

## **Background Information on Homeless Outreach services 2006**

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The first year of any new program is full of growing pains and modifications to make the program effective and useful to all entities involved, from the grantor, to the grantee to the individuals who will benefit from the services to be provided. The Homeless Outreach Grant is no different. The first year of the grant has been an ongoing learning process, as the Outreach team has begun to build a reputation and developed trust among the homeless population. The first year of the program required on going change and assessment. Some changes that took place during the first year were: reviewing and modifying the evaluation tool; identifying tools to decrease duplication of services, assessing ways/means to meet the needs of the individuals; assess ways/means to meet the needs of the Co-located agencies; and identifying gaps in services. Training and maintaining a consistent staff also posed a challenge. Several resignations and new hires impacted the number of direct services hours and contact. The best effort was made to obtain new staff and provide overlap to deliver a consistent level of services.

The first year did indicate a trend demonstrating less resistance to services by homeless individuals. It was found that more long term and intensive services were needed than originally anticipated. The supportive services provided by the Outreach team made gaps in services more apparent. Significant gaps such as the lack of a crisis stabilization unit for psychiatric issues, lack of immediate crisis housing, lack of psychiatric support for shelter staff during nights and weekends, limited supportive housing voucher dollars are some of the barriers to providing complete wrap around services to this at risk population.

There appears to be a “steady level” of individuals in services, case loads are full but manageable. Current case loads for the outreach team are triaged based on intensity of service need and case loads are assigned to various workers to prevent over loading a specific worker. As the homeless population flows between Co-located agencies, "flexing" the case loads among the case workers is effective for both the individuals and Outreach workers. Individual's needs for case management differ based on individual's current living situation, potential complications from physical health, dental health, mental health and or substance abuse and willingness to participate in services. Case loads range from 20 to 25 individuals per worker, which translates into approximately 65-85 individuals receiving on going services at any one point in time. Case loads are similar to guidelines prescribed by SRS/Medicaid regulations for other Bert Nash case managers. Case loads are “fluid” in that homeless individuals tend to come and go on and off case loads and from various systems. Every homeless individual may not appear on a case load at a specific point in time. Some individuals may struggle with consistent participation in the program, or may “drop out of sight” for lengths of time. The goal would be that within a six month period every homeless individual would have the opportunity to engage in services with an Outreach worker if they so choose to participate. The assignment of case loads is one mechanism used to decrease duplication of services. Case load lists are shared with Co-located agencies, if an individual appears on the Outreach case load, the individual becomes the responsibility of the Outreach Worker as their primary resources and is not carried on case loads of the Co-located agency staff.

The Homeless Outreach program began May 15, 2006, initially the team was started with 2.5 FTE, with the third position being filled May 30, 2006. We have replacements trained and on board and the goal is to have consistent staffing of 4 FTE's through out 2007 the fiscal year. It is pertinent to note staffing transitions, initial and ongoing staff trainings, vacation, holidays and sick leave impact direct service hours provided as well as number of individuals seen.

Direct Service Hours:

- First quarter ( 5-15-06 thru 6-30-06) 466.5 hours of direct service were provided,
- Second quarter ( 7-1-06 thru 9-30-06) 1572.5 hours of direct service were provided,
- Third Quarter (10-1-06 thru 12-31-06) 1180 hours of direct service was provided.
- Direct services hours can be impacted by staff change, vacation, sick and training time.

Individuals Served:

- First Quarter (5-15-06 thru 6-30-06) 59 individual served received both assertive out reach and ongoing outreach support, 75 individuals declined services,
- Second Quarter (7-1-06 thru 9-30-06) 285 individuals served received both assertive outreach and ongoing outreach services, 27 individuals declined,
- Third Quarter (10-1-06 thru 12-31-06) 281 individuals served received both assertive outreach and ongoing outreach services, only 7 individuals declined services.

The evaluation tool has been modified each quarter, as part of the normal "growing pains" of a new project and to reflect recommendations from CCH members as well as from the Outreach Team itself to provide more accurate data to reflect services provided. One significant change in the 2007 reports will be the tracking of number of contacts per individual per quarter. There is some duplication of numbers in the 2006 reports. These changes will accurately demonstrate how many service contacts are made per quarter and begin to accurately identify unduplicated numbers of individuals served. It is expected that the number of direct service and collateral service contacts will increase significantly with the use of the new evaluation tool.

The flex funds were utilized in various ways to assist individuals with the necessary items to facilitate improving current situation, improve housing or seek employment.

20 Individuals received assistance with Identification, birth certificate

19 Individuals received assistance with rent and or deposits

12 Individuals received assistance with utilities

11 Individuals received assistance with obtaining medications

10 Individuals received assistance with various other personal needs