

**HPRP Tucson and Pima County
Design Group Meeting Notes
July 14, 2009**



Attendance: Margaret Kish, Jodie Barnes, Efrain Romero, Linda Kot, Jane Burch, Mary Beth Landis Jantzen, Tony Bruno, Don Logue, Pat De Vito, Leslie Carlson, Gary Bachman, Terri Patt-Smith, Ron Koenig and Bea Gallivan

Introductions

Leslie Carlson welcomed everyone and the participants introduced themselves.

Report from subcommittee: Tasks of Resource Specialist and Financial Administrator

1. What Does the Resource Specialist Do?

Challenges for prospective clients. Jane Burch mentioned that 13% of her transitional housing clients are unable to pay rent. All the small pieces that are happening to people are taking a toll: losing day care, work hours cut back, etc. New Beginnings can take care of the client's rent for one to two months. Perhaps in the future, the client could be given an eviction notice and then could be referred to HPRP. But even with that help, some clients might not be able to stay housed.

HMIS. Don Logue provided more information about HMIS (Homeless Management Information System). This is an information system required by HUD for homeless services. After some past difficulties, HMIS was implemented in Pima County in the fall of 2008, and there are approximately 5,000 clients entered into the system. HUD requires that all HPRP clients are tracked in HMIS, and there are new data elements that are being added for this. The software that we use for HMIS in Pima County is ServicePoint. The system will show the needs and characteristics of homeless individuals, and the services they have received. HMIS data will be required for the HPRP Quarterly Performance Reports.

HMIS can also be used as a case management tool. The resource specialists would want to be able to share case file information with one another and HMIS would be a way to do that. Don explained that HMIS has a template for case plan information. The template includes needs, goals, referrals, deadlines, outcomes (when goals are met), and case notes. Additional assessments can also be entered.

At what point is client information entered into HMIS? It was agreed that when the client meets with a RS for an initial eligibility appointment, this will include an assessment and referrals, so this is already a provision of services, whether or not the client goes on to receive further HPRP resources. So at this point, the RS should check to see if the client is already entered in HMIS, and if not, then create a new client record, and also note that the client receive a unit of HPRP case management services. If/when the client is approved for further services, the RS will continue HMIS data entry to add and track those services and ongoing

information about the case plan. If a client is approved to get services from Legal Aid, Legal Aid would not do the HMIS data entry. The Finance Administrator will approve the services, and the RS will do the HMIS data entry.

For HPRP services in rural areas, if the Resource Specialist did not have computer Internet access, the data could be collected manually and entered into HMIS later.

Self sufficiency Matrix – The Design Group discussed whether to use the entire Self Sufficiency Matrix or selected domains recommended at the last meeting. Don reported that HUD has dropped a proposal to require some use of the SS Matrix. However, ServicePoint already includes all of the SS Matrix domains. The consensus of the group was to use only selected domains from the SS Matrix for client assessment and outcomes, and to enter this information in HMIS.

Background checks. The group discussed whether the Resource Specialist would conduct background checks on clients. Background checks can reveal issues that are housing barriers that the Resource Specialist should know about, and include in the client’s case plan. There would be no intent to use the background check for denial of services. After discussion, the group agreed that the RS would not conduct background checks. Instead, the RS would ask the client about housing barriers such as bad credit, jail/prison records, etc. It was also agreed that the description of RS tasks would delete the step of “client assessment” and merge these tasks with “make case plan.”

Rural Areas. The Design Group discussed how HPRP services would be provided in rural areas. There will be a separate RFQ for these services, and it is envisioned that there will be a rural Resource Specialist who will function as a “circuit rider,” going to different rural areas with a laptop. It will help the Design Group to have a clearer description of how this will work. Margaret Kish and Tony Bruno will draft this description for the July 21 meeting.

Client Exit. The Resource Specialist will follow a closeout procedure for client exit. The group discussed how the RS’s will ensure this process in case they lose contact with clients. The RS should have monthly contact with clients who have been approved for 3 months of HPRP resources. When client services are completed or need to be terminated, the RS should attempt to reach the client by mail, email, or telephone in order to complete the exit process. If after three attempts, the client still can’t be contacted, the case will be closed as “unable to contact client.”

2. What Does the Financial Administrator Do?

Name for this position. The group discussed what title to use for the Financial Administrator. It was agreed to use the term, “Contract Specialist.”

Check writing. The Contract Specialist would be responsible for authorizing checks but not for writing them. Another authorized person will write the checks in order to have a separation of functions to comply with accounting practices.

Role of Contract Specialist. The Contract Specialist would conduct a verification to review the RS's recommendation regarding client eligibility and HPRP resources. The purpose of the review is to have another person check that all steps were followed, the verification documents were in order, and that the recommendations meet HPRP standards. It was noted that the Contract Specialist should not be viewed as the Resource Specialist's supervisor.

It will be important to have these kind of verification checks. Ron Koenig stated that if an agency gives a client resources, and that it's later discovered that the resources should not have been given, the agency has to pay for it. This will be included in the contracts with HPRP providers.

Examples of conditions that would result in declining services to a client.

- Client is maxed out on HPRP resources
- Didn't comply with case plan.
- Landlord complaints.
- Required documents not included, or not appropriate.

We will need to spell out in more detail what conditions would result in a denial of services. We will also need to list what kinds requirements need documented proof, e.g., Pima County residency, 50% AMI.

Unanswered questions. Who will do the following tasks?

- "Rent reasonableness" determination
- Lead-based paint assessment
- HQS (Housing Quality Standards) inspections (for new units, not existing ones)?
- Set up contracts with landlords

Other Reports

- Gary Bachman summarized topics discussed on the National Association for County Community and Economic Development (NACCED) HPRP Webinar that was held on July 8 .
- Efrain Romero summarized additional services that will be available through ESN as a result of CSBG stimulus funds.
- It was suggested that Mark Ludwig from the Arizona Department of Housing be invited to the July 28th expanded Design Group meeting.

Agenda Items for July 21 Design Group meeting

- Big picture – how to define success for overall HPRP
- Budget and service priorities.
Margaret described a step chart that shows how resources management can be dispensed. Leslie will email this chart with along with meeting notes.