

Meeting Needs. Moving Forward.

*What Does "Success" Look
Like at Hope Ministries?*



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Success at Hope Ministries

"What's Your Success Rate?"

We're asked this question regularly—by generous ministry partners, on grant applications, even by family members seeking help for their loved ones struggling with homelessness or addiction.



The person asking the question is usually looking for a percentage or a statistic—a concrete number. But it's nearly impossible to provide one. The natural inclination might be to consider every man or woman who graduates from one of our long-term life recovery programs a “success” and anyone who does not, a “failure.” But that's simply not accurate. It discounts too many people and too many achievements.

For instance, many of the individuals and families Hope Ministries serves don't participate in our life recovery programs. They're coming to us for free meals, which allows them to save limited resources and stay in their homes. *That's a success.* Or, they're visiting our Hope Ministries Outreach Center where they're able to take a shower, maybe for the first time in weeks, or receive help filling out a job application. *That's a success.*

Others are staying for a few nights or few weeks, perhaps a few months, in our free shelter. During that time, they're able to sleep somewhere safe at night while looking for work or housing during the day. All their essential needs are met as our case managers help them take their next steps in life. *That's a success.*

And for those who do enter our long-term life recovery programs, yes, completing the entire program and meeting every graduation requirement is a significant—and celebrated—achievement. But there are many other successes and milestones along the way experienced by residents who participate in our program without checking every “graduation” box.

Success Cont.

We strive to help every person who walks through our doors feel safe, loved and valued—no matter their past and no matter how long they stay with us.



With the variety of services Hope Ministries provides—and the unique needs of every individual we serve—coming up with a simple success rate isn't, well, simple. But recognizing success is:

At Hope Ministries, any time a homeless, hungry, abused or addicted person moves forward in life, we recognize it as a success. And we see it happen daily in hundreds of lives in a multitude of ways.



Day-of Successes

Hope Ministries provides immediate impact through services such as free breakfast, lunch and dinner provided daily at our Hope Café for anyone in the community; outreach to those living in tent camps and on the streets; in-the-moment assistance plus free restroom and shower facilities, public computers and a phone charging station at our Hope Ministries Outreach Center; and more.



Some of the successes experienced by those receiving immediate help and care at Hope Ministries include:

- Accessing needed mental health care
- Taking a shower and/or receiving clean clothing prior to a job interview
- Completing job or housing applications with help from our outreach case manager—and often using our public computers
- Accessing veteran's resources
- Eating meals at Hope Café, allowing them to redirect limited resources toward rent, utilities, medical bills, etc.
- Coming off the streets to enter shelter after an invitation from our outreach case manager



Short-term Shelter & Services Successes

Hope Ministries offers short-term refuge for both individuals and families at our Bethel Mission men's shelter and our Hope Center for Women and Children.

Every person staying in our residential centers on a short-term basis has a case manager who helps them identify the next steps they'd like to take in their life.

Each next step is a success and examples include:

- Gaining employment
- Signing a lease on an apartment
- Saving up money to be able to pay off outstanding debts and fines
- Joining a recovery group and/or reaching a sobriety milestone
- Accessing needed therapy or mental health services
- Improving physical health
- Transitioning into society after incarceration
- Obtaining transportation



Long-term Life Recovery Successes

Some of the individuals who come to Hope Ministries for services don't need, or are not ready for, our long-term (one- to two-year) life recovery programs. But those who do take advantage of our free life recovery programming experience many opportunities for success!

In addition to the milestones already mentioned, examples of continued successes experienced by those in our life recovery programs include:

- Receiving a high school equivalency diploma
- Being reunited with children after DHS involvement
- Coming off probation or parole
- Reaching a long-term sobriety milestone
- Paying off past debts, opening bank accounts and developing a budget
- Earning a driver's license
- Developing healthy habits
- Reconciling with family members
- Becoming active in church and/or recovery groups
- Accessing higher education
- Growing their work skills through job readiness training
- Become leaders for those who are newer in the program



These are just a few of the many instances when men and women who are dedicated to rebuilding their lives experience success—and we're proud of them in each and every instance. Some will complete every requirement to graduate from our program, while others will not. But all will have moved forward in their life while with us.

Internal vs. External Success



In addition to the measures of success that can be seen in external life circumstances, we at Hope Ministries know just as much, if not more, is happening internally with every individual we serve—whether they're receiving day-of, short-term or long-term help. Many are experiencing safety for the first time in a long time when they walk through our doors. The hour someone spends eating at Hope Café or receiving assistance at our outreach center, the full week or month or even year they stay with us may be the most stability they've ever experienced.

We want every man, woman and child served by Hope Ministries to relish that feeling of safety and stability—as well as feeling comfortable, clean, loved and valued. We work hard to build relationships and establish trust with our guests and residents, and we know more often than not, helping individuals move forward in life requires healing from the traumas and painful experiences in their past that have contributed to the challenges they're experiencing today.

These internal changes and areas of growth are not measurable. When it comes to our long-term life recovery programs, though, some program outcomes are measurable, and we have a tracking system in place to capture them:

- We track the number of life recovery participants who obtain employment or receive their high school equivalency diploma
- We track each individual's movement through our program.
- Six months after program participants graduate, we touch base with them about four areas in their life: housing, employment, sobriety and church/recovery group participation. This gives us a point-in-time look at how well our graduates are doing post-program completion.



But these measurable outcomes aren't representative of an individual's complete recovery journey, and programmatically, number are not our primary focus. People are. In most cases, we are serving people for a relatively short season in their life. Our mission is to do everything we can during that season—whether it's measured in days, months or years—to impact their lives in uplifting and empowering ways.

Relapse ≠ Failure



Just as we see successes all along the way in our time serving each person in our care, we do see setbacks, too. We are working with individuals and families who have faced innumerable challenges in their lives. It's not solely homelessness or addiction—most are facing multiple and often debilitating issues, including abuse, incarceration, chronic poverty, mental health struggles, etc. We are not deterred in our mission by the reality that people we serve, including those who have completed our programs, may go on to experience relapse or other struggles in the future.

This is the nature of what we do, and addiction recovery, in particular, is not a straight line. According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse, 40-60% of people with addiction will experience a relapse. Relapse is normal. It's not a surprise—and in truth, it's not even necessarily a failure. It's part of the journey, and an important piece of our work is preparing our life recovery participants with the tools they'll need if and when relapse happens.

An example of this: One of our 2016 graduates soared through our life recovery program. He dedicated himself to classes, joined recovery groups, reached one sobriety milestone after another and enrolled in college. But after completing the program, he experienced a relapse. However, he told us after the fact that he knew exactly what to do when faced with his relapse. He knew who to call and what steps to take to prevent a short-term relapse from becoming a long-term spiral.

Another past program participant left Hope Ministries before she reached graduation. Later, she experienced a severe relapse that led to hospitalization. Our staff visited her in the hospital and helped her get back on track. Today, she's been sober for more than seven years. Was the fact that she didn't complete our program a failure? Was her relapse a failure?

Or instead, were there multiple successes throughout her journey that led to where she is today? The safety and security she felt with our staff, her willingness to receive their help following her relapse, all the work she put in while in our program but also later, using tools and skills she learned during her time with us . . . all these investments helped change the course of her life.

Our Success Rate



The bottom line is people's lives are messy and complicated. Trying to simplify our picture of success is not productive and often does a disservice to the hard work done by and with those we serve. For most of the individuals and families we serve, we'll never know exactly what their futures hold—but we have been able to see good things happen while they stay with us.

Which means, perhaps, it's not so difficult to pinpoint a concrete number when it comes to our success rate. After all, every man, woman and child who comes to our Hope Café for a free meal, receives exactly that in a safe and friendly environment. Every individual who stays in one of our residential locations for the short-term receives safe refuge, case management, and practical assistance as they take their next steps in life. Every person in one of our life recovery programs is offered compassionate guidance, life skills classes, recovery support, job readiness training and other empowering opportunities to help them rebuild their life.

So you might say our success rate is 100%.

We are focused on building relationships to come alongside every individual we serve, meeting their unique and varied challenges in unique and varied ways. **Because we see so many short- and long-term milestones and accomplishments along the way, we're able to be confident and excited about the impact of our programs . . . and about the hopeful possibilities and potential for every individual and family we serve as we help them move forward in life.**



**Name changed for privacy*