



# Coordinated Outreach System Mapping Initiative

A System Mapping Partnership for Unsheltered Response

# Why We're Here

Over the past two months, the **Homeless Alliance of WNY** has partnered with the **Buffalo Police Department** to system-map encampments and frequently identified outdoor/places not meant for human habitation, sleeping locations.

This effort grew from what many of us are already seeing:

- More individuals sleeping outdoors
- Increased reliance on Code Blue during extreme weather
- 311 calls and police observations highlighting frequent locations
- The shared desire to respond more intentionally

## **Today is about alignment.**

We want to ensure outreach, housing, and law enforcement partners are working from the same information; in a way that supports safety, dignity, and housing.

# What the Data Is Showing Us

## Annual Homelessness in Erie County

- **5,579** individuals experience homelessness each year
- **4,520** report coming from within the **City** of Buffalo

## Trends We're Observing

- Over **1,862** individuals stayed in **Shelter** on night of **PIT**
- **1,064** individuals age **55+** experiencing homelessness
- **4980** new clients entered the homelessness response system
- Outreach teams are on track to complete **1,700+ VI assessments** this year

## What This Tells Us

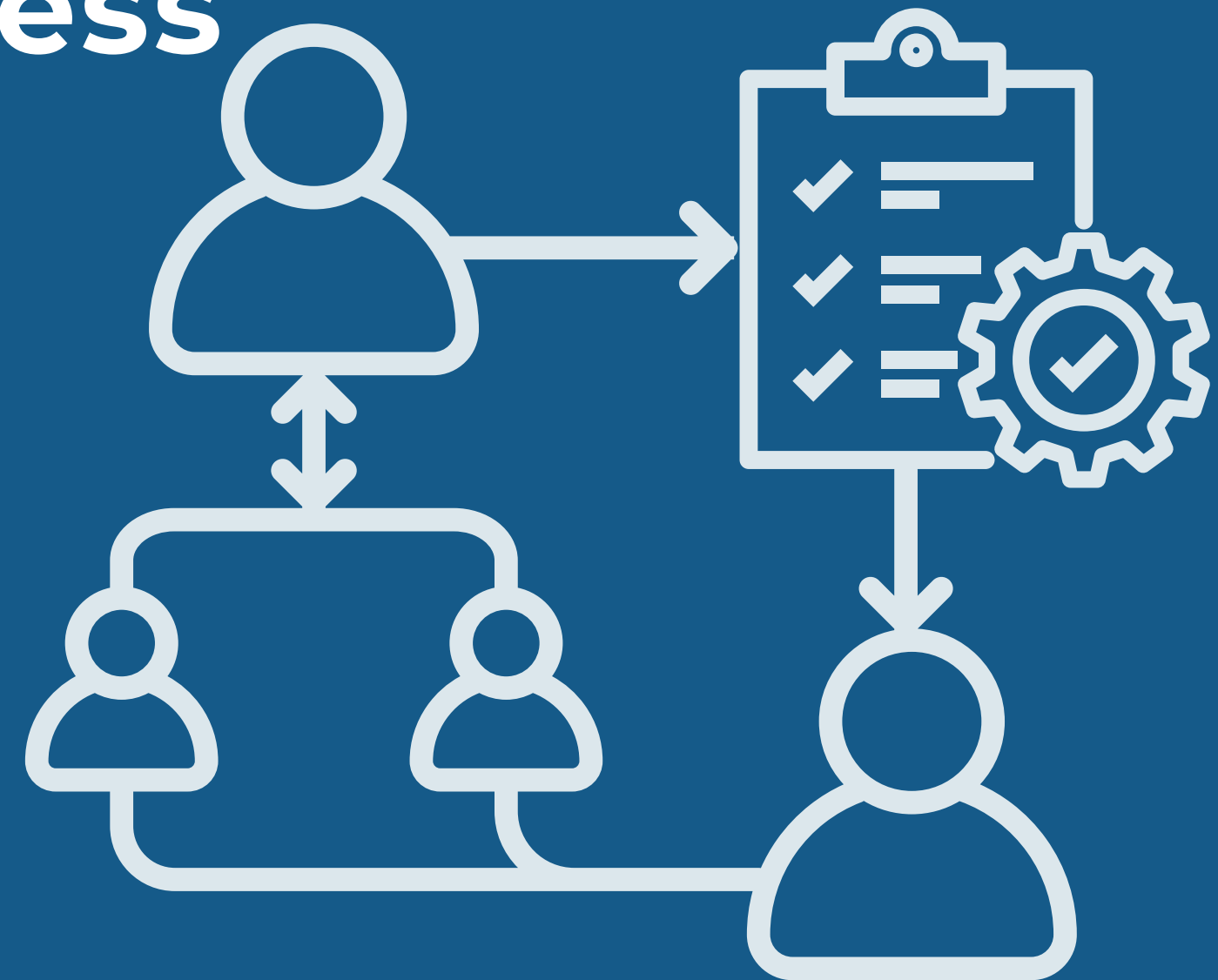
- Strong outreach and engagement is happening across systems
- More individuals are being identified and connected to services
- Continued coordination between outreach, shelters, and systems partners is essential

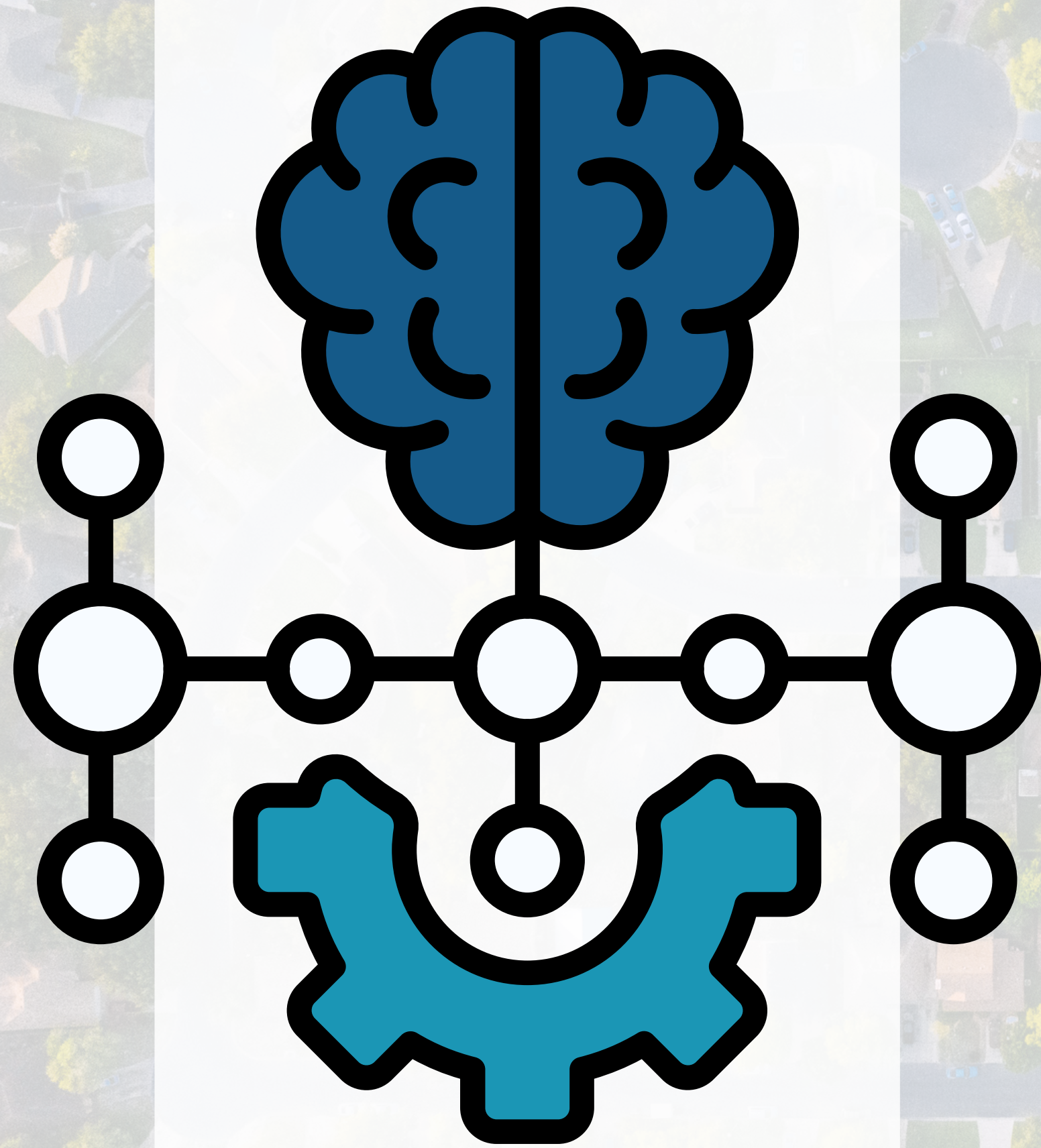


# Effective, Equitable, and Efficient Homeless Response System

Uses a **systematic  
approach:**

to align interventions and  
resources across programs in a  
coordinated way around this  
common goal.





**Shift the  
mindset from  
charity and  
containment to  
strategic  
housing-focused  
engagement**

# What is Housing-Focused Street Outreach?

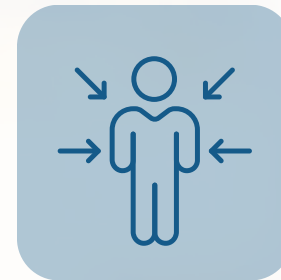
Housing-Focused Street Outreach or (HFSO) is an engagement strategy that prioritizes connecting people experiencing unsheltered homelessness to lifesaving person-centered services and resources while actively working towards securing stable and permanent housing solutions. This approach is characterized by five distinct core elements.



**USING DATA AND  
IMPACT ANALYSIS TO  
INFORM DECISION  
MAKING**



**STRATEGIC  
COLLABORATION  
AND  
PARTNERSHIPS**



**PERSON-  
CENTERED  
ENGAGEMENT**



**PROMOTION OF  
COMMUNITY  
HEALTH AND  
SAFETY**



**HOUSING-FOCUSED  
APPROACH  
ANCHORED IN  
HOUSING FIRST &  
IDENTITY**

## Purpose of ESG-Funded Street Outreach

ESG outreach is designed to:

- Engage individuals living in places not meant for human habitation
- Build trust and rapport
- Connect individuals to shelter, housing, and services as quickly as possible
- Support movement toward resolution of homelessness

## What This Means for Our Coordinated Approach

To stay aligned as a system, ESG outreach:

- Works within Coordinated Entry
- Documents engagement in HMIS
- Focuses on housing pathways and shelter connection
- Avoids indefinite maintenance of encampments
- Prioritizes forward movement toward safe, stable placement



## ESG Street Outreach: Shared Roles & Expectations

The shared goal is progress toward housing... not sustaining unsheltered conditions.

# Key Functions of Housing-Focused Engagement

- Engagement and Trust-Building
- Documentation
- Housing Navigation
- Advocacy Across Systems

# What Street Outreach Is Not



Volunteers with granola bars/solely distribution of goods



Police without badges



Having good trust and rapport, but no actions directly related to resolving their homelessness



**Strategic Deployment:**

Right People, Right Place, Right Time



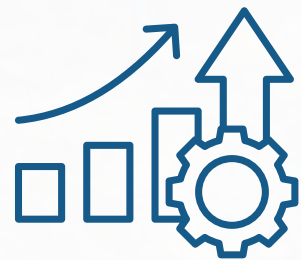
**Integration with Housing Access:**

Coordinated Entry isn't Optional



**Skilled, Supported Teams:**

Blend of Lived Experience, Clinical Knowledge, Housing Expertise



**Clear Performance Expectations:**

Housing Engagement >  
Engagement Counts

# Key Ingredients of a Strong Outreach System

# REALITY.....

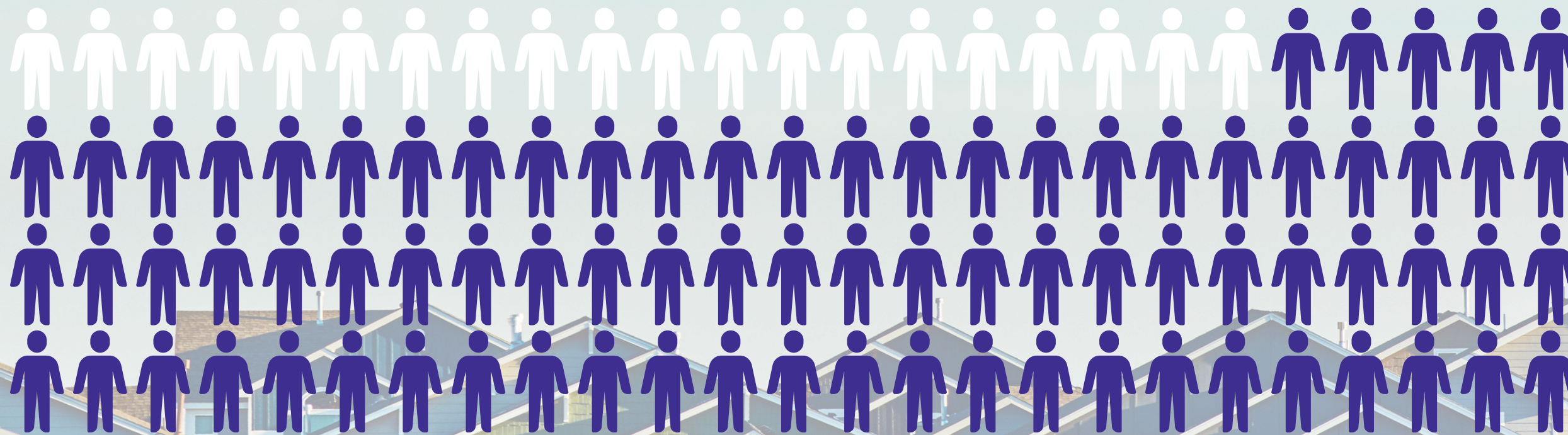
CoC-funded housing projects can only serve about 20% of those in need. As the Continuum of Care, we work to ensure that the system operates efficiently—removing bottlenecks, promoting equity, and prioritizing those with the greatest needs. Our goal is to make every resource count, strengthen coordination across agencies, and create a clear path from homelessness to stable housing for all.

But to truly make an impact, we need everyone participating in the same system — ESSHI, PHAs, law enforcement, hospitals, faith-based programs, etc.

We have the people.

We have the list.

We just need every door to lead to the same, coordinated spot — Coordinated Entry.



# Why Coordination Matters More Now

**More people are entering the homelessness response system**



**Real-time information sharing allows outreach teams to respond more effectively**



**Federal policy and Funding Uncertainty**



**Unsheltered homelessness is becoming more visible in public places**



# What Is the Purpose of System Mapping?

System mapping is about **shared awareness** and **coordinated response**.

Our goals are to:

- **Identify** where individuals are currently sleeping outdoors
- **Ensure** outreach teams can follow up intentionally and consistently
- **Strengthen** connections to Coordinated Entry and housing pathways
- **Reduce** repeated contacts without clear next steps
- **Improve** communication across systems

At its core, this work is about making sure individuals are **engaged, connected, and housed**.

## Impact Snapshot:



**Mapped Locations**

**Connections to Outreach**

**Clients Added to By Name List**

**Sites Resolved or Marked Inactive**

# How This Will Function Moving Forward

Today we will review and align on:

- Clear points of contact
- How locations will be shared between outreach and police
- How outreach/police can report back on mapped sites
- How updates will be tracked and communicated
- How this connects to Coordinated Entry and the By-Name List
- Ongoing monthly coordination meetings

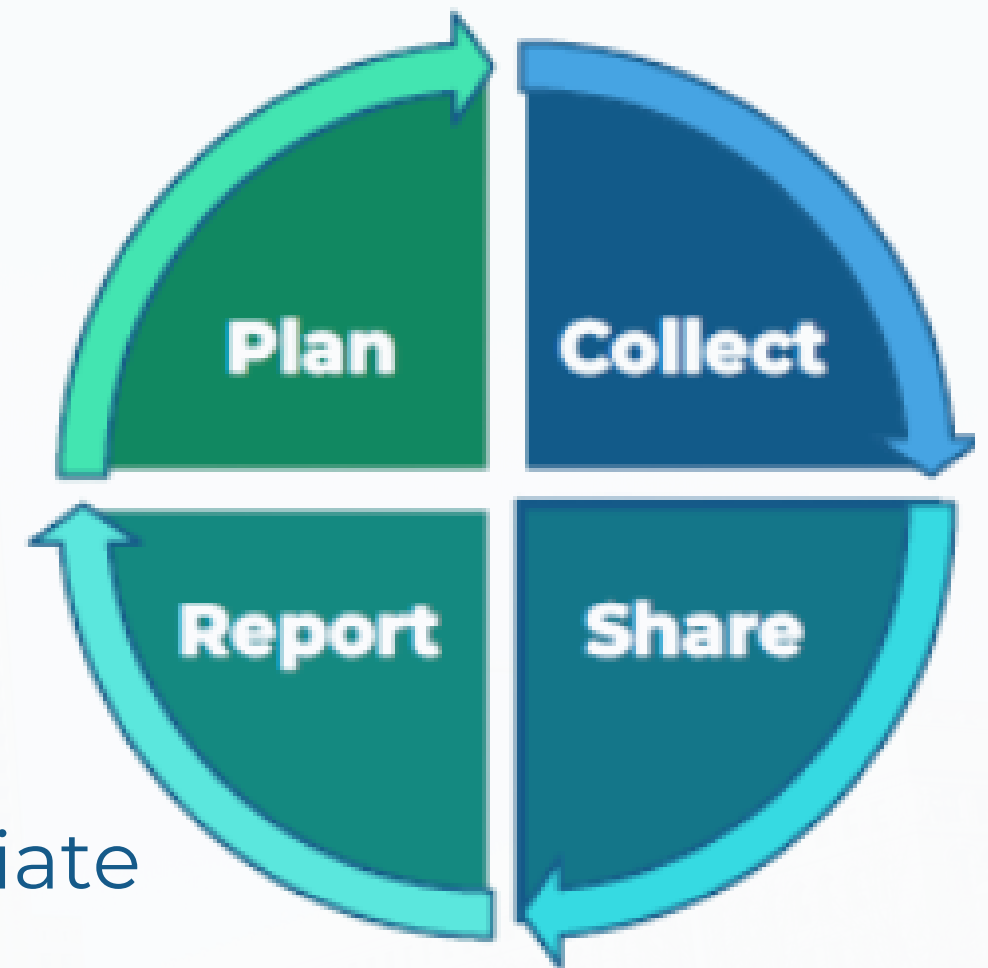
We see this as a living process. One that will evolve with your feedback.

# Client Confidentiality & HMIS Boundaries

This effort prioritizes **safety, dignity, and privacy.**

It is important to clarify:

- Mapping focuses on locations, not sharing protected client-level data.
- HMIS information remains confidential.
- Individual client details are only shared within appropriate outreach and housing channels.
- Law enforcement will not have direct access to HMIS.
- Updates will focus on engagement status (e.g., “connected to outreach,” “linked to Coordinated Entry”) rather than personal details.

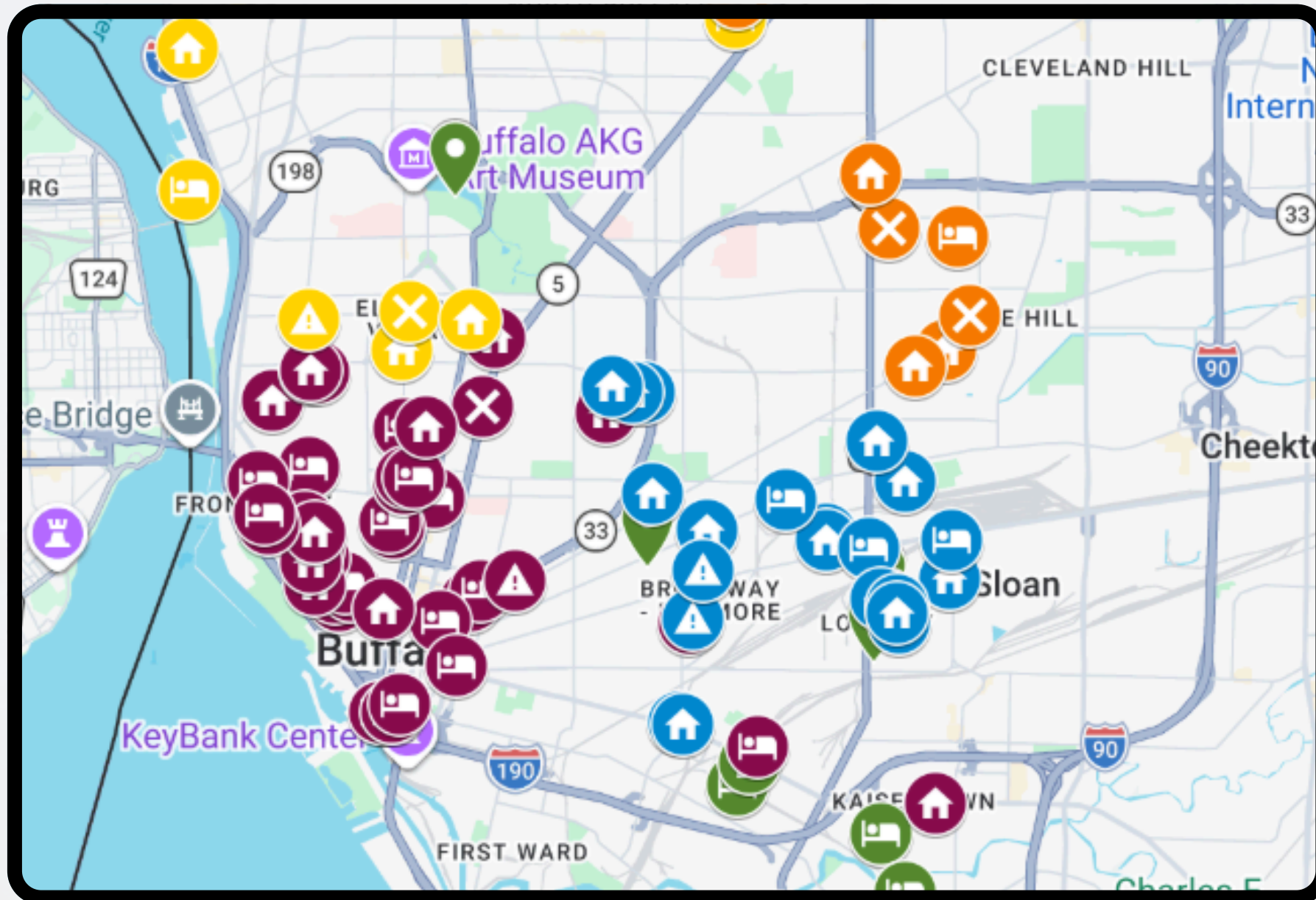


**Our shared goal is coordination without compromising client trust or privacy.**

# How Mapped Locations Are Communicated & Updated

## Encampment Map

## Phase 1: Initial Mapping (Completed)



### 103 locations:

- Encampment locations identified across districts
- Each site assigned a letter identifier (A, B, C, etc.)
- Internal master map created
- Site-specific instructions documented (access notes, terrain, safety considerations)
- No client-level information included in mapping

# Map Legend & Outreach Prioritization



**Unsheltered encampment/sleeping location**



**Vacant building**



**Police presence needed for safety before visiting**



**No visible activity or any signs of someone at the location- observed during visit**

**Each icon represents a specific type of location identified on the map.**

## Outreach Prioritization

- Outreach will first focus on **unsheltered locations** where individuals are sleeping outdoors.
- Prioritizing these locations helps ensure outreach efforts are coordinated, efficient, and focused on connecting **individuals with the greatest needs to shelter, housing, and services.**

**Winter 2026 Encampments Map**

# Ongoing Process and Moving Forward

- **Step 1: Police encounter or identify a new or active encampment**
- **Step 2: Location is submitted via designated contact channel**
- **Step 3:**
  - **If new → assigned next letter ID**
  - **If existing → status updated**
- **Step 4: Outreach notified**
- **Step 5: Outreach conducts engagement & updates status**
- **Step 6: Discuss in Monthly Meeting**

# Reporting Back on Mapped Sites

Assigned Letter	Location Type	Location	Outreach Team Assigned	Engagement/Clients Found	Outreach Status	CE Status
A	Unsheltered encamp...	Houghton Stachowzki Park				
B	Unsheltered encamp...	Babcock St. Trailers				
C	Unsheltered encamp...	200 Mineral Spring Rd				
G	Unsheltered encamp...	16 Chauncey St				
I	Unsheltered encamp...	Oak and 33 Onramp				
J	Unsheltered encamp...	33 Bridge				

## Police receive:

- Whether outreach has engaged
- Whether site is active or resolved
- Whether connection to services occurred

## Police will NOT receive:

- Names
- Scores
- Case details
- Housing status of specific individuals

**Outreach will report back using location letters.**

[System Map Outreach](#)

# Anticipated Outcomes of Coodinated System Mapping



## Operational Outcomes:

- Faster outreach response to identified locations
- Reduced duplication of contacts across systems
- Improved tracking of active vs resolved sites
- Stronger alignment between police observations and housing pathways

## System Outcomes:

- Increased connection to Coordinated Entry
- More complete By-Name List
- Reduction in long-term unsheltered stays
- Better prioritization of high-acuity individuals

## Community Outcomes:

- Fewer public complaints about repeated site activity
- Improved perception of coordinated response
- Clear pathway from unsheltered to housing engagement



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