

**HPRP Tucson and Pima County
Design Group Meeting Notes
August 4, 2009**



Attendance: Margaret Kish, Jodie Barnes, Linda Kot, Mary Beth Landis Jantzen, Pat DeVito, Leslie Carlson, Terri Patt-Smith, Ron Koenig, Anthony Young, Rosalva A. Bullock, La'Tresa Jester, Jane Burch, Tony Bruno and Bea Gallivan

Welcome and Introductions

Leslie Carlson welcomed everyone and the participants introduced themselves.

HPRP Feedback Meeting Held on July 28

Leslie asked for reflections about the stakeholder meeting held on July 28. Design Group members felt that the feedback was positive and there were no major critiques of the HPRP plan. It was good to hear the feedback and helpful have people there who tied in to other systems, for example Mark Ludwig from the Arizona Department of Housing who is responsible for HPRP in rural areas of Arizona.

Feedback

Design Group members summarized some of the feedback from the meeting.

- There probably won't be enough money to serve all the need.
- There may be a flood of phone calls, and a need for enough HPRP-trained staff who can deal with the calls.
- The newly homeless often don't have any idea where to go for help. If we don't market the program to the general public, then those who get the help will be those who already know how to access services, i.e., those who have a case manager who knows about the program. It will be important to do presentations about HPRP in grassroots settings like faith communities, not just through agencies. We don't to create an impression that the program is earmarked only for those who already have a case manager.
- Leslie reported that she met with Barbara Montrose, from CPSA, who was not able to attend the July 28th meeting. Barbara thought the HPRP plans sounded good. In regard to the HPRP emphasis on ensuring access to mainstream benefits, Barbara noted that the community still doesn't have a specially-trained person who focuses on helping homeless people with Social Security applications (SSI). It was mentioned that DIRECT does do that. Barbara also thought that it is unlikely that HPRP will run out of money in the first year, due to the program's design.

Design Group discussion

- Margaret noted that the ESN cap for the CSBG funds was \$1500, a lot less than the \$8,000 recommended for HPRP. But the group noted that HPRP assistance is not expected to be that high for most people, and will have to be reauthorized every 3 months. Norma also stated that the CSBG cap can have some flexibility.

- The agencies that contract to provide the Resource Specialist will need to have multiple staff available to answer telephone questions. It will be important for these agencies to send as many of their staff as possible to the HPRP training. It was suggested that the training might be video taped, so when there is staff turnover, new staff could view the video. Anthony Young suggested that the training should also include how to spot legal issues and where to refer the client to, e.g., Legal Aid, Attorney General office, etc.
- It will be important to provide presentations and trainings about HPRP to a broad range of agencies and organizations . Margaret Kish mentioned that we will need two different types of training, one for the non-profit agencies, and another for the faith-based and other community-based organizations who will need more information about the existing services system. Rosalva Bullock suggested that we train all the *promotoras* that are already in outlying areas working with low income families. Tony Bruno added that First Things First also has people already working in varied communities.
- Tony Bruno said that he is still concerned that HPRP services will not reach rural communities. Even though there is a plan for “circuit rider” Resource Specialists, it will be hard to serve rural areas. Margaret noted that there has been discussion about the rural communities from the very beginning and that we will need to make sure that services reach those areas. Rural communities are not all the same and need to have services provide in a ways that will be a good fit. We will need to use existing service sites. Maybe some of the HPRP process can be done differently for rural areas. For example determine initial eligibility on the phone, and then conduct a more formal process when the circuit rider gets out there. We need to make sure that information about HPRP gets out to grassroots contacts in rural areas. Rural areas are like the faith communities in that they lack knowledge about how to access services, and may also lack capacity. We could publish a one-page guide on where to get help.
- Ron Koenig said that the housing quality inspections will be provided in-house by someone within the Section 8 unit. There are existing regulations that address the actual physical condition of a house. This is for the re-housing component of HPRP. However, it might be challenging to make sure that these re-housing services get out to rural areas, and they might have to be contracted out.
- Anthony reiterated that it will be less costly if HPRP can save money by providing eviction prevention before costly fees are incurred. There are landlord-tenant laws, and usually, after a 5-day grace period, the landlord will issue a notice to the tenant to either pay or move out within 5 days. If there is no response then the court action starts. HPRP could educate landlords as well as tenants that the tenants can seek emergency rent assistance before court action.
- There will be extra costs for serving more distant rural areas such as Ajo. These extra costs can be written into the contracts
- The Design Group discussed whether there should be targets or set-asides to ensure a certain proportion of HPRP services get to rural communities. The group also discussed a definition of

“rural.” Margaret said that the County had already developed a definition as a part of another program. Tony noted there is also a USDA definition, and stated that rural areas are numerous and varied.

HMIS Data Standards for HPRP

Revised HMIS Data Standards have been published, including new requirements for HPRP. These are in a 60-day public comment period. Leslie said the Data Standards total 126 pages, but she printed the table of contents and gave the group a summary of what is included in the Data Standards. Leslie will forward the information about HMIS and HUD-required reports to the group via email.

Much of the data required for HUD quarterly and annual reports will come from HMIS. The group discussed who would compile the all the information that is required for the reports. There was consensus to have the Contract Specialist compile the information for the reports, and forward this to the City and County, who will then submit the reports to HUD.

RFQ's for Providers

Scope of Work

Leslie asked what further input was needed from the Design Group in order for the RFP or RFQ to be written.

- Ron said they will need to decide how payments are handled, e.g., fee for services, FTE, or a block of money.
- The Design Group discussed what kind of case load should be expected for the Resource Specialists. There may be an initial surge of clients where the case load is high at first. It was agreed that a ratio of one RS per 50 clients would be a good average, knowing that the Resource Specialists will have a mix of clients. If a client needs more intensive case management, there should be a partner agency who could help with that. If necessary, there could be a wait list to prevent over-large case loads.
- Should the scope of work for the Resource Specialist include dealing with the phone calls? Jane Burch suggested that the program could use phone technology so that there would be only one phone number to call and calls could roll over to an extension that could be answered by someone else on a cell phone. The phone could have features where callers could press a number to hear recorded bits of information. Clients could also leave messages. It will be important to have one phone number where questions are answered by knowledgeable people who provide accurate and helpful information. Contract Specialists could help with this.
- Ron Koenig raised the question about whether there should be more Resource Specialists, perhaps three RS's and one CS.
- Jody Barnes asked if follow-up could be done by going out to a client's home. It was agreed that this should not be done, or else only be done in rare cases. You would need two caseworkers to go together for security, so it would be very resource-intensive.
- Mary Beth Landis Jantzen stated that the group has a very good definition of the Resource Specialist and the Contract Specialists. But there are some things that still need to be clarified, such as who answers to whom, which agency is responsible for what, what costs are included

in a contract, and where the City and the County step in. Ron and Margaret said that the City and the County will be working together to work out the specifics. The exciting part is creating a model between non-profits and government where nonprofits are at the table, and government doesn't just figure it out on their own. This model can be used in the future for other things as well.

- There will be an opportunity during the pre-bid process for questions and comments. Procurement rules will be followed after that.

RFQ Timeline

It was clarified that HUD requires grantees to have subcontracts in place by September 30. The City and County will work together on the RFP or RFQ and will look for a way to issue the RFP quickly so that the process can go forward and we can meet the deadline. The City and the County's Procurement Departments will be able to work together to issue one RFP.

Leslie asked for an estimate about the program start date. If contracts are signed by September 30, we will still need time to train staff, test the web site, etc. It might be prudent to predict a start date of November 1. Maybe some non-complex services could start in October, such as move-in assistance for existing VASH clients.

Jodie Barnes reported that there are 64 veterans eligible for the Veterans Support Housing (VASH) program who will need move-in assistance. If we estimate \$500 in assistance for each client, that totals \$32,000. This support for VASH clients would not happen all at once, but would be spread out over time. The Family Unification Program (FUP) also provides housing vouchers, but these are not specifically for homeless people or those at imminent risk of homelessness, so it's not likely to be a good fit for HPRP.

Ron had contacted HUD about refugees and was told that they could receive HPRP services if they met all of the eligibility requirements. They have to meet certain requirements to be considered "qualified aliens."

Evaluation of the Design Group's Experience

Leslie suggested using an evaluation process of listing "pluses and wishes" about the Design Group experience.

Pluses

- Variety of perspectives;
- Diversity of group;
- Opportunity to forge new collaborations;
- Learn more collectively than we can as an individual;
- Personal development for all;
- Opens up possibilities;
- There were a lot of feedback loops, such as seeing grids, digesting the information, then commenting, which made it more comfortable to move onto the next step;
- The subgroups/workgroups helped a lot;

- Quality of facilitation, kept us on track, made it more productive and organized;
- Coming together with a purpose;
- It helped to have providers at the meetings who knew a lot about the day-to-day workings and what needs to be considered for the RFP;
- I was happy to have the opportunity to comment, and to receive input from stakeholders;
- We have a better product;
- The process was authentic; the City and County didn't already have a product in place, and then come to us just to approve it;
- Good job of balancing how much we could do in each meeting;
- The discussions helped us to consider populations that we might not have known about for HPRP, not just who we usually think about; this helped put a face on it;
- Showing the City and County the usefulness of working together to create a good program; this creates good quality and is cost effective;
- The minutes were good and really assisted the process;
- Everyone was really committed;
- Our time was used well; we learned a lot;
- It was a good group of people.
- Anthony Young mentioned that Legal Aid doesn't often have the opportunity to be included in these kinds of groups , so he appreciated being at the meeting and finding out more about services in the community.

Wishes

- Wish we had been clearer on our hard deadline (for RFQ and contracting) in advance of starting the Design Group meetings;
- It would have helped if we had known earlier in the process about the scenarios, a picture of what the agencies are experiencing, what is really happening out in the community, e.g., the lines out the door. Some of this was unfolding as we met during the last couple of months.
- It would have helped to get steady data on indicators like new applications for unemployment;

Leslie will prepare a report about the Design Group's process and recommendations, and put this together with other documents that will be a record of the process.

Leslie thanked everyone for the commitment and helpfulness to the process.

Tony Bruno mentioned that on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, the Arizona Rural Human Services Network meets at the Food Bank to network and hear speakers. He invited the group to the next meeting on August 19th at 10:00. Leslie will present about HPRP, and former state senator Tim Bee will also be a speaker.