

**HPRP Tucson and Pima County
Design Group Meeting Notes
July 28, 2009**



Design Group Attendance: Jodie Barnes, Gary Bachman, Linda Kot, Mary Beth Landis Jantzen, Pat De Vito, Leslie Carlson, Terri Patt-Smith, Jane Burch, Tony Bruno, Ron Koenig, Anthony Young, Rosalva A. Bullock, Charles Monroe, and Bea Gallivan

Guests:

Andrea Ibáñez, City of Tucson
Anne Levy, Community Outreach Program for the Deaf
Sarah Adamson
Chris Kang, Green Valley Assistance Services
Jennifer Andersen, New Beginnings for Women and Children
Mark Ludwig, Arizona Department of Housing
Sue Krahe, Our Family Services
Diana Edwards, Pima Council on Aging
Levonne Gaddy, City of Tucson
Norma Gallegos, Pima County, Community Action Agency/ESN
Nancy Panico, Open Inn
Kevin Jackson, Wingspan
D. Grady Scott, Grace Temple Baptist Church
Mary Pat Sullivan, Comin' Home
Martin Twohill, Southern Arizona Veterans Administration

Welcome and Introductions

Leslie Carlson welcomed everyone and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to share the plans developed for HPRP so far and to get feedback. All the participants introduced themselves.

Presentations

HPRP Presentation

Leslie gave a PowerPoint presentation on the draft plans for the HPRP program in Tucson and Pima County that have been developed by the HPRP Design Group.

During the presentation, additional information was provided by meeting participants.

- Information and Referral

Sue Krahe gave an update about Information and Referral Services. Community Information & Referral (CIR), a nonprofit in Phoenix, now has all the Southern Arizona information from our local I&R database that is administered by Our Family Services. CIR provides a 24/7 phone line and a web site. Thus, the CIR web site will have all the information that is found in our local I&R book, including information about services related to homelessness. Our Family Services

will continue to keep the 5-county southern Arizona information up to date and provide updates to CIR.

- Emergency Services Network

Norma Gallegos summarized how the ESN system works. There are eight provider agencies that are contracted to provide emergency rent and utility assistance. There are limited funds, and recipients can receive the assistance one time a year.

- HPRP in Arizona Rural Areas

Mark Ludwig from the Arizona Department of Housing (ADOH) explained that about \$7 million in HPRP funds for rural areas will be provided through the existing system of Community Action Agency providers in Arizona rural counties. Eleven providers will be contracted to provide HPRP services. Mark also noted that ADOH funds for Eviction Prevention/Emergency (Homeless) Housing Assistance (EPEH) might stop after 2010.

Questions and Comments

Web site

- Because CIR in Phoenix now can provide information and referral information for Pima County, it will not be necessary for the HPRP web site to provide information on where to get help. Instead, it will primarily provide HPRP information, a self-guided eligibility assessment, and will link to other key web sites. The other key web links should include:
 - The CIR web site -- <http://www.cir.org/firstcall-search.html>
 - Arizona Community Action Agencies information on benefits programs -- arizonaselfhelp.org
 - Benefits Checkup web site -- <http://www.benefitscheckup.org/index.cfm?link=az>
 - Arizona Law Help web site -- <http://azlawhelp.org/>
 - Don't Borrow Trouble -- <http://www.dbtaz.org/>
- Make sure the web site uses language for low reading ability, and is in both English and Spanish.
- A Case Worker at an agency could assist a client to use the web portal to assess eligibility for HPRP.

How Will Outreach and Marketing Be Done for HPRP?

- We think a lot of people who need HPRP are already clients with other agencies. These agencies will refer their clients to HPRP as soon as HPRP services become available. We don't want to market HPRP very much because there will already be a lot of clients. On the other hand we won't keep it a secret. It will be a "soft roll-out."
- Provide workshops for service provider staff about HPRP. Also, provide workshops for faith communities on HPRP and the rest of the services system in Tucson/Pima County pertaining to homelessness.
- There is no particular group of people that is "earmarked" for this program. There are no set-asides. Services will be based on need and likelihood of success, and will be for anyone who

meets those criteria. We need to balance the need to get the word out with not wanting to over-market the program.

- Q: When will services begin? A: Subcontracts must be in place by September 30. We will need time in October for training and pilot testing the services. Services may not start until late October or early November. Perhaps during October the program could assist non-complex cases such as VASH clients who just need one-time help with deposits.

Need and Demand for Services

- There will likely be great demand. Norma reported that the Pima County ESN system has four people answering a hotline line and gets 100-200 calls per day. Some staff have been working weekends to stay caught up. In the past they have gotten as many as 40 walk-ins. They have made a decision to stop allowing walk-ins.
- Jane Burch said that the agencies that accept contracts to provide Resource Specialists will be responsible for responding to all the phone calls with questions and requests for assistance.
- Agencies may have a hard time absorbing extra demand for HPRP services. Their staff are funded by other grants and have specified deliverables. Agencies have no extra capacity, especially now, with reduced donation and grant dollars.
- We might consider using social work interns or similar community resources to help with tasks like answering questions, doing HMIS data entry, etc.
- Encourage agencies to cross train additional staff, i.e., send more than just the Resource Specialist to the HPRP trainings. This will help when the RS is absent, or if there is turnover. It may also help improve case management, referrals, and use of HPRP services, in general, within and across agencies.
- The other mainstream benefits programs that we are supposed to interface with may also get overwhelmed with demand for services.
- It would be good to document unmet demand, e.g. turnaways, in both the ESN and HPRP programs. This data should be a part of the “story” of implementing this program in Pima County.

ESN and Pima County One Stop

- Norma Gallegos described plans for how CSBG stimulus funds for emergency assistance will be used. These extra funds will be available for one year and will be targeted to dislocated workers who are registered at the Pima County One Stop whose case worker recommends the assistance. Income eligibility is 200% of federal poverty level. Assistance can help with rent, mortgage, car repairs, and certain other needs. In general, a maximum of \$1500 will be provided, but they have some flexibility. The CSBG funds will also be used to provide additional remedial training for people with low educational levels. The One Stop Center is working with Pima College Adult Education to provide a computer-aided learning lab to help people increase reading and math skills in order to reach minimum requirements so they can enroll in other training programs. The lab will be able to accommodate cohorts of 15 people at a time.
- HPRP and the Pima County One Stop and ESN will both send clients to one another. HPRP will want eligible clients to first get help from ESN, and also from the CSBG funds if they fit the

criteria. The One Stop and ESN will send client to HPRP when clients need more assistance than they can provide.

Other Comments and Questions

- What requirements will be needed for proof of residency?
- Set eligibility rules about late payment and eviction notices so that the client can be assisted, and eviction prevented enough ahead of time so that fees and other legal costs can be avoided. This is much more cost effective.
- We need to watch out for people who will try to scam this program. For example, do regular follow-up with prevention clients to ensure that they kept their housing. This will protect against unscrupulous landlords who may collect rent payments and evict the tenant anyway. Also, make sure that rent payments aren't just going to someone's relative.
- Question: Could two agencies submit a collaborative proposal? Answer: agencies can respond to selected portions of the scope of work in the RFQ. It will be very important for agencies to collaborate in this program.
- It is possible that the program could use up all the money in the first year or two. If so, that will be okay, and will demonstrate how much need there is.
- We want to use best practices and use this opportunity to improve our systems for preventing homelessness and re-housing homeless people. This will also position us well for future federal funding, since is a direction that HUD will be going in.
- We will need to document our work well and have good evaluation data.
- It is expected that HPRP will have an advisory group that will include all the Resource Specialists, Contract Specialists, and managers from the City and County. They will meet regularly and assess how the program is going, and be able to make changes to improve program delivery.