Smart Policy Works LLC

The Road Map Initiative: Disrupting Cycling High Utilizers

Our partners wanted to understand the scope and breadth of people cycling across the homeless system, emergency health departments and the criminal-legal system.

To study this, we convened a collaborative effort – the Road Map Initiative – to generate a data-informed framework for changing practice and policies. We wanted to test and vet ideas for process changes that would allow us to create concrete recommendations to disrupt cycling across systems, and improve outcomes and quality of life.

We engaged the Urban Labs–Health Lab to link data from three key datasets – the Homeless Management Information System, Cook County Sheriff's Office and Illinois Department of Public Health hospital data. Cross-linking allowed us to perform cluster analyses revealing important insights:
- Very few people access all three sectors over four years, and even fewer persist in cycling.
- Homeless services clients are most likely to have cross-sectoral engagement.
- The effects of systemic racism are apparent.
- Access to stable housing is a challenge.

Interviewing people with lived experience of these systems using systems process mapping and journey mapping tools gave us a view into the "customer experience" – along with a better sense of how people flow through these systems. For example, we learned that when someone is released from Cook County Jail, they have 72 hours to find housing or face re-arrest. And that we ask people for a lot of information during intake, but don't do much with it – and rarely share it.

These perspectives allow us to work with our partners on process changes designed to disrupt cycling. We want to develop tools to identify cycling high users, more effectively target outreach and engagement and test small-scale cross-system data sharing. The goal is to evolve toward a more collaborative ecosystem that improves health and quality of life and saves Chicago and Cook County valuable resources.

Housing Stability • Effects on Families

smartpolicyworks.com