

Mississippi Pre-Academy Site Visit Notes

November 20-21, 2002

Expectations

- Network/coordination between the 3 Continuums of Care
- Identify/utilize mainstream resources
- Training for program managers/staff on client needs
- Develop framework for strategic plan that enables comprehensive coordinated system of care
- Gain buy-in for issue of homelessness
- State law/policy around addressing homelessness
- System for tracking/ legislative buy-in to fund

Ground Rules

- No opinions should be taken personally
- Everyone participates in meetings and the work (share the load)
- Be respectful of time
- Look beyond individual programs to what works for the state
- All ideas are encouraged
- We will strive for facts and understand opinions
- We will test assumptions
- We encourage thoughtful disagreement
- We will stay focused on tasks and discourage distractions
- All critical decisions will be made by consensus
- The leader has the team's presentation to keep up on task and on time
- Each of us takes responsibility for our collective success
- Silence cell phone/beepers*

Vision Statement

Mississippi *has* a statewide coordinated service delivery system where each individual has equal access to all resources needed to become self-sufficient while maintaining full self-determination.

Current Problems/Issues

- Fragmentation of system
- Few transitional programs (mostly linked to substance abuse)
- Conflicting regulations & barriers (different definitions of preventive services; need a court order for treatment)
- Transportation
- Traditional approach doesn't include permanent housing
- Discharge planning problems
- Health care, including dental & optical***
- Identification issues
- Affordable housing
- Lack of communication about available treatment services
- Weak case management systems/lack of training for non MH staff
- People falling through cracks
- Inconvenient operating hours
- Can't serve people on probation in shelters
- Limited funding for medications; follow-up issues
- No hospitals as holding facilities
- Lack of housing for singles
- Regional differences in working with housing authorities
- Lack of training for shelter staff
- Hard to serve 18-20 population
- Assistance with benefits (SSI, food stamps)
- Job training
- Employment
- Information dissemination to get people at table for C of C difficult
- Uncertainty of number of homeless persons statewide***
- High drop-out rate (GED and High School)***
- Lack of marketable skills***

Strengths/Stakeholders/Resources

- Strong charitable climate
- Arrangement with SSI to use shelter address
- Collaboration among PATH programs

- MOU with housing authority in Meridian to put homeless families at top of the list
- Resource directories
- Surveys
- Mission Links Coalition, MDA, CSD, Mississippi Assoc. of Community Action Agencies, Home of Your Own Alliance, Mental Health Assoc. of the Capitol Area
- Climate
- Outreach
- Continuums of Care (Partners to End Homelessness, Mississippians United to End Homelessness, Open Doors Continuum)
- Mississippi Home Corporation & Mississippi Housing Initiative
- Clinics, soup kitchens, emergency shelters, food pantries, healthcare services targeted toward homeless people, clothing pantries
- Substance abuse treatment centers
- GED programs
- Support from city government
- Faith-based support
- State CSBG office - Division of Community Services
- Strong VA homeless programs
- Partnerships with financial institutions – CRA
- Hinds County Human Resource Agency (HCHRA)*

Political Environment

- Jackson - supportive citywide; Homeless Memorial Day; developing transitional job program targeted to homeless people; improved relationships w/police
- Spotty support
- Many interested legislators
- Governor's interested
- Few uninterested parties
- Election next year = changes mode of politicians; can educate & tap into interests (e.g., veterans)
- Current mode of conservative restraint on fiscal appropriations - no new initiatives that require \$\$\$; interest in managing and pooling current resources

- Nationwide backlash against homelessness/not a popular cause anymore, public does not relate (*Need to look at other states Panhandler Laws*)
- Lack of awareness among majority of public officials
- Support for data systems/ tracking
- NIMBYism affects housing development (*Not in My Backyard*)

Opportunities

- Combine lists of resources throughout state
 - MOU between state agencies - bring to the same table, pool resources
 - Coordination with Voc rehab
 - MAC (Mississippi Access to Care) plan implementation
 - Partner w/agencies to facilitate linkages to permanent housing
 - Revisit revolving fund idea for mortgages (SA, Home of Your Own for people w/disabilities)
 - Individual Development Accounts program
 - Support National Housing Trust Fund
 - Tap into Community Development Corporations (CDCs), federal home loans banks, community housing development organizations (CHDO), and private foundations (e.g., Enterprise Corp of the Delta)
 - Identify/expand statewide network of players
 - Educate public officials/ legislators using survey data; help improve data collection process
 - Use upcoming election to get homelessness on the agenda
 - Cross-training of staff
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- Improved coordination/increased knowledge among those at the table
 - Scarce resources force coordination
 - Educate the public about prevention of homelessness*
 - Partner with Department of Correction to provide support services of early release offenders*

Threats

- Slow economy

- Apathy
- Continuing backlash
- Overwhelmed by other issues
- Turf issues
- Priorities of team may conflict with state and local community priorities
- Budget cuts - lack of manpower at state level (agency & service staff)
- Lack of buy-in from consumers

Priorities/Goals

- Create avenues for developing affordable and accessible permanent housing
- Conduct needs assessment/ inventory of services, housing, and structure of state delivery system to find out what exists (and determine geographical regions/ communities served) and create resource directory
- Create and implement coordinated mechanism of connecting programs and resources
- Enhance statewide coordination of three continuums
- Educating and increasing awareness among the public and elected officials
- Educating congressional delegation about federal regulations
- Review and remove internal and external barriers to accessing and providing services (e.g., transportation, eligibility, regulations, funding streams)
- Learn and build on what we've learned from development of the MAC (Mississippi Access to Care) plan (e.g., single point of entry)
- Eliminating duplication and enhancing coordination of case management services within and between agencies
- Develop integrated tracking system
- Create a forum of the involvement of the target population
- Enhance outreach efforts
- To expand HUD's definition of homelessness in order to include preventive services*
- Affordable, available, and accessible housing*

Technical Assistance

- Options for using Medicaid, grants, and other resources for supportive services
- Identifying grants and matching funds
- Systems design (e.g., case management, etc.)

- Other (similar & more advanced) states' activities in terms of needs assessment (e.g., funding, implementation, etc.)
- Resources (e.g., web sites, federal updates)
- Tracking systems (e.g., models, best practices)
- Models for statewide coordination/integration efforts and interagency councils
- Looking at options for housing (existing resources and new development)
- Models for education and increasing awareness
- Effective models for outreach for and engagement of hard-to-reach population (especially in rural states)
- Listing of federal resources for assisting homeless (from PRA)
- Contact information for people at various federal agencies, national advocacy groups

Potential Additional Team Members

- MS Home Corporation
- Planning & Policy - Ben Mokrey
- Enterprise Corporation of the Delta - CDC
- Bill Bynum, Chief Executive Officer
- MS Assoc. of Community Action Agencies
- Lolita Ross
- MS Primary Healthcare Association
- Robert Pugh

Add formerly homeless person to team

Next Steps

- Schedule brief meeting in January prior to policy academy-Schedule after travel arrangements have been finalized
- Finalize additional team members by end of week (Two additional un-funded slots will possibly be Bill Bynum, Chief Executive Office of Enterprise Corporation of the Delta, and Lolita Ross, Mississippi Association of Community Action Agencies, in order to have broad representation on team)
- Circulate current list of members via email and finalize team by Friday, December 13, 2002. (Call Wanda if e-mail of revisions discussed in meeting December 11, 2002 not received by Friday)
- E-Mail final list of team members to Jamie Hart

- Explore additional funding opportunities for additional 2 members
- Identify co-leader and time keeper for team at next meeting when all members are present
- Shirley Deville will act as scribe at the policy academy and will take a laptop (Take copy of diskette)
- Circulate revised vision and SWOT analysis on email for approval/revisions, submit to HSR by January 4th