this change. In response, we've been working closely with Animal Control to address the problem. We've also started offering classes focused on pets and homelessness, including topics like providing vaccinations for dogs. A big part of the issue is that some people in the community don't have anywhere to take their pets, so they end up dropping them off at our site.

Other than that, Captain Brinlee said the the program is working incredibly. Once we get the mentorship and stewardship programs up and running—with volunteers actively engaging in the community and all background checks in place—this program is going to be absolutely incredible.

Sergeant Dimmitt asked Captain Brinlee if the victims in the encampment area being targeted specifically because they're homeless, or is it just coincidental that they happen to be on the property and become victims.

Captain Brinlee said it's generally related to their circle of influence. A lot of them are actually family members. However, on the flip side of this, Captain Brinlee said we have also set up a safe zone where family members can reconnect with their loved ones. This month, we've seen great results—families from places like Chickasha and Oklahoma City have come out, found their daughters or grandchildren, and were able to help them, get them off the property, and into a safe environment. Captain Brinlee said the program has great benefits.

Regarding staffing and training, Captain Brinlee said we have 3 individuals volunteering in stewardship, and 6 individuals volunteering in mentorship. We also have four volunteers that are doing showers on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Captain Brinlee noted that one case manager has accepted a position and will be starting within the next two weeks.

Captain Brinlee said we're facing some serious issues that need to be addressed quickly—one of the biggest being food safety and food insecurity. People are dropping off food at the site in record numbers, often straight from the trunks of their cars. In many cases, their vehicles are in poor condition, and the food isn't safe to consume. Captain Brinlee noted that even well-meaning organizations have brought in food, but this is also not safe, because none of it is regulated. Just last week, someone dropped off raw deer meat from a personal freezer, stored in two ice chests. People were out there cooking it on small barbecue grills, forming patties as fast as they could. As a result, three individuals developed severe diarrhea. He said food insecurity is a major issue, and that's why I'm bringing this up today—I'd like to ask for some level of permission to address it. Additionally, people are being exploited over food. He said if I offered most of you food out of the back of my car, you'd likely decline. But people facing food insecurity often don't have that choice. They're in survival mode, and that puts them at risk.

Captain Brinlee said there are two key reasons why this matters. First, if a foodborne illness breaks out, we need to be able to trace its source. People facing food insecurity deserve the same safety and dignity the rest of us expect when eating at a restaurant or sending our kids to school. Second, there are organizations that have gone through the proper channels and have set aside \$97,000 in their budget to feed people. The organizations have purchased the right equipment, taken food safety classes, earned certifications, and they follow strict food handling protocols, including checking food temperatures. That level of preparation and investment deserves to be protected. Captain Brinlee said when you have four local organizations collectively spending around \$330,000 a year to feed people, and then someone shows up at a nearby park with a barbecue pit, deciding on a whim to feed large groups for two weeks, it undercuts carefully planned budgets and efforts. Additionally, Captain Brinlee said we're not seeing enough collaboration. If one group is already scheduled to serve lunch on Tuesdays, others should respect that. These groups have taken the time to plan, secure funding, and rely on community donations to make it possible. That coordination should be supported and protected.

Captain Brinlee said he's asking for the opportunity to bring together the different agencies and churches that have already invested in this work to create a coordinated plan for how we feed people to be presented to the Committee.

Captain Brinlee noted that the Engage Community property has to be developed. He said in April, the condition of the property was terrible—it was muddy, filthy, and unsanitary. Dogs were relieving themselves on-site - we have since banned them. There's standing water collecting on the property, and overall, it's a mess that urgently needs to be addressed. Captain Brinlee said if I'm unable to develop or improve the property within the next month, and the rain continues, I'll have no choice but to relocate the operation.

Captain Brinlee said one other thing I want to point out is the amount of trash coming off that property—it's significant. In April alone, 8,600 pounds of trash were removed. That

doesn't even include everything. There are nine trash cans that hold about 150 pounds each, plus two large dumpsters weighing about 800 pounds each that get emptied twice a week. When you do the math, the total amount of waste being collected is actually even higher. The upside is that we're managing that trash in one location instead of it being scattered throughout the city. This trash would exist regardless—but having a central place to collect and dispose of it helps us stay ahead of the issue.

Chairman Booker asked if there is anything that we can do to help the Salvation Army with the people that are showing up with food or going in there thinking they're going to work with what are now Captain Brinlee's clients and his program without going through the proper channels.

Hampton said I've done some reading about other communities that have dealt with this, and one of the things that they started with is setting up an ordinance where you can't feed more than two people publicly. He said he thinks there needs to be standardized ways of dealing with this issue.

Taylor asked Captain Brinlee if he has a presentation regarding food insecurities that he would like to share.

Captain Brinlee said I do. He said I've developed everything I need for the other agencies that are feeding like we are so that we can come together, and I can show them photos of the issues we're facing, including health problems that have already come up, so they can see the real impact firsthand. He said if we can develop a safer, coordinated food program, it not only protects public health—it also helps us better track who is in our community, where they came from, and what their condition is. This is a critical part of the larger effort. If someone is feeding people across the street by Walmart, for example, and it's not coordinated, there's no record of who was helped or what was given. That lack of information makes it harder to serve people effectively.

Taylor said I think your presentation might give us a full view of what's going on, why it's not good, and who you'd like to engage to come up with solutions - then the ordinance could come from that.

Chairman Booker asked Captain Brinlee if they feed the people in the Engage Program.

Captain Brinlee said no, not right now, but I will go back to doing that. He said we have \$97,000 set aside in our budget for this. He said what I'd like to do is bring together all of us who have food handler's licenses, established budgets, and have invested in feeding people facing food insecurity. My goal is for us to sit down and develop a coordinated plan to ensure a safe, consistent feeding program in Lawton—specifically for individuals experiencing homelessness or poverty.

Hampton asked Captain Brinlee if he needs the city to coordinate the meeting.

Captain Brinlee said no, I'll coordinate that, but we do need to come back here and make a report, because in order for us to completely solve this, we are going to need city involvement.

Debra Johnson, Comanche County Health Department, said she would like to have an active role in this considering the foodborne safety aspect of it and the licenses that we're in charge of. She noted that there's long been discussion about how these individuals deserve healthy, well-rounded food. She said the foodborne illness is a whole other aspect we want to look at.

Chairman Booker asked Captain Brinlee to work on his presentation and advise him when he's ready to give the presentation.

Chairman Booker asked Captain Brinlee if he knows of any program in town that works with sex offenders.

Taylor said Grandeur of Grace works with sex offenders.

Chairman Booker noted that he may want to hear from them in the future.

Taylor said that Grandeur of Grace is veteran-specific, but they can give us what they're doing and how it's working. She noted that they have tiny homes that are outside the city limits.

No action was taken on this item.

8. Discuss homeless encampments within the City of Lawton that are located outside the Salvation Army Engage Community, and consider directing the City Manager to take proactive measures to address the issue, including providing property owners with a Trespass Enforcement Authorization Form.

Chairman Booker provided background information on this item. He said this is really about us being proactive, and not saying, "well, that's private property - there's nothing we can do", because we can reach out to the property owner and ask them to sign a no-trespass form.

Ratliff noted that the city does have a no-trespassing form that can be provided to property owners. He said we do have a system in place for this. However, I don't think it's being widely used or publicized. For example, if you go to our website and simply search "trespass", the form comes up immediately. But the fact that this topic is on the agenda suggests that not everyone is aware of it. The form has been available online for about a year now, and we also have printed copies here. Property owners or managers can submit it either digitally through the website or in person at the Police Department.

Sergeant Dimmitt said I met with the Board of Realtors and gave them a full breakdown

of this process. The idea was to make sure that when new property owners come in—especially those managing rental properties or representing out-of-state owners—they're aware of the forms and can get them filled out. If there is something new that needs to be revisited or if there's a need for me to present it again to the Board of Realtors or any other group, just let me know.

Chairman Booker said I'd like to see this become a citywide effort—whether it's the Police Department, Solid Waste, or the Department of Safe and Clean Neighborhoods—anytime a tent is spotted, the property owner should be contacted. He said I use an app on my phone that gives me access to property tax records, so it's easy to identify who owns a particular parcel. I assume the city uses this tool when sending out notices. Chairman Booker said we're free to discuss this, but I'd really like to see a motion here to direct the city manager to be proactive, utilizing all the city's assets to obtain these forms wherever they see a tent. He said we can't allow this activity in our neighborhoods, because our job is public safety and to provide neighborhoods for families where children can thrive.

Motion by Hampton, **Second** by Weger, to direct the City Manager to be proactive in utilizing all the city's assets in obtaining no trespassing forms from property owners.

AYE: Hampton, Booker, Weger, Williams. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

9. Consider recommending to the City Council approval of the Lawton Unhoused Trust Authority Indenture.

John Ratliff, City Manager, provided background information on this item.

Ratliff said you have a copy of the Trust Indenture in the back of your packet - this is just a draft. Essentially, there are nine trustees, with two alternates named, but we can substitute the names - this is just what we've come up with. The purpose behind this Trust is to manage the real property - Captain Brinlee was talking about this. Ratliff said he thinks if we can stand this trust authority up at the next Council meeting, we can talk about the transfer of the property, we can talk about grading it, and we can talk about making the improvements that Brinlee has talked about, because that's exactly the purpose of this authority - to manage property and manage assets to help with the homeless issue.

Ratliff said he is certainly open to any comments or any amendments the Committee wants to make, but this is just the legal framework for this authority so we can move forward, acquire the real property, and start making the improvements necessary to make it a livable place.

Chairman Booker asked the Committee if there is a motion for recommendation to the Council.

Weger made a motion to recommend the trust indenture to the City Council.

Hampton seconded Weger's motion.

Taylor said she is a trustee of this authority. She asked if this authority is particularly aimed towards the Engage Community, or if it's for other things as well.

Ratliff said it's for other things as well, but right now, that's the primary purpose.

Melissa Simms, Comanche County Health Department, said we need to check on state employee involvement as a trustee before we're good this.

Debra Johnson, Comanche County Health Department, noted there's a change going on with the Director of the United Way, but the trust indenture currently lists Mark Woommavovah. She recommended just listing a general CEO/President for the United Way.

Motion by Weger, **Second** by Hampton, to recommend to the City Council approval of the Lawton Unhoused Trust Authority Indenture. **AYE:** Williams, Booker, Hampton, Weger. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

Adjournment



City of Lawton

Homeless Action Committee

Lawton City Hall
212 SW 9th Street
Lawton, Oklahoma
73501-3944

Minutes

Thursday, June 5, 2025

3:00 PM

Lawton City Hall
3rd Floor Conference Room

Recommending Body

"Official action can only be taken on items listed on the agenda. As a recommending body, the Committee may review and discuss agenda items, propose and enact floor amendments, and then choose to make a recommendation to the City Council or provide direction to the City Manager. The Committee may also defer items for further review, refer matters to the City Attorney, or send items to standing committees, boards, commissions, or authorities for additional study. In some cases, items may be postponed to a later date or removed from the agenda entirely."

Meeting Called to Order

Tim Wilson, Interim City Attorney, said since we don't have the Mayor here as the chair, and we don't have a vice-chair, we need to elect someone to be chair for this meeting.

Motion by Weger, **Second** by Williams, to elect Hampton to chair the meeting. **AYE:** Hampton, Weger, Williams. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

Statement of Compliance with Oklahoma Open Meeting Act, 25 O.S. 301-314

The meeting notice and agenda were posted by the City Clerk's Office as required by State Law.

Roll Call

PRESENT: Allan Hampton, Bob Weger, Sherene L. Williams, Bernita Taylor (Non-Voting), Melissa Simms (Non-Voting)

ABSENT: Stan Booker (Chairman), Terri Lee (Non-Voting)

OTHERS PRESENT: Julia Mantzke, City Council Relations Liaison; John Ratliff, City Manager; Tammy Huffman, City Manager's Office; Tim Wilson, City Attorney's Office; Tammy Branstetter, City Clerk's Office; Gary Brooks, City Housing & Community Development; Larry Parks, City Community Enrichment Department; Charlotte Brown, City Community Enrichment Department; Captain James Churchwell, Lawton Police Department; Detective Donald Pauley, Lawton Police Department; Sergeant Ronald Dimmitt, Lawton Police Department; Tanna Vu, Committee Alternate 3 Member; Kim

McConnell, The Lawton Constitution; Captain Bryan Brinlee, Salvation Army; Sarah Svec & Alicia Scheall, Family Promise of Lawton; Brooke Brown, Grandeur of Grace

Introduction of Guests

Guests of the meeting introduced themselves.

Business Items

1. Review and discuss the proposed 2025 Annual Action Plan and make a recommendation to the City Council.

Gary Brooks, Housing and Community Development, provided background information on this item.

Brooks said our recommendation is that we adopt the plan as is, and then make amendments once it's been accepted by HUD. He said I provided the documents, but the annual action plan project activity list is pretty much the same as last year's - the only thing that is probably a little confusing is the program income in CDBG is \$140,850. Brooks said I put that in there, but there's not really a sure expectation that it's going to arrive this year. He noted the City of Lawton has an NSP account. The NSP program closed in 2016. Brooks said I think the last quarterly reports they did were in 2019. That money was technically program income from that program, and it can be transferred to CDBG upon approval by HUD, and that approval is pending. Brooks said I have no idea whether it will be accepted as allowed to transfer to CDBG, but in the chance that it is, having it in the proposed plan keeps us from having to amend it later.

Brooks said everything else is pretty much laid out as the prior year. He noted that the total grant amount went down by a few thousand dollars. Our CDBG administration is \$147,000 - it's always around \$150,000. All the projects are the same as last year.

Chairman Hampton asked if there is a deadline.

Brooks said the initial deadline is June 24th. If you go beyond June 24th, you have to make a written request to extend our time for submission. The drop-dead deadline every year is August 16th, and if you don't have it submitted by August 16th, then you lose funding. He noted that when you ask for an extension, you generally ask for a month or something. You have to get your timeframes met on posting and all of that, and you can run that concurrent if you amend both the action plan and the consolidated plan. Brooks said you usually have to make changes to both. He said they have to be posted for 30 days, and they would like to have two weeks' notice of posting.

Chairman Hampton asked if there is a penalty for asking for an extension.

Brooks said no - there's no penalty.

Charlotte Brown, Deputy Director of Community Enrichment, said the penalty comes with the August 16th deadline. If you don't have it submitted by then, then you completely lose all of your funding.

Chairman Hampton asked Brooks if they have recommendations put together for the City Council.

Brooks said our recommendation is to adopt the plan as is.

John Ratliff, City Manager, asked Brooks if we included busing in the plan.

Brooks said we did not. He said I emailed HUD either yesterday or the day before. Basically, there are two problems with the busing. The first problem is that it comes out of the 15% for Public Service Organizations (PSOs). Initially, I think we proposed \$50,000. The total amount allocated for PSOs is \$110,700, so if we allocated \$50,000 to the busing, that would reduce the amount available to other public service organizations by that same amount. The second problem—and this one is more critical—is something I think Jackie McBride may have missed in her response. I believe she read the first part but didn't catch the second part. The issue is that anything we've funded out of our budget prior to making it a Public Service Organization cannot be replaced by CDBG funds. In other words, CDBG funds cannot be used to supplant city funds. So, if the city was already paying for the bus tickets, then we would have to meet and exceed that—we would have to go above and beyond the city's existing funding. The regulations clarify that the city can continue its current level of spending independently of CDBG. However, any CDBG funding would have to be in addition to what the city is already providing.

Ratliff said I don't think there was a line item for the funding—we used manager contingency funds last year. So there wasn't an actual set-aside specifically for busing. I think what we did is different, and that would be my response to that—because we didn't actually have dedicated funds set aside for it.

Brooks said given that, I think we could do it - it's legitimate. The guidance just says to be careful with how you do it—it's pretty simple, but still, we must be cautious.

Ratliff said we would want to bus an individual back to a place where they have a support system—family, a job, or whatever the case may be.

Ratliff asked Brooks if we have a carve-out for administrative costs in the plan, because we're going to want to develop the metrics.

Brooks said within the administration costs—the \$147,000—we've typically allocated around \$20,000 over the last few years for professional services. Some of that covers routine expenses, but it's a small amount—about \$3,000 or so—that goes toward our share of building costs like bug spray and similar items. With regard to the Consolidated Plan, the reason we included that amount again is that there's an Analysis of

Impediments to Fair Housing Choice that's done every five years. I spoke with—I think it was Lisa Krieg from Norman—and she mentioned that if we're not expecting any significant changes from our last analysis (and we aren't), then we're not required to conduct a new analysis every five years. Based on that, the option is not to do the analysis again this year, and that money can instead be redirected towards the item we're currently discussing.

Brown said we would have to make amendments to the Consolidated Plan and the Annual Action Plan for that agreement. So that's what we recommend. We're recommending approval of the existing plan now, and then we'll come back with the amendments once HUD has finalized this agreement—so that we don't miss the deadline.

Ratliff said that makes sense.

Brooks said the funds we currently have include rollover amounts from prior years. Based on what we have from those previous years, we believe there's enough to cover between \$50,000 and \$60,000.

Ratliff asked what the deadline is.

Brown said the first deadline is June 24th.

Chairman Hampton asked if the hard deadline is August 16th.

Brown said yes.

Brooks said the council meetings are on the 10th and the 24th. Initially, I think I had posted for June 10th—after I adjusted for the April 22nd meeting that was canceled. I chose the 10th because waiting until the 24th seemed precarious.

Ratliff said I recommend that the Committee move to make a recommendation to the Council to approve the plan as it is.

Motion by Williams, **Second** by Weger, to recommend to the City Council approval of the 2025 Annual Action Plan as presented. **AYE:** Williams, Hampton, Weger. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

2. Receive a report from Bernita Taylor regarding ongoing efforts taken by the Lawton Housing Task Force to mitigate homelessness within the community.
- **STRICKEN**

Chairman Hampton said this item has been stricken, and we will consider it at a future meeting.

No action was taken on this item.

3. Receive an update from staff regarding a proposed amendment to the city's panhandling ordinance.

Tim Wilson, Interim City Attorney, provided background information on this item. He said this is still in legal. We had the Police Academy this week, so that slowed us down. Also, the Mayor has asked for some changes to be made to the trust indenture for the Lawton Unhoused Trust Authority and the associated resolution for the indenture, so that's been a priority getting that on for next week's Council meeting.

Chairman Hampton said there were some items like no panhandling zones and no blocking of sidewalks.

Ratliff said that's currently in the ordinance—you can't impede someone or force them to go around you on a sidewalk. So that can be enforced now - there's no limitation. If someone is panhandling on a sidewalk, and it causes someone to have to take evasive action, then that would be a violation of our ordinance.

Wilson said it's a public safety issue. With regard to the no-panhandling zones, it's my understanding from some research we've done that Oklahoma City may have something like that, so we're going to need to look and see what we can put in those and where we can identify those.

Chairman Hampton asked if setbacks from the curb will be included.

Wilson said we will look at that.

Ratliff said I think Tim's going to look at that, but the existing ordinance says you can't go into the street or interfere with traffic. So if you're doing that now, that would violate the existing ordinance, even without the buffer zones.

Wilson said that is our current code—like John is saying—where we're talking about people getting onto the streets - it's a public safety issue. The courts tend to affirm the panhandling ordinances when they address issues like public safety. Panhandling is considered a form of speech, so any regulations have to be content neutral.

Ratliff noted that there have been a lot of complaints about panhandling in particular. From my understanding, people will stop and give money, and then the panhandler will actually step into the street to collect it. That violates existing code. So if that behavior is observed, that's something that can be immediately actioned.

Sergeant Dimmitt, Lawton Police Department, said we'd have to have some type of physical evidence—either a call from someone, or an officer driving by and witnessing it, or something else along those lines. If someone has a video, they could also go and file a complaint at City Court.

Wilson noted that another option would be to station a police officer in that area or in the

parking lot. And sure enough, someone would probably walk out there and do it in their presence.

Sergeant Dimmitt said I've gotten with the schools, and school officials say they've had a major increase in homelessness and panhandlers around the schools, so that would also be a reason for us to be looking at it for safety purposes.

Ratliff said that's a good point. I think one thing we've got to keep in mind is that we have a tendency to group them together, but homeless and panhandlers are not synonymous. I've seen some folks by the Walmart near my house who didn't look homeless to me—they were wearing nice clothes and nice shoes. So, not all panhandlers are homeless. I think we've got to guard against making that assumption, because it's not always true. Some people have a home, but they're still out begging.

No action was taken on this item.

4. Receive a report from Lawton Police Department on Sex Offender Registrations, to include individuals listed as homeless.

Detective Donald Pauley, Lawton Police Department, provided background information on this item. Detective Pauley said currently, there are 161 sex offenders being tracked in the City of Lawton. Of those 161, 24 are currently locked up. He said in the last month, I completed seven warrants, and those individuals are not included in the 24 already incarcerated. So, there are potentially seven more who will be going to jail within the next few weeks, since their warrants have come back. Additionally, 28 of the 161 offenders are listed as homeless on their current registry.

Detective Pauley said from May 6th through May 9th, we conducted a compliance check in partnership with the United States Marshals Task Force. By teaming up with them, we were able to act as a force multiplier—meaning we had more personnel involved than usual. We had 19 officers from the Lawton Police Department and another 18 from the U.S. Marshals Task Force. Together, we carried out compliance checks across the board for offenders within the City of Lawton. We were able to check in with about 130 out of the 161 individuals. As a result of that operation, we made nine on-site probable cause (PC) arrests, and identified 14 others that required immediate follow-up investigation. Those 14 may result in either warrants or additional on-site arrests, depending on whether we make contact with those individuals before the next time we coordinate a round of warrants. That being said, I also have a sheet here that lists all offenders currently registered as homeless, and notes whether they are currently locked up due to recent warrants or PC arrests.

Ratliff asked how long individuals are kept in our custody if they're arrested for failure to comply with the registration laws.

Detective Pauley said the problem I run into with this is that each person's situation depends on whether they post bond and their individual history. Right now, because the Comanche County Jail is holding so many individuals, I have several that have been

ordered out, but because of history, I have some that have gotten larger bonds. For example, I had one individual who had a failure to register last year. He was released from the Department of Corrections on January 9th. At the beginning of February, I wrote a new warrant because he failed to register again. In March, he was picked up on that warrant and placed back in county jail. Due to his history and other factors, he was given a \$75,000 bond, and he's homeless. About four weeks later he posted bond and came in to register. However, he failed to check in for 16 days in a row. For homeless individuals on the sex offender registry, they are required to check in every seven days. So I issued a new warrant, and he was arrested and is now back in jail. If you look at the timeline, he has been out of jail three separate times, and during those periods, he re-offended three separate times. Detective Pauley noted that this type of situation is common.

Detective Pauley said many of them claim to be homeless, but the problem is they don't have a designated place—like a “green zone”—where they are allowed to stay. So, they register as homeless, but then try to live somewhere else where we can't locate them. If we catch them, they get a new case. If not, they continue on until we do or until they move somewhere else or something else happens.

Williams asked if sex offenders are supposed to be on Facebook.

Detective Pauley said it depends on their charge. If they have an internet-related charge, such as possession of child pornography, they are not allowed to have internet access. However, once they have fully completed their sentence and are no longer on probation or any other restrictions, those internet restrictions fall off. The sex offender registry itself does not control whether they have internet access or what they do online. What we do require is that they provide their Facebook or other social media accounts, including their actual usernames, as well as their email addresses. So, I have access to some of that information. If we receive any relevant information, we can investigate further, issue warrants if necessary, and have a way to monitor what they may be doing on social media.

Taylor said she would like the committee to allow Brooke from Grandeur of Grace to speak about what she does, if she would like to.

Chairman Hampton asked if this is regarding sex offenders.

Brooke Brown, Grandeur of Grace, said yes, we do serve registered sex offenders. We assist registered individuals with housing because we recognize there are many barriers to finding housing. These barriers often force them to register as homeless, which can lead to non-compliance. So, we do provide assistance, despite the laws making it very difficult. If I know who is registering as homeless, and I'm interacting with those who are actually unsheltered on the streets, there's a better chance I can provide help—sometimes by working directly with the Lawton Police Department to assist them. We do offer these services because there are very few, if any, other organizations that say they will serve this population.

Taylor asked if this housing is outside the city limits.

Brown said we mostly house individuals outside of city limits because it's very difficult to find housing within the 2,000-foot restriction zone. As a result, the majority end up in rural areas, which makes employment and transportation more challenging. We do take that into consideration. Of those we have served, several have shown compliance, which is encouraging. The stigma around this issue is real, but I'm glad to see many are making positive changes. Most want to better themselves—they aren't defined by their past mistakes. So, we do our best to eliminate any barriers we can.

Sergeant Dimmitt asked Brown if there are guidelines regarding those they cannot help.

Brown said that financially, because Grandeur of Grace serves veterans and veteran dependents, we cannot assist anyone who does not meet those guidelines. Usually, though, we can find a relation—grandchildren are included as well. When someone outside those guidelines comes to us, we work with other organizations. Typically, when advocating for someone, we can find resources to help them, which sometimes includes transporting them to a location where they have family, friends, or other support.

Chairman Hampton asked Brown how many individuals they are assisting now.

Brown said at last count, we had 10 that we were actively assisting.

Chairman Hampton said we're trying to focus on the Kid's First Initiative here. He asked Detective Pauley if in his work he finds many individuals violating the rules in or near areas where kids are.

Detective Pauley said yes, and that's the biggest problem we run into. If you look at how the registry is worded regarding living arrangements—just focusing on that for now—every sex offender has to live at least 2,000 feet away from any school, park, or daycare. When you think about how the city is laid out, it's intentionally divided so that each neighborhood has a park or school. Many places also have in-home daycares as well as commercial daycares. For daycares, that includes every home daycare that has a DHS license. If the home daycare has more than four children in the residence, it counts as a daycare for this purpose. About every other month, I get an updated listing from DHS of every licensed daycare in the state. I have to separate those out and log them, then add them to the map I maintain. I have a partial GIS map that's been created, but it needs to be reworked. That map is currently on the website, so it at least gives us an idea.

Detective Pauley said every offender who comes to the office knows they have to get their address authorized by me, and I place it on my map. I update the map at least every two months. When you put all the schools, parks, and daycares on the map, it cuts out about 85% of the city as places they can live. There has been some movement

on how parks are counted. For example, the DA wants me to only include parks that have actual children's play centers or playgrounds. There is a big field off Sheridan Road and Lincoln Avenue that's listed as a park on every map, but since it's just open land without playground equipment or facilities, I don't count it as a park when mapping. Actual parks with playgrounds, basketball courts, tennis courts, and other amenities are counted, so the 2,000-foot rule applies to those. Because schools or daycares are also involved, sometimes the buffer zones overlap, making it effectively 4,000 feet from certain places on the map—this completely cuts off entire neighborhoods. For example, in the Park Lane neighborhood, when the area was sold, the back park that was not part of the school was not used as a park, so it opened up the whole neighborhood for offenders to live in. However, most offenders I deal with cannot afford to live there.

Detective Pauley said another important point is about offenders living with children. Whether or not they can live with children depends on their charges and specific restrictions in the law. If an offender is prohibited from living with children, the law says they can only live with their biological or legal stepchildren—but stepchildren must be legal, meaning through marriage, not common law. Also, if the child was a victim, they cannot live with them. So, for example, if a man wants to live with his girlfriend and they've been together for a while, but her children aren't his biological or stepchildren, then he is prohibited from living there. This creates more problems with trying to find housing for offenders. Because of all these restrictions, some offenders end up registering as homeless, moving from couch to couch, or staying at a girlfriend's house until they get caught or their circumstances change.

Detective Pauley said I do know quite a few offenders that are homeless and are living on the streets, and that number fluctuates. We keep track through contacts and registrations. Some of them show up clean and well-dressed, which indicates they have a place to stay when they come in. When offenders register as homeless, my rule is that they cannot spend more than three hours at any one residence. If they want to stay at their aunt's, mom's, grandma's, or girlfriend's house, that is allowed—but only for a limited time. You can take a hot shower, get a hot meal, interact with family—whatever it may be—but after three hours, you need to leave. If I find out you've been at a residence for more than three hours, I have to assume that you're living there, unless it's clearly some type of special event, like a graduation party, a birthday - obviously that changes some parameters. But again, everything is taken into context each time we make contact. All of those factors come into play when we try to determine who is living where.

Detective Pauley said another important factor when children are involved is distance from a park. There are safety zone restrictions for how close they can be to a park, particularly when it comes to loitering. That also comes into play when evaluating compliance.

Chairman Hampton asked if there are things that we can do to help to keep our neighborhoods safe, considering the number of sex offenders we're dealing with.

Detective Pauley said I guess the biggest thing is—we're entering a new era, a new area within that program. So even just talking about it now holds greater significance, because we're actively looking at different things we can do. Right now, the way things function—or at least before I came to this meeting—is that it mostly falls on police officers. If we happen to make contact with someone and then find out they're a registered offender, then we can act on that. But if we don't make contact, they could be walking around and nobody would know. There's nothing physically different between me and a sex offender just walking down the street, so you can't arbitrarily profile someone and assume anything. So when we do make contact with someone, for whatever reason, and then find out they're an offender, that's when we can start looking into it further. But without that contact, there's nothing we can do.

Detective Pauley said that's why, if we start looking into how we house them, where we place them, and what resources we provide, that goes a long way. Being proactive about housing helps create a better situation. If they truly are trying to stay out of trouble and walk the right path—as many of them are—then helping them find a stable place to live supports that effort. The problem is, they come here trying to do the right thing, but I have to tell them they can't live where they want to. I have to tell them they can't live with their mom. I have to tell them the resources they hoped to rely on won't help them. So what do they do? We end up creating a vacuum. Just by talking about these challenges and looking for new options—that's already a step in the right direction.

Chairman Hampton asked if there is a way for citizens to access some of this information. He asked if some of this information is private.

Detective Pauley said most of the registry isn't private—it's public information. So, what we've done over the years, even before I took over, is the city has basically deferred that responsibility to the state. For example, on our city website, we have a QR code or a link that takes you directly to the state's registry site. The state maintains all the offender information anyway. There's also a link (or there used to be) to the national registry site. So, if you search for an individual, and they're on any state registry, they'll also show up in the national registry—and it will show where they live.

Chairman Hampton raised concerns about the accuracy of these lists. He noted that it's important for the citizens to have updated information.

Detective Pauley said for the state, if you go to the Oklahoma Sex Offender Registry (OSOR), which is managed by the Department of Corrections, that's where all of Oklahoma's sex offenders are housed. If you visit the site as a member of the public, you can view all that information. For example, if you search "Lawton," it will give you a list—right now, my list shows around 246 people. As you go down that list, you can see every sex offender who has been associated with Lawton. It will indicate whether they've moved out of state, completed their registration time, are in transit, delinquent, and so on—all of that is listed on the far-right portion of the page. You can also see photos. If there's a current photo available, it will be shown. Some individuals don't have photos, but that's usually because they were never incarcerated—like if they pled out in

court and got a suspended sentence, serving their time only in county jail—so their photo was never uploaded to the system.

Detective Pauley said when they come in to register with me, the first thing I do is get all their registration information and take photos. I send those to the state. So, over time, everyone should have a photo in the system, though there are still some gaps due to transfers or people arriving from out of state. The bottom line is that communication plays a huge role. For example, let's say someone is being released from Dick Conner Correctional Center in Hominy, Oklahoma. He tells his case manager, "I'm going to Lawton." That information goes to the Oklahoma Sex Offender Registry, and he shows up on Lawton's registry. But if, after being released, he decides to go to Tulsa instead of coming here, and he never registers in Lawton, we have nothing on him—he's just listed on our registry. And if he never registers again, there's nothing we can do until we locate him. I can't take that case to the DA's office unless we can show that the crime—failure to register—is happening in Comanche County. If he left Hominy and actually registered in Tulsa, he's still in compliance. But if he didn't register anywhere, then he's non-compliant.

Tammy Huffman, City Manager's Office, asked how this many people are being monitored, specifically when it comes to the regulation of not being allowed to stay at one residence for more than a few hours.

Detective Pauley said they're not - it's by chance. I do compliance checks—that's how that works. I'll get a phone call, an email, or sometimes a tip through Crime Stoppers or another source that says an individual is living somewhere. Then I make arrangements within my schedule to try to monitor that situation, or I'll get someone from one of the task forces or other departments to help monitor and observe if the person is coming or going from that residence. That's how the monitoring works. It's difficult to maintain that kind of surveillance over a long period of time, but in the short term, technically, if someone just goes over to a house today, and there's nothing that says they're living there—I can't just arbitrarily monitor that. One other caveat when it comes to monitoring is this: a lot of individuals who are on probation or supervised parole through the Department of Corrections (DOC) and claim homelessness will have an ankle monitor. That monitor is provided through a DOC program. However, that only applies while they are under DOC supervision. Once their year or two of supervision is complete, there's no more ankle monitor tracking.

Vu said I think at the last meeting there was a question or a statement made about homeless individuals who are also sex offenders—like the 28 that were mentioned. She asked if these individuals are included on the map.

Detective Pauley discussed the paperwork that homeless offenders are required to complete when they check in with him. He said this is the form they fill out when they come to the Lawton Police Department. One of the lines on the form asks, "Where will you be for the next week?" and "What areas do you normally travel?" This form is filled out at the front desk. When I receive it, I review their responses. Some of them, for

example, might say, "I'll be at work." So, if this guy says he works at a certain place, that's what he lists as where he'll be. Now, he's obviously not going to be there the entire time, but that's all he wrote on the form. So the next time I see him, we'll have a conversation about that part. Each person fills out this form themselves—that's their check-in. Homeless offenders are required to come into the police department and check in every seven days. I think there are about 12 of them here that checked in on Monday and Tuesday. Out of those who are required to check in weekly, they will check in sometime between Monday and Friday of this week. I gather all this paperwork, and then next week I go through and mark off everyone who checked in like they were supposed to. For those who didn't, I mark them as "delinquent." By the end of that week, if they still haven't checked in, they'll either have a warrant issued or be contacted.

Simms asked if sex offenders fall off the list of sex offenders registered as homeless if they are staying in a shelter.

Detective Pauley said unfortunately, there's not a single shelter they can technically go to—because they have to abide by the residential laws, and there's no shelter in the City of Lawton that is at least 2,000 feet away from a school, park, or daycare.

No action was taken on this item.

Adjournment

Motion by Williams, **Second** by Weger, to adjourn the June 5, 2025, meeting. **AYE:** Williams, Hampton, Weger. **NAY:** None. **MOTION PASSED.**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:50 PM.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE



**NOT FOR PROFIT
CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION**

WHEREAS, the Not For Profit Certificate of Incorporation of

EMBRACE HOPE COLLABORATORIUM, INC.

has been filed in the office of the Secretary of State as provided by the laws of the State of Oklahoma.

NOW THEREFORE, I, the undersigned, Secretary of State of the State of Oklahoma, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby issue this certificate evidencing such filing.

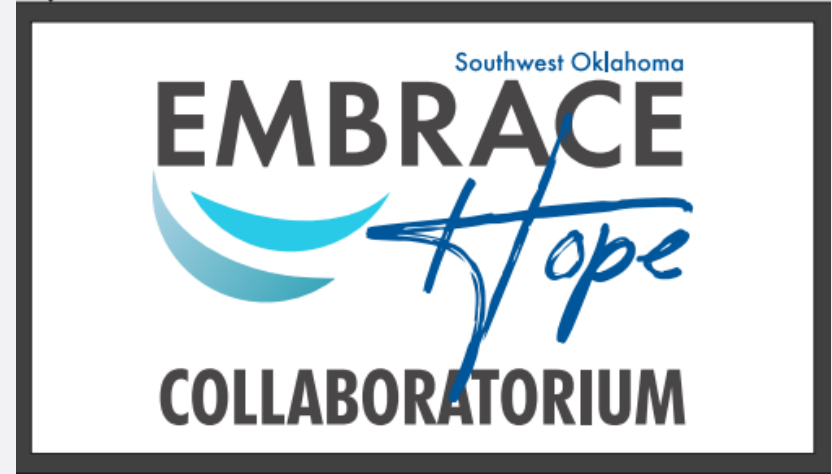
IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I hereunto set my hand and cause to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of Oklahoma.



*Filed in the city of Oklahoma City this
30th day of November, 2023.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. C. ...".

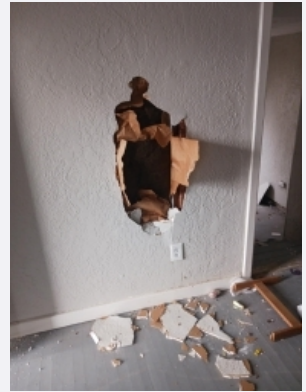
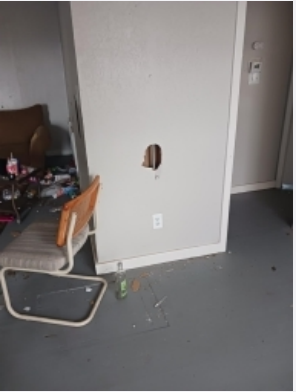
Secretary of State



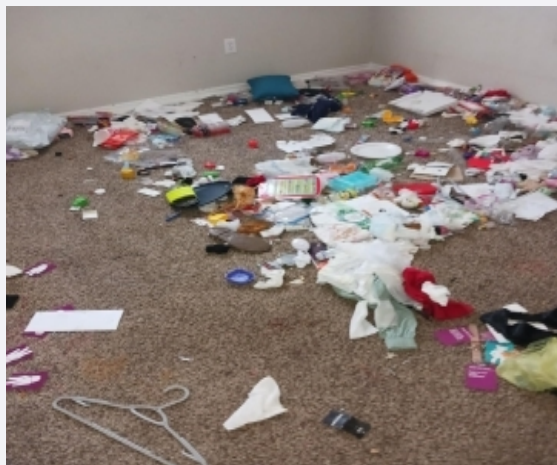
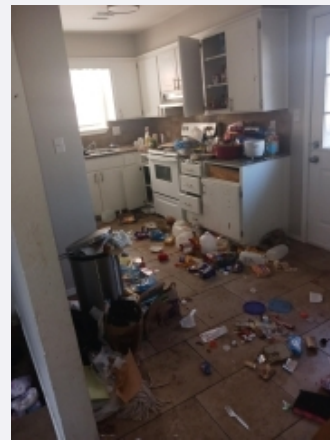
Embrace Hope Collaboratorium, Inc

PURPOSE

1. Provide a variety of diverse programs and services that promote resiliency, collaboration, and fosters self-reliance and self-sufficiency of individuals and families.
2. Provide comprehensive training, education, and information of resources available and assistance with first time home purchases, rental agreements and responsibilities for the prevention of evictions, budgeting 101, professional development seminars addressing new parent support, life and family skills development, communication and relationship training and support groups for children, adults, families and support agencies. Safe secure location for parent and child supervised visitations
3. Outreach programs, annual day of giving, referred to as Embrace Hope In Southwest Oklahoma, where all partner agencies come together and through coordinated efforts based on needs assessment, provide one stop opportunity to receive Information and Referral for preventative Health Care, Dental Care, Breast Examinations, Vaccinations, Information of Food and clothes closets, distribution of food with Feed the Children collaborative efforts, employment assistance, to include resume building, free haircuts, and warrant forgiveness, section 8 housing opportunities, and information and support with obtaining second chance employment, second chance affordable housing, and/or shelters for homeless population, domestic violence victims.







- Single Mom
- 3 Children
- Eviction filed, mediated, evicted
- DHS involved



- Newly renovated, new floors, full house paint, new appliances
- Deposit, rent paid for the first two months.
- Fully furnished





Over the past year, Embrace Hope; C Carter Crane Shelter has successfully assisted 71 individuals in securing safe, stable housing — and remarkably, all have remained housed for over a year.

This success stems from a structured, supportive approach requiring residents to be drug- and alcohol-free, while building daily habits of responsibility and self-care. Each morning begins with washing up, brushing teeth, making beds, completing chores, and working on a personalized action plan.

Our team provides assistance with clothing, furnishings, identification, WIC, SNAP, Social Security, housing applications, and job placement. By combining accountability with practical support, we empower individuals not only to find housing but to sustain it long-term.

Case Management is the secret sauce, staying engaged, building relationships, holding individuals accountable.

Solutions

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Success Story: Advancing Housing Stability and Support in Lawton Fort Sill

Prevention: Stopping Evictions Before They Happen

In 2025, Comanche County faced the 4th highest eviction filing rate in Oklahoma, with 1,113 filings in the first half of the year alone. To address this crisis, the Lawton Housing Task Force Prevention Subcommittee finalized a nine-step Eviction Prevention Plan in May 2025.

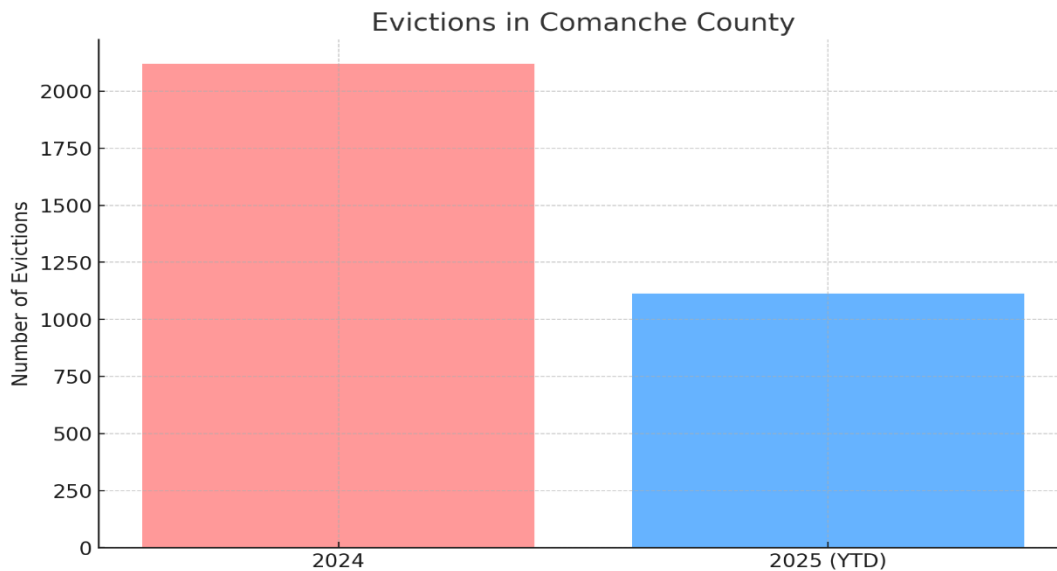
The plan focuses on:

- Identifying and prioritizing at-risk households
- Building coordinated support systems
- Educating residents on housing rights
- Engaging stakeholders to reduce preventable evictions

In June, we launched the Lawton Housing Resource Center’s “Levels of Care” model to streamline services:

- Red – Immediate Needs
- Yellow – Ongoing Support
- Green – Stable Housing
- Blue – Sustainable Independence

This model ensures that each household receives tailored assistance at the right time. Partnerships with Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma, Early Settlement Mediation Program, Lawton Board of Realtors, local emergency shelters, and the Comanche County Sheriff’s Office have been critical in redefining eviction prevention.



Outreach: Meeting People Where They Are

From January to July 2025, outreach teams engaged 85 individuals, 74% of whom were first-time contacts. The majority (96%) were unsheltered at the time of contact.

Key Demographics:

- 10% Veterans
- 16% Age 55 and over
- 28% Female

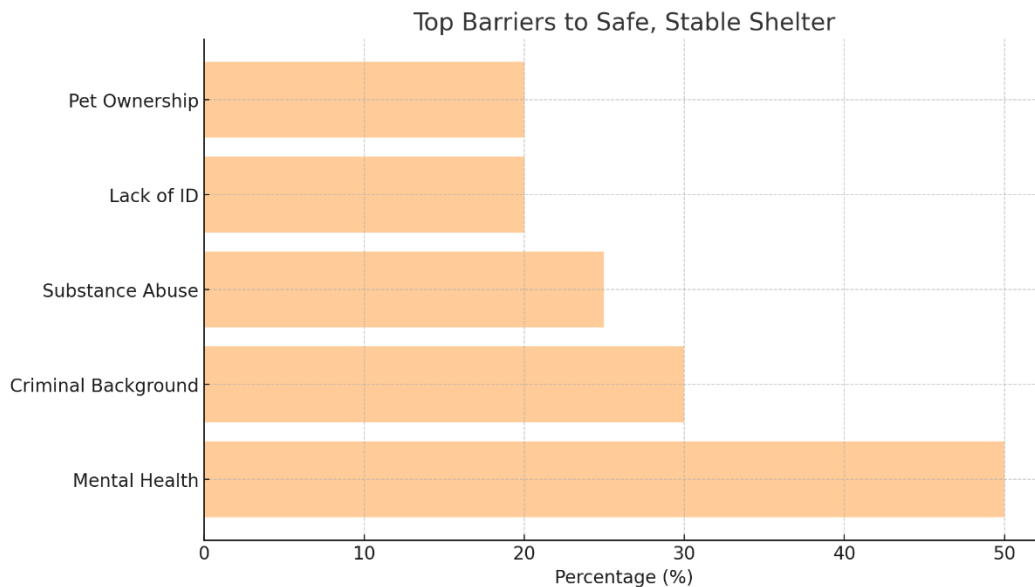
Top Reported Barriers:

- Mental Health Needs – 50%
- Criminal Background – 30%
- Substance Abuse – 25%
- Lack of Identification – 20%
- Pet Ownership – 20%

Early Outcomes:

- 5 individuals employed
- 3 individuals housed
- 4 individuals relocated to reunite with family or access care in other regions

These numbers show that our outreach efforts are not only connecting with vulnerable residents but also creating tangible changes in their lives.



Work Ready: Empowering Through Employment

The Work Ready Program directly addresses the connection between economic stability and housing security.

Housing Instability Trends (Participants Reporting No Stable Housing):

- 12 staying temporarily with family/friends
- 6 residing in local shelters
- 3 without any regular place to stay (cars, parks, abandoned buildings)

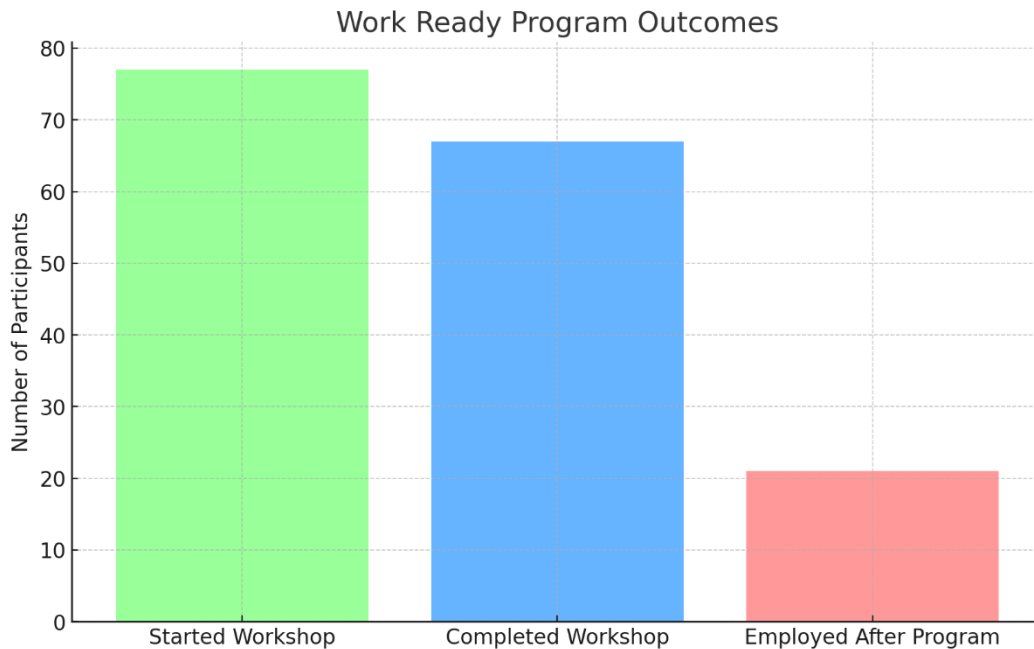
At Risk of Losing Housing:

- 3 participants citing financial hardship or lease insecurity

Program Impact:

- 77 participants started workshops; 67 completed
- 21 employed after completing the program
- 40 total hires during this fiscal year
- 4 participants registered for short-term training programs (still attending)
- \$1,874 invested to assist housing-insecure participants

By equipping participants with skills, job readiness, and financial support, Work Ready is breaking the cycle of instability.



Higher Heights: Stabilizing Families and Households

The Higher Heights Adult Program has served 56 participants as of August 2025, with an average household size of 2.7 people.

Participant Demographics:

- 75% Black, 18% White, 2% Hispanic, 5% not listed

- 66% hold a high school diploma or GED

Financial Profile:

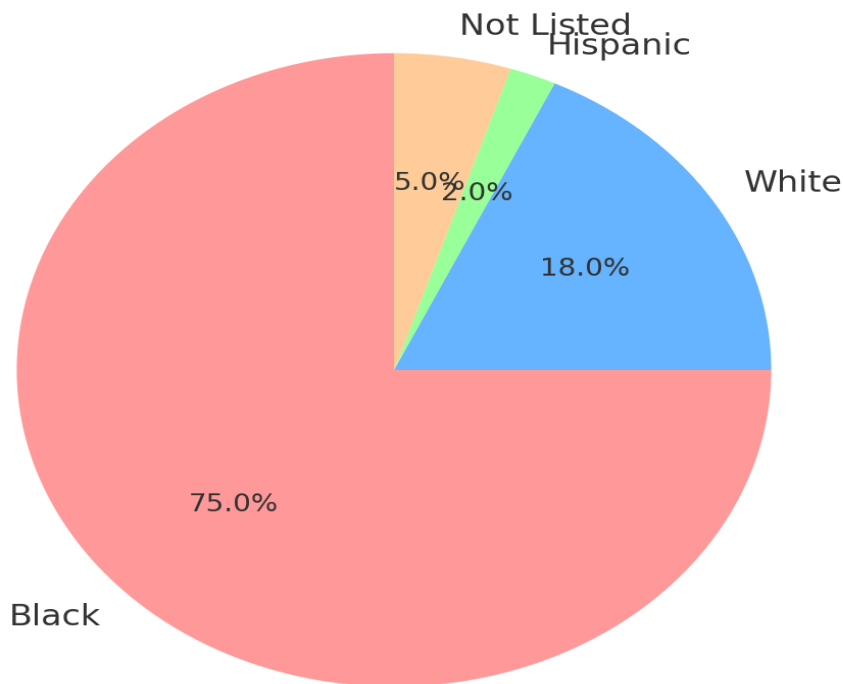
- 66% of participants earn below the poverty line (\$15,000/year)
- Most common income: \$11,604
- Lowest non-zero income: \$552
- Highest income: \$30,000

Investments in Housing Stability:

- \$46,068 – Prevention Rental Housing
- \$6,300 – Relocation & Stabilization Assistance
- \$4,637 – Rapid Rehousing
- \$3,000 – Essential Services
- \$3,821 – Outreach Support
- \$2,413 – Administrative Costs

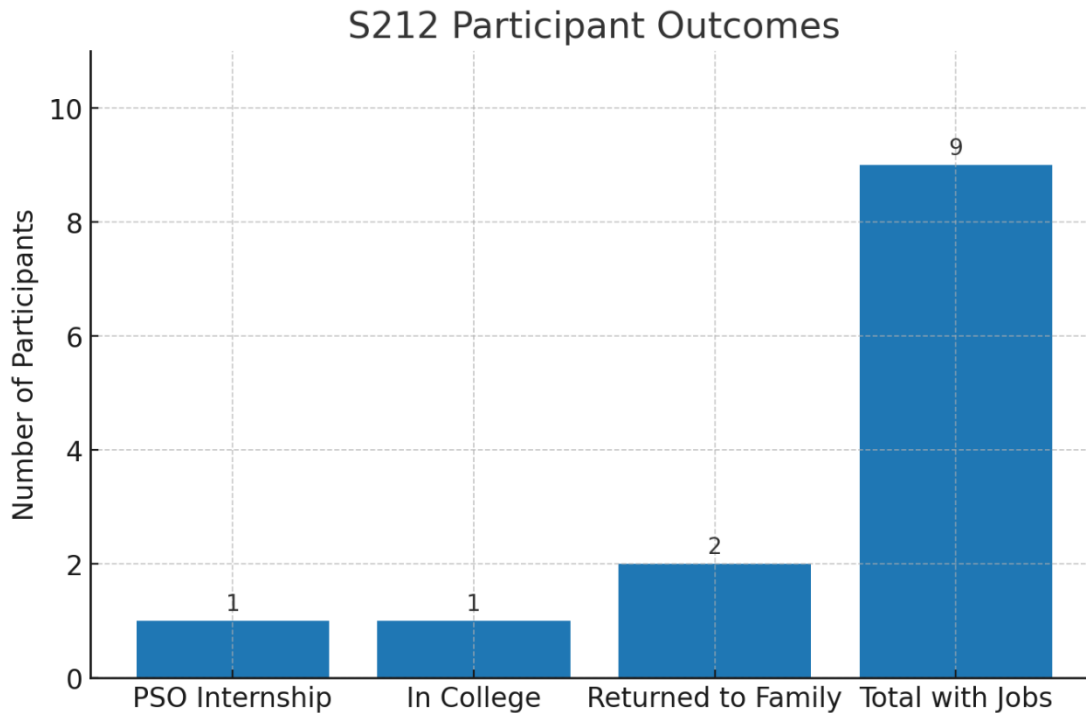
Higher Heights is providing both immediate relief and long-term stability for some of the county’s most vulnerable households.

Higher Heights Race Demographics



S212 Success Story – Empowering Young Men Toward Stability and Independence

At S212, our mission is to provide a safe, supportive environment for young men aged 18–24, equipping them with the tools and opportunities to transition successfully into independent living. This quarter, we are proud to share a remarkable success story that reflects the heart of our work. All nine of our current participants have secured jobs, demonstrating their dedication and drive to build stable futures. Among them: 1 participant has earned a PSO internship, opening doors to professional experience and career advancement. 1 participant is currently enrolled in college, furthering their education while maintaining employment. 2 participants have successfully returned to live with family, strengthening their support networks while continuing their employment. These achievements highlight the resilience of our residents and the effectiveness of S212’s holistic approach which combines employment readiness, education, and family reunification where possible. From job placements to internships to continuing education, S212 continues to be a place where young men are given the structure, guidance, and encouragement needed to reach their full potential. With a total of nine residents thriving in employment and life, this success story stands as a testament to what is possible when opportunity meets determination



Conclusion & Call to Action

Through prevention, outreach, employment readiness, and targeted family support, Lawton Housing Task Force is developing a comprehensive system to combat housing instability. While challenges remain, these initiatives have already prevented displacement, secured housing, and created pathways to independence.

We urge the City Council to continue supporting these efforts through policy action and targeted funding so we can expand these successes and strengthen our community's foundation.



DOING
THE MOST
GOODSM

William Booth, Founder
Lyndon Buckingham, General
Commissioner Kelly Igleheart, Territorial Commander
Lt. Colonel Dean Hinson, Divisional Commander
Capt. Bryan & Tracy Brinlee, Corps Officers

1. Engagement of people: 60
2. Intakes: 28
3. Placements/housing found: Treatment, 2. Jail, 3. Housing, 0. Transport, 1.
4. Calls to dispatch: 18 from SA employees/volunteers
5. Arrests: 3
6. Police Engagement (CPT Churchwell)
7. Medical emergencies: 3 (2 EMS)
8. Day Center guests: 121 starting 22JUL2025
9. Clothing Vouchers: 906 items, 102 requests, 7 items of furniture for individuals homeless to housed, 121 hygiene kits.
10. Volunteer hours: 192 hours (Showers, stewardship, and mentorship)
11. How many in program currently: 18
12. Work hours: 212 hours – Developing improved work program.

Topics for Discussion

-Chronic Homelessness

-Hope Hub

-Development of the property. Camp moved twice this month because of property issues.

-Continued efforts to find solutions for dog issues.

The Salvation Army Lawton, Oklahoma
1306 SE W Ave. Lawton, Oklahoma. 73501
Lawtonok@uss.salvationarmy.org
Telephone: (580) 355-1802 Fax: (580) 355-1803

GOG Brothers Program

Structured Support for Justice-Involved Men Facing Housing Barriers

Briefing for the Homeless Action Committee – Lawton, OK – August 11, 2025

Program Overview

GOG Brothers Program is a faith-rooted, peer-led accountability initiative that stabilizes **justice-involved men**, including those on the **sex offender registry**, through:

- **Daily structure & reporting**
- **Workforce preparation**
- **Mentorship and case management**
- **Community service**
- **Sober, peer-driven support**

We are not a shelter. We are a **brotherhood committed to rebuilding lives** — safely, justly, and with accountability.

Shared Goals

Goal	GOG Brothers Alignment
Reduce chronic homelessness	GOG supports men ineligible for traditional housing
Improve community safety	Daily check-ins, sober living, structure, and accountability reduce risks
Coordinate local services	We collaborate with agencies to ensure needs are met
Address housing barriers	We work with landlords for safe placement
Promote dignity & reintegration	GOG fosters accountability and long-term change

Program Impact (2024–2025 Snapshot)

- **Active Participants: 10**
- **Successfully Completed (Since 1/2023): 7** (100% have remained housed & employed)
- **100%** of active GOG Brothers have remained housed and sober since entering the program
- **0 serious legal incidents** among program participants in past 12 months
- **100%** are employed, in training, or volunteering while seeking employment
- **Over 2,000 hours of volunteer service** given back to Lawton

Why It Works

GOG Brothers provides the **missing middle** — men too risky for public shelters but too motivated to abandon. We offer what no other program in the region provides:

- **Safe accountability without enabling**
- **Mentorship without manipulation**
- **Redemption without excuses**
- **Community without isolation**

Justice-Involved individuals, especially sex offenders, are **among the hardest people to house**, yet **ignoring them increases community risk**. The GOG Brothers Program meets them **where they are** — and holds them to **daily discipline and change**.

Yes, you can structure your **CDBG-funded strategy to reduce homelessness among existing Lawton residents** without creating new programs or facilities that may attract homeless populations from outside the area. HUD regulations allow for targeting local needs, so long as the activities benefit eligible low- and moderate-income (LMI) persons and comply with the national objectives under 24 CFR 570.

Here's how to structure your **CDBG plan to stabilize and reduce local homelessness** without expanding capacity in a way that could inadvertently draw in non-residents:

Permissible, Targeted Strategies (with Regulatory Justification)

1. Stabilize the Currently Housed at Risk of Homelessness

Use: Owner-occupied rehab & minor repair (24 CFR §570.202)

- Fund home repairs for elderly, disabled, or very low-income residents at imminent risk of displacement.
- Focus only on long-term Lawton residents.

2. Improve Existing Shelter Facilities – No Expansion

Use: Public facilities (24 CFR §570.201(c))

- Fund ADA upgrades, fire safety, and structural repairs for existing shelters (e.g., C Carter Crane, Family Promise), **but do not increase bed count**.
- Clearly restrict facility use to residents with documented ties to Lawton (e.g., last place of residence, family connections).

3. Fund Public Services with Residency Requirements

Use: Public services (24 CFR §570.201(e)), within 15% cap

- Require subrecipients (e.g., GPIF, Marie Detty, Family Promise) to:
 - Prioritize clients who lived in Lawton prior to homelessness.
 - Establish eligibility screens that emphasize local connections (e.g., last known address, voter registration, Lawton schools attendance).
- Provide case management aimed at **permanent local rehousing**, not long-term transitional support.

4. Code Enforcement and Blight Reduction in Targeted Zones

Use: Code enforcement and clearance (§570.201(d))

- Focus on deteriorated areas where vacant buildings contribute to informal encampments or safety issues.
 - Coordinate with shelter providers and police to transition encampments into stabilized housing—not into new facilities.
-

✘ Avoid These Approaches to Prevent Influx of Non-Residents

- Do **not** use CDBG to **add shelter beds or construct new shelters** (which may attract new clients).
 - Avoid launching **new or highly visible outreach programs** that might draw transient populations.
 - Avoid direct promotion of services outside Lawton or on regional homeless assistance networks.
-

HUD Compliance Tip

As long as your activities:

- **Benefit LMI individuals ($\leq 80\%$ AMI)**
- **Do not create new capacity or entitlement for non-residents**
- **Align with documented local need (via Con Plan and AAP)**

...you are operating within legal and regulatory boundaries under **24 CFR 570**.

Would you like help drafting program language or RFP requirements to legally reinforce the local residency preference?

You said:

can you be very specific in this plan?

ChatGPT said:

Absolutely. Below is a **precisely structured CDBG-only plan** that will help the **City of Lawton reduce homelessness among current residents** while avoiding expansion that could attract new homeless populations. Every element includes **specific activities, subrecipients, regulatory citations, and resident-focused controls**.

City of Lawton FFY 2025 CDBG Homelessness Reduction Plan (Resident-Focused)

1. Public Services – Homeless Prevention & Rehousing

Total Allocation: \$108,200 (15% max of CDBG per 24 CFR §570.201(e))

Subrecipient	Activity	Controls	CDBG Eligibility
Family Promise of Lawton	Case management and housing stabilization for homeless families with children	Require proof of previous Lawton residency (lease, school records, etc.)	24 CFR §570.201(e) – Public services
GPIF / C. Carter Crane Shelter	Supportive services (meals, ID recovery, rehousing navigation)	Prioritize clients with local family or service ties	24 CFR §570.201(e)
Marie Detty New Directions	Crisis support and case management for DV victims at risk of homelessness	Require Lawton PD referral or prior city address	24 CFR §570.201(e)

✓ **Monitoring Plan:** Subrecipients must use a “Local Residency Verification Form” approved by HCD to document eligibility.

2. Public Facility Improvements – Non-Expansion Shelter Upgrades

Total Allocation: \$144,309 (20%)

Eligible under: 24 CFR §570.201(c)

Project Location	Scope of Work	Restrictions
C. Carter Crane Shelter (GPIF)	Replace fire suppression and HVAC systems; install ADA door openers	No increase in occupancy permitted under this scope
Family Promise Facility	Roof replacement and security camera upgrades	Work must be for health/safety only

✓ Require subrecipients to certify that upgrades will not be used to expand bed capacity or draw in out-of-town clients.

3. Targeted Code Enforcement

Total Allocation: \$108,200 (15%)

Eligible under: 24 CFR §570.202(c)

Target Area	Scope	Rationale
NW Lawton Zone 2	Support two code officers in LMI neighborhoods near known encampments	Supports slum/blight elimination and rehousing
Near shelters & parks	Monitor and cite unsafe/vacant structures for cleanup and demolition	Coordinates with rehab and enforcement

✓ Coordinate with PD and housing outreach teams to ensure follow-up on illegal occupation is linked with shelter navigation.

4. Emergency Demolition of Blighted Properties

Total Allocation: \$72,200 (10%)

Eligible under: 24 CFR §570.201(d)

Property Type	Action	Intent
Vacant residential homes	Demolition and lot clearance	Remove unsafe encampment hotspots; preserve neighborhood stability

✓ Require local police and code records to confirm blight/hazard status before proceeding.

5. Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation (Stabilize at-risk households)

Total Allocation: \$180,537 (25%)

Eligible under: 24 CFR §570.202(a)

Target Population	Scope of Work	Requirements
Low-income seniors, disabled homeowners	Roofs, plumbing, HVAC, ADA ramps	Must be Lawton resident 3+ years, income ≤80% AMI
At-risk families with eviction notices	Emergency repairs (up to \$5K)	Must show proof of local residence for past 24 months

✓ Use Recapture clause to protect funds if property is sold within 5 years.

6. Planning and Administration

Total Allocation: \$108,200 (15%)

Eligible under: 24 CFR §570.206

Use	Deliverables
Staffing (1 FTE) Homeless System Strategy Development	Monitor residency documentation, ensure HUD compliance Build coordination protocols between CDBG, CoC, and LHA
Data coordination (non-HMIS)	Maintain service use data to avoid duplication and expand only as needed

Key Policy Safeguards

- All service providers must certify **no promotional activity outside Lawton.**
- **Residency screening protocols** required for all CDBG-funded homeless services.
- No facility expansion unless shown to reduce **existing unmet need** within Lawton boundaries.
- **Service agreements** include mandatory reporting on Lawton origin rate of served individuals.