

Region V Systems
Promoting Comprehensive Partnerships in Behavioral Health

HOUSING STEERING COMMITTEE

MINUTES

August 18, 2006
1645 'N' Street, Suite A
Lincoln, NE
10:00 a.m.

Present: Wendy Andorf, CMHCC; Seanna Collins, Lincoln Housing Authority; George Hanigan, PIER; Carol Murphy, Julie Hippen, Lutheran Family Services; Crete Housing Authority; Sam Ridge, CMHCLC Independent Living; James Wells, Consumer; Jay White, CTP/Heather; John Turner and Marti Rabe, Region V Systems

1. Welcome / Introductions / Minutes

Turner mentioned that several people were attending training and were unable to be at the meeting. Introductions followed.

2. Specific Case / Other Discussions

- Hanigan commented that a client moved and did a good job of taking care of most of the details. She hadn't been safe where she was. Because she stayed with the same apartment management company, it was relatively easy to make the transition. The voucher stayed with her.
- Murphy discussed a client who was housed recently and is currently employed. She is being threatened with the loss of her SS benefits even though she is talking about quitting her job, has no CS worker, and appears to be un-medicated. This client has been involved with TASC in the past, but is uncooperative. She has resisted efforts to get her signed up for Medicaid. At times she has stayed at the mission in order to save gas money. The suggestion was made that one of the persons who deal with homeless people with special needs could meet with her at the mission. Murphy and Andorf will coordinate that process. This consumer is not in RAP.

3. System Issues

LB40A Update and Rural RFP:

- Turner updated the committee on LB40A. A check for \$123,000 has been issued to CenterPointe to purchase the former FreshStart facility which will provide permanent supported housing. The second project involving \$200,000 is still pending approval of the HUD 811 grant. CenterPointe is currently seeking land for this project.
- The remaining \$100,000+ will be RFPd in the rural areas. Turner intends to follow the model developed by Region 6 and intends to get the RFP distributed widely in rural areas. He stated that he would like to see collaboration among existing agencies, and that Mary O'Shea has expressed interest in the rural RFP.
- When applications are received, this committee will review them and make recommendations, prior to moving the applications through the Region V meeting cycle.

RentWise:

- Turner stated that he is seeing more need for RentWise training in the community and would like to see regular trainings begin soon. Suggestions included: incorporating training into home visits for clients who would benefit from one-on-one training, training RAP clients and Community Support (CS) workers; keeping groups to ten or less; and teaching the sequence of six modules regularly, and allowing consumers or others to complete them as they are able. Even though the

sequence builds on the previous module, consumers could get the information they need if they completed the modules out of order. A check-off sheet would need to be maintained. The RentWise program will need to be marketed.

- Most modules take approximately one hour to complete. It would be advantageous for clients to attend these trainings with their support worker, as some consumers may have difficulty processing the information that quickly. Providing this additional support will make it possible for trainers to move through the material at the recommended pace.
- Region V and the Midtown Center were suggested venues for these trainings.
- Turner will provide a list of persons who are trained to be trainers for RentWise.
- Other suggestions for teaching included: team teaching; having one or two persons responsible for only one module; videotaping the training for use in rural areas; and creating a central referral system for those interested in the training.
- Funding the training was discussed. There is a \$5 fee for the material used for the training, and every consumer would need to have the materials. Community Health Endowment, Department of Economical Development, and REOMA were suggested as possible sources of funds for these materials. Nebraska Housing Developers Association has written a grant for \$15,000 over three years to the Dept. of Economical Development.
- Lancaster County Drug Court clients could benefit from the training. Landlords are also interested.
- Ridge indicated that the intention is to hold a RentWise training beginning in October at the Midtown Center.

Flex Funds:

- Turner commented that CS workers are being encouraged to use RAP flex funds for housing-related costs, prior to using the Region V Consumer Flex Funds.
- It is not necessary for a client to be involved in RAP to receive this one-time funding.

4. Utilization

- Turner has begun a wait list which has led to questions and concerns about the bridging process. Determining who is ready to bridge and coordinating the move to Section 8 are priorities. Seanna has been forwarding messages to the housing specialist, bypassing the intake housing specialist, for these clients. Hanigan commented that they are getting a release of information for LHA as soon as a client is in the program so they can move forward with the bridging process.
- One concern is that there may not be a timely response to time-sensitive documents. LHA has been CCing appropriate support workers. Collins commented that she has had similar problems with the mainstream vouchers. It was noted that 75 percent of persons eligible for vouchers have either a MI or disability, so it is very helpful if there is an advocate or CS worker to contact. Turner indicated that he will continue to list the support worker in any emails to LHA. Other persons to be CC'd were identified, including BVMH for rural clients.
- Turner stated that bridging is becoming a monetary issue as clients get close to using their \$5,000 voucher. Any dollars above the \$5,000 for a voucher would come from some else's voucher. Because Section 8 is not available in many rural areas, those clients may need on-going assistance well above the original \$5,000.
- Confidentiality was discussed. Clients in the RAP program do sign a release allowing Turner to discuss their situations at this Housing Steering Committee. For clients like the one discussed above, indicators can be used to determine who a client is without divulging his/her name.
- Clients will move off the waiting list by date of application, not priority, though priority 1 clients will always take precedence.
- Turner has received 103 applications. He commented that there is a 70/30 split for these vouchers. He has currently used the available vouchers for Lancaster County, but has 15 available for rural applicants.
- Turner distributed copies and discussed data from the monthly report for July. He noted that the number will be a lot different for the August reporting period. He also indicated that he is working with the fiscal department to create a monthly report to track flex fund usage.

- Flex fund usage for “vacate owing” clients were discussed. Collins indicated that a client may still receive Section 8 housing if they sign a payment agreement.

5. Other Business

- Turner commented that he has been asked to come up with five standards that he feels are important and working well. He said that flexibility will be one of those standards.
- The electronic version of the application will be available on the website soon. Collins commented that the number of walk-ins has decreased dramatically since they posted their application. This saves staff time.
- There is concern that when clients fill out the application themselves, they often are not accurate. It is helpful to have a CS worker help, and staff sometimes helps

6. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held at Region V Systems on Friday, September 15, 10:00 a.m. The Steering Committee continues to meet on the third Friday of the month.