

*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
U.S. Department of Labor*

## **Improving Access to Mainstream Services for People Experiencing Homelessness: Focus on Homeless Families with Children**

---

*Radisson Miami Hotel  
Miami, Florida  
January 27 - 29, 2004*

### **BREAKOUT SESSION DESCRIPTIONS**

#### ***TRACK ONE: CRITICAL ECONOMIC RESOURCES***

##### **Assisting Homeless Families with Employment Skills**

**Objectives:**

- To inform State Teams about TANF work requirements, use of funds, and Department of Labor (DOL) mainstream and targeted programs to provide employment-related assistance for homeless parents and other services for homeless families
- To highlight promising practices at State and local levels
- To encourage discussion and exchange among State Team participants
- To assist State Teams in developing a strategy

**Content:**

- Brief overview of Workforce Investment Act system and DOL mainstream and targeted programs
- Brief overview of federal policy on TANF work requirements and use of TANF and MOE funds
- Promising practices from both systems at the State and local levels

**Presenters:**

- Brian Kennedy, Deputy National Director, Office of Job Corps, U.S. Department of Labor
- Randy Cooper, Senior Policy Advisor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor
- Mack Storrs, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

**Target audience:**

- Workforce development and TANF representatives on State Teams
- Other participants with an interest in employment and training-related services for this population

## **Supporting Permanent Housing for Homeless Families**

### **Objectives:**

- To communicate how the Continuum of Care process works to maximize effectiveness and use of resources
- To identify and provide examples of how HUD (e.g., CDBG, HOME) and other resources may be blended and braided to create permanent housing for families who are homeless

### **Content:**

- Overview of CoC process
- How the CoC is used to permanently house families who are homeless
- Discussion of HUD resources available and how these resources may be braided and blended to create permanent housing for families

### **Presenters:**

- John Garrity, Director, Community Planning and Development, Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Mark Johnston, Deputy Director, Community Planning and Development, Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Emily Cooper, Technical Assistance Collaborative, Boston, Massachusetts

**Target audience:** Any member of a State Team who is involved with local Continuums or interested in learning more about collaborating with Continuums and service providers.

## **Issues Homeless Families Face In Accessing Food Stamp Program Benefits**

### **Objectives:**

- To inform State Teams on basic Food Stamp Program eligibility
- To identify the barriers to program access faced by homeless families
- To focus on what States can do to reduce or eliminate the barriers

### **Content:**

- Overview of the history of the Food Stamp Program
- Overview of basic eligibility criteria
- Identify and resolve barriers to program access for homeless families

### **Presenter:**

- Vicky T. Robinson, Program Analyst, Certification Policy Branch, Program Development Division, Food Stamp Program

**Target audience:** Policy Academy participants who are interested in expanding their knowledge of the Food Stamp Program and the issues faced by homeless families

## **Accessing Medicaid Services and Block Grant Programs**

**Learning Objectives:** This session will address the health and behavioral health needs of homeless families and children, major federal programs that fund health services for custodial parents and children, barriers to program access for homeless families, and strategies that some States or localities are using to reduce these barriers.

After attending this session, participants should be able to:

- Identify barriers to Medicaid enrollment/renewal most commonly experienced by families and children who are homeless;
- List at least three strategies to reduce these barriers and improve homeless families' access to Medicaid-funded health services; and
- Identify block grants funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and how they can be used to increase homeless families' access to needed health services.

### **Content of presentation by Pat Post:**

- Why Medicaid matters to homeless families and children
- Who is eligible but not enrolled and why
- Obstacles to enrollment and continued eligibility
- Best-practice models for reducing enrollment obstacles and increasing service access
- Summary of recommendations from HCH providers

### **Presenters:**

- Patricia A. Post, M.P.A. – Policy Analyst, National Health Care for the Homeless Council, Nashville, Tennessee
- Starleen Scott-Robbins, Best Practice Consultant, North Carolina Division of Substance Abuse Services, Raleigh, North Carolina

## ***TRACK TWO: DIRECT SERVICE INTERVENTIONS***

### **Providing Services through TANF to Support Homeless Families**

#### **Objectives:**

- To inform State Teams about those aspects of TANF that involve services relevant to homeless families
- To review funding for services under TANF
- To learn of significant features in the proposed reauthorization of TANF
- To encourage States to consider how TANF services should be incorporated into their action plans

#### **Content:**

- Brief overview of TANF
- Funding to States under TANF and changes in funding mixes and caseloads
- Services to TANF-eligible families and children, including participation requirements and time limits
- A taxonomy for thinking about the applicability of TANF and family homelessness

#### **Presenter:**

- Don Winstead, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Services Policy, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

**Target audience:**

- Social services, family welfare, and TANF representatives on State Teams
- Other participants interested in assisting needy families with children in achieving stable housing and self-sufficiency

**Addressing Health and Behavioral Health Needs of Homeless Families**

**Objectives:** To assist Policy Academy participants in better understanding the clinical needs of homeless parents and of their children. The session will include a discussion about the environmental context of parenting in public and the challenges to accessing existing health and behavioral health care service systems.

**Content:**

- I. Needs of Homeless Parents
  - A. Issues and stressors for single-parent households
  - B. Health care and medical needs
  - C. Family history, sexual abuse, and trauma
  - D. Mental health and substance abuse treatment needs
  - E. Social issues and concerns
  - F. Predictors of homelessness
  
- II. Needs of Homeless Children
  - A. Health care and medical needs
  - B. Developmental concerns and educational development
  - C. Addressing the needs of “special needs” children with disabilities, chronic health conditions, etc.
  - D. Emotional needs
  - E. Social needs
  - F. Need for stability
  
- III. Family Issues
  - A. Parenting in public environments
  - B. Family interaction and extended family contact
  - C. Environmental context (e.g., safety; access to jobs, transportation, and services)
  
- IV. Service Access and Barriers
  - A. Availability of targeted and mainstream programs
  - B. Barriers to accessing available programs
  - C. Strategies to overcome service barriers

**Presenters:**

- Linda Weinreb, University of Massachusetts Medical School, Department of Family Medicine and Community Health, Worcester, Massachusetts
- Brenda Richardson, President, Women Like Us, Washington, D.C.
- Marianne Savarese-Feliciano, Homeless Healthcare Coordinator, Catholic Medical Center Community Services/City of Manchester Public Health Dept., Manchester, New Hampshire

**Target audience:** State Team members responsible for addressing the medical and behavioral health care needs of homeless parents and their children.

## **Addressing the Childcare and Education Needs of Homeless Families**

### **Objectives:**

- To share concepts, best practices, and experiential data with State team members in developing effective and efficient delivery system models and constructs for implementation and delivery at the State and local levels to homeless children and families
- To share local service provider insights and experience-based perspectives with policy makers and other first-tier State decision-makers with the authority and responsibility for funding and administering State-administered services systems for the homeless

**Content:** A discussion of needs and challenges regarding child development, education, literacy, family and community partnerships, health, and nutrition needs of homeless Head Start and school-aged children as they relate to partnering with State and local funding and service-providing agencies and programs; Perspectives and particulars from the U.S. Department of Education addressing the Department's programs and efforts relating to homeless students and families

### **Presenters:**

- Kay Floyd, Director, Oklahoma Head Start State Collaboration Project
- Janet Coscarelli, Director, Tennessee Head Start State Collaboration Office
- Amy Davis, Homeless Coordinator, Oklahoma State Department of Education
- Dr. Beth Garriss Hardy, Director of the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE), representing the U.S. Department of Education

**Target audience:** Key leaders from mainstream programs and services, including Governor's Offices, Medicaid, Head Start Collaboration/Project Directors, State-level homeless services administrators or Continuum-of-Care contacts, health promotion and treatment systems, mental health treatment systems, and substance abuse prevention and treatment systems

## **Family Strengthening**

### **Objectives:**

- To present programs that can help families develop positive relationships with spouses, children, and co-workers
- To identify access and enrollment barriers in mainstream programs encountered by homeless families and pregnant and parenting teens
- To inform State Teams about how funding sources can be integrated to provide housing and support services for this population
- To assist State Teams in developing a strategy

### **Content:**

- Research findings relating to marriage and available resources for family formation
- Spending TANF funds on family goals
- Discussion of the unique characteristics and needs of homeless pregnant and parenting teens including:
  - Demographics
  - Family dynamics
  - Presenting issues (substance abuse, mental health, lack of housing, income resources, skills training)
- Discussion of access and enrollment barriers of targeted mainstream programs (SCHIP, Food Stamps, TANF, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Block Grants)

- Discussion of how to bridge and build access to mainstream programs for homeless families
- Promising practices and model examples of how to blend various funding streams to create and maintain housing and support services for homeless families

**Presenters:**

- Carlis Williams, HHS Regional Administrator, ACF Region 4, Atlanta, Georgia
- Jane Harper, President/CEO, Family Resources, Inc., St. Petersburg, Florida
- Traci Gruenberger, Director of Operations, Lutheran Social Ministry of the Southwest, Phoenix, Arizona

**Target audience:** Key leaders from mainstream programs and services