

Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Design Group
Meeting Notes
June 30, 2009

Attendees: Jody Barnes
Margaret Kish
Ron Koenig
Linda Kot
Terri Patt-Smith
Mary Beth Landis Jantzen
Tony Bruno
Jane Burch
Pat DeVito

Pat welcomed everyone back and reminded them that the focus of this funding is housing for the homeless or about to be homeless, not just hard times.

Leslie had requested that we develop a list of Guiding Principles or Core Values for our work. These include:

- Seamless to the Recipient
- Timely Delivery of Service
- Build on Existing Systems such as ESN
- Emphasis on Referral and Networking
- Consistency/Standardization/ across the resource specialists
- Plan for Success and Sustainability
- Coverage and Outreach to Rural and hard to reach populations and locations

The working titles for the two positions are:

Resource Specialist - (the Case Management role)

Disbursement and Compliance Administrator - (the person who authorizes expenditures and monitors the contracts and cash flow.

The federal regulations are set at serving households at **50% of median or below**. After a brief discussion, the group decided to use that guideline initially. If the funds are being spent too quickly, this decision could be revisited and lowered. The intent is not to make the family destitute. They need to retain their cars, retirement plans and some savings. **At the time of application, the family may not have more than \$3000 in liquid assets.** Verification of income going forward will be layoff notice, Unemployment Insurance or similar documentation. They will also submit eviction or utility turn off notice.

It was pointed out that due to the poor economy, we may end up serving fewer households for longer periods of time if people cannot find work quickly. Particularly in rural areas, the job opportunities are few.

Margaret has been giving this a lot of thought and walked the group through her tier concept for determining eligibility.

Tier I Health and Safety

Residence condemned, victim of domestic violence, living in uninhabitable conditions

Tier II Crisis Pending

Pending foreclosure or eviction, severe cost burden, sudden, significant loss of income

Tier III Serious Issue

Extremely low income, young and pregnant, illness or disability, past institutional care

Everyone agreed this model made sense and helped narrow down and layer the levels for eligibility.

This program has to balance both need and likelihood of success. The people most in need might have the least chance of attaining and maintaining stable housing.

The Service Plan will be the driver and compliance will determine whether assistance is continued. In the initial phase, 2-3 months, recipients will meet frequently with the Resource Specialist. If the recipient is making progress on his/her service plan, then meetings can become less frequent and they can check in by phone or email. Those with more risk factors will have more frequent contact. Case Management is a program requirement. The first three months will be more inclusive, broader to see how the family progresses.

High Risk

Low Risk

High Success

Program Emphasis is here	May not "need" - lower tier - HPRP, but could cycle through quickly
Refer to other programs longer in duration or deeper assistance.	May not be best use of funds

Low Success

For example, households with multiple evictions, poor work history, poor credit, criminal history and active substance use may be too high risk to be successful in the time constraints of this program.

The Resource Specialists will meet often -weekly - for Group Staffing to discuss difficult cases, and to resolve issues with the program design. These meetings will include the Disbursement and Compliance Administrators who will not have direct contact with the recipients and therefore may not have a sense of all the factors facing the families.

The Resource Specialist needs to elicit, “what’s your plan for yourself”, “what happens next month, next year” to assist the family in thinking about their own resources and support. The recipient has to take responsibility for the plan with assistance from the Resource Specialist to find other resources such as child care.

In thinking about eligibility, Fair Housing needs to be considered. It is not legal to exclude a member of a protected class, for example, a person with a disability, solely on the basis of that disability and to use that as criteria for denial of assistance.

The group discussed use of the DES Self Sufficiency Matrix as a tool already accepted by HUD and used in the HMIS system. The Resource Specialist could use modified version to assess both need and likelihood of success.

The Matrix could be shortened with fewer questions and the most pertinent domains could be “weighted”. Jane will send out the HMIS version of this matrix; Mary Beth, Terri and Jody will meet as a subcommittee to make recommendations before next Tuesday’s meeting where we will discuss Case Management.

The group expressed concern about households, with children old enough to understand, losing their housing. Being homeless is very traumatic for children and sets them back in school.

The question came up about **refugee eligibility**. The City and County will research this issue. Minors may not enter into leases so they should be referred to Open Inn and Youth On Their Own (YOTO). Some families may need Legal Aid referrals. The issue of **undocumented** households was not addressed in the original set of regulations. However, the applicants need to be able to work legally here or obtain income benefits such as SSI to be successful in their service plan for housing stability.

The leases will fall under the Arizona Landlord Tenancy laws. The group consensus is that lease requirements can include mandatory program requirements as well.

The “Roll Out” for HPRP should be at locations and programs with a ready target audience for the program. These could include the ESN agencies, DES/UI and the Pima County One Stop. These are natural referral entities that are already seeing new populations at risk of homelessness.

Initial Eligibility will require a residency requirement. Applicants need to show proof they have resided in Pima County for at least three months.

The team recommended a **survey for landlords** to see if they would be interested in participating in this program.

Tony mentioned that the One Stop had received \$1.5 million from CSBG for mortgage assistance. Norma Gallegos will be administering this through ESN. All of the existing and new programs need to coordinate and the HPRP Resource Specialists need to be very knowledgeable about the other programs and keep up with new funding and opportunities.

Future Issues to Be Decided:

What is the relationship between the Resource Specialist and the Disbursement Compliance Administrator? How much leeway does the Resource Specialist have? How easily can his/her decisions be over ridden?

Is there a dollar CAP per household?

How are we handling inspections? Who is doing them? Are we using HQS? How can we respond quickly to this requirement?

Who is doing the Section 8 Rent Reasonableness, Payment Standard?

Do we want to pay rent/utilities during a lengthy job training program if there is no guarantee of work, no guarantee of sustainable income?