

Trail EOPS report 2025/26

This year seems narrowly different in outcomes of services provided in Trail BC than the year prior although the worst scenario is the number of deaths has increased. ANKORS is using similar tactics to help street folks endure the onslaught of daily survival on the streets of Trail BC. ANKORS EOPS works in partnership with Interior Health Outreach/Nurses and IH OAT Nurses, Population Health worker (Abigail), City bylaw, La Nina Shelter, Dr Tobias & NP Tammy McLean, Trail C.A.T., the United Church, Salvation Army and Community Volunteers providing access to some support & warm food.

This past fall ANKORS has acquired a medicalized van to use throughout the City of Trail as well as the connected communities near Trail that our vulnerable population move back and forth from. This funding stream is finished as of the end of this fiscal year. Funding applications are being applied to continue this work.

The Van is being used to provide Episodic Overdose prevention, a venue for professional health care ie. (Outreach workers, Nurses & Doctors) to use as a place to provide wound care and the care of other health issues to our vulnerable communities as an option rather than having to take them to Emergency. Street populations having worked with ANKORS have come to trust us and the services we provide. We also have a working partnership with a local Doctor. Access to this Physician is applicable when he is in office and we can bring in clients to their clinic on short notice as an option. Trail EOPS workers also provide sandwiches donated by the United church, Salvation army and 1 day a week ANKORS makes and provides the sandwiches. Trail EOPS also provides water, yogurt and other snacks such as granola bars and clothing items donated and cold/hot weather items from a grant received from population health. We help folks navigate the system within our means to help ensure vulnerable populations safety and well being.

We are seeing more boots on the ground provided by various agencies to deal with street folks health care, incidences of despair, medical needs and access to health care. Each year there are less than a handful of folks who achieve finding a form of housing to keep the elements at bay.

These tactics are generally helpful in the moment and helps some folks with immediate care. However, the future outcomes seem likely to be similar as it has for the last few years with little to and mostly no access to housing, a lack of ability to wash up, lack of access to toilets, ability to warm up or cool off in a safe place. To make matters worse the incidences created by organized crime adds to the demise of our already suffering street populations in Trail.

We are also seeing a less than desirable response by some of the community businesses to street folks and because ANKORS van now has a phone number visible to the public we are receiving more hostile calls regarding street populations near or on their property. Street folks have no refuge from the streets and are using their property as a resting place or using their wif or having a health emergency.

Outreach programming is very helpful to deal with issues in the moment but provides little insurance regarding future safety of street populations. Trail street populations have dramatically decreased in numbers due to deaths by overdose, death by exposure to extreme cold, exposure to fire/explosions. Outreach is no match for people's ability to be safe, safe from the elements that be, safe from organized crime, safe from the influx of extra toxic drugs

that generally come through the day before or the day of and after payment by Social Services. The past several Social Assistance pay days has brought out extra toxic drugs that impact payday week with several daily overdoses. There are days when we are responding to several overdoses at the same time. Most of the emergency is much like clockwork where the most toxic drugs become available the day before payday and the week after until the drug dealers correct the mixed dosages to help mitigate the loss of their clients.

We are seeing an increase in access to detox & treatment. Some of the intakes are attributed to the IH workers being available at the United Church during foodbank days. The IH Outreach workers set up a table of information to discuss with clients who may be interested. Referrals to access of detox and treatment in partnership with IH has helped bring some of the street folks to treatment. There seems to be an influx of access to treatment. We know that folks that go to detox & treatment put them at high risk of overdose once released. There seems to be plans in place for people leaving treatment but once finished treatment and if sent back to the streets it will most likely increase risk rather than abatement.

Poor hygiene plays a big role in the outcome of infections created by addiction. We are seeing infections from cuts scrapes, burns acquired from torches used to smoke substances as well as burns produced by enforcers of organized crime. People are not able to access a place to wash on a daily basis to keep from incurring further infections.

La Nina Shelter is directed to be the homeless shelter in Trail but we are seeing the same vulnerable folks on the street repeatedly with no ability of recourse from mistakes made or not made to access the La Nina shelter. Some of the people denied access by shelter staff are denying people access on rumors and unable to access the homeless shelter at all. We are seeing fatalities to people who were once able to stay at the shelter and kicked out during the most formidable elements of weather to live through and unfortunately many of our most vulnerable street people succumb to the elements in a tragic way.

In the past year we have lost an incredible amount of people living on the streets. Some perished from overdose, some from infections that could not be corrected in time, we lost people from fire and the extreme winter cold. Many have been maimed by street survival of one form or another. It is difficult to manage the cold weather without taking an extra dose to stave off the cold. Unfortunately, it's the cold or the drugs that have taken so many of the vulnerable populations trying to survive the onslaught of hurdles placed in their way to be able to get the help needed.

There is a quote regarding Social Murder which I'm inclined to agree with. Friedrich Engels a philosopher and Marxist in 1845 quoted:

'When one individual inflicts bodily injury upon another such that death results, we call the deed manslaughter; when the assailant knew in advance that the injury would be fatal, we call (it) murder. But when society places (millions) in such a position that they inevitably meet a too early and an unnatural death, one which is quite as much a death by violence as that by the sword or bullet; when it deprives thousands of the necessities of life, places them under conditions in which they cannot live — forces them, through the strong arm of the law, to remain in such conditions until death ensues which is the inevitable consequence — knows that these thousands of victims must perish, and yet permits these conditions to remain, its deed is murder just as surely as the deed of the single individual; disguised, malicious murder ...'

