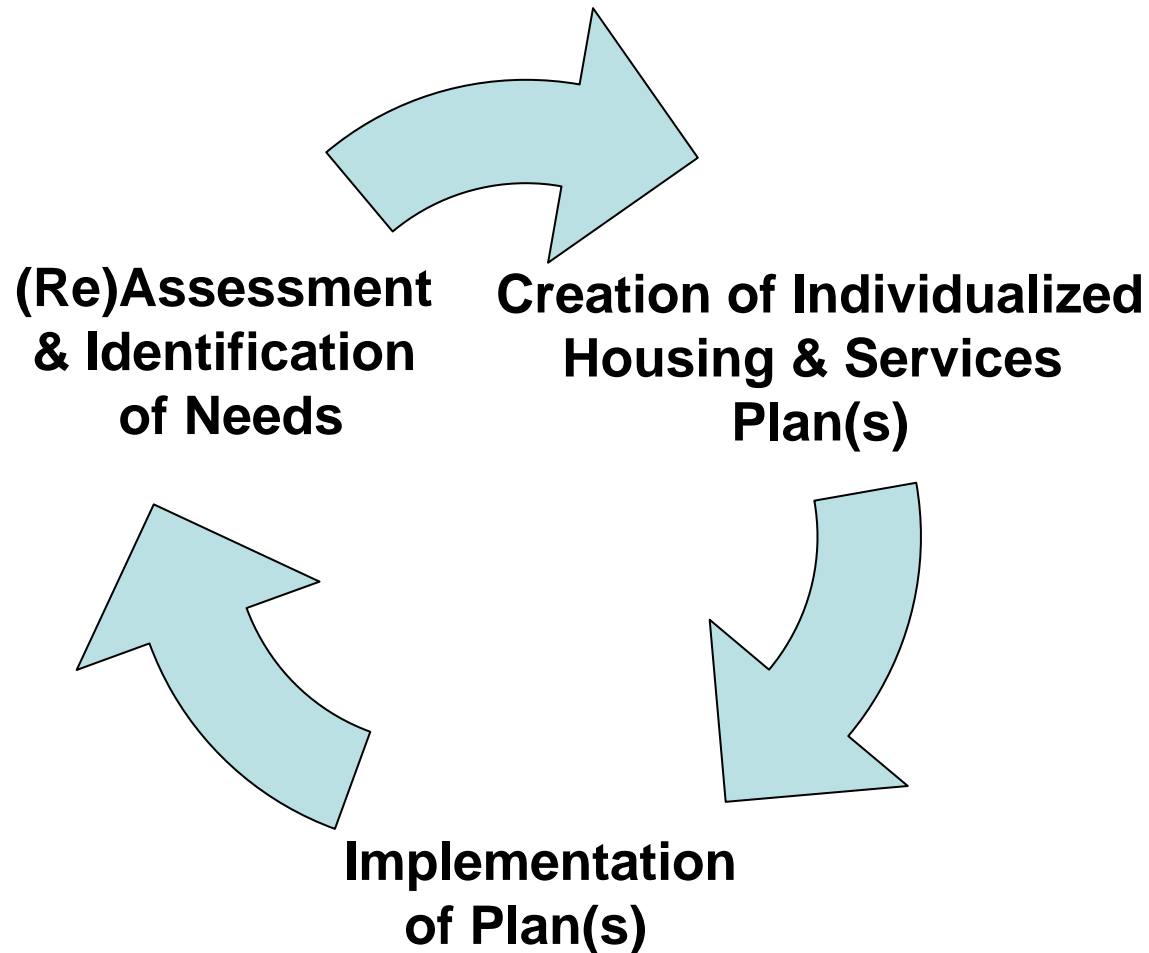


ASSESSMENT & TARGETING INTERVENTIONS FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES

Beyond Shelter
1200 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 600
Los Angeles, CA 90017



The Cycle of Addressing Needs



LINK BETWEEN ASSESSMENT AND CASE MANAGEMENT

Effective case management requires the ability to thoroughly and accurately assess the family. The ability to do this effectively depends upon the relationship between the family and case manager, since some issues are not easily or readily identifiable. These issues may only be known through disclosure.



...Engagement

then becomes one of the keys to quality assessment.



The first and most important task of the case manager is to engage the head-of-household in the process. Particularly during the crisis intervention and emergency shelter phase, developing trust and establishing a relationship (to both the case manager and the agency) is *very important* to future success.



Access to the client and the ability to follow-up on the case plan, once they have moved into housing (and services are voluntary) depends upon this relationship. *Initial engagement is even more important when you are establishing a relationship when the client is already in housing or in any voluntary setting.*



TARGETING HOUSING INTERVENTIONS

- **Minimize duration of homeless episodes**
- **Talk “permanent housing” up front**
- **After family’s emergency needs are met, permanent housing assistance becomes the central focus of our work with them**
- **Housing First is not a housing option, but an approach with many different potential housing destinations**



TARGETING HOUSING INTERVENTIONS (Cont'd)

- **Promote housing choice**
- **Service needs should not undermine housing choice**
- **Service needs intensity should not be used to track families into particular housing types**
- **Most homeless families do very well in leased housing “on their own”, i.e. scattered-site apartments integrated into residential neighborhoods**



TARGETING HOUSING INTERVENTIONS (Cont'd)

- **Target the more intensive interventions, including permanent supportive housing, to the minority of families who might need such rich interventions on an ongoing basis (such as families in which the head-of-household has a dual diagnosis or is developmentally or chronically disabled).**



Matching Services to Need

Generally speaking...

Intensity of Needs



Intensity of Case Management



MATCHING SERVICES TO NEED

- **While in a homeless state, families benefit from crisis intervention and short-term case management.**
- **Once in permanent housing, families benefit from case management that helps them transition to stability and integrate stable living patterns into their daily lives.**
- **Services may be intensive, but are most often time-limited, depending upon need.**
- **Families with high intensity service needs may be connected to mainstream systems for longer-term support.**



MATCHING SERVICES TO NEED (Cont'd)

- **All benefit from assistance in developing a support network in the community responsive to their individual needs.**
- **Home-based case management is intended to assist families in making the transition from homelessness to stability in permanent housing and to link families to other community resources and services which they might need.**
- **A subgroup of homeless families will also benefit from assistance in the development of basic life skills.**



AN EXAMPLE OF TARGETING IN ACTION

SKID ROW FAMILIES DEMONSTRATION PROJECT IN LOS ANGELES, CA



SKID ROW FAMILIES DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

- **Partnership with L.A. County Departments**
- **300 homeless families**
- **Immediate removal from Skid Row area**
- **Short-term housing, including apartments master-leased and furnished by Beyond Shelter**
- **Housing First approach with Section 8 subsidies and intensive, time-limited services**
- **Front-end and ongoing assessment to determine service intensity and frequency**



KEY COMPONENTS OF HOUSING FIRST

- **Crisis Intervention & Emergency Stabilization**
- **Intake and Assessment**
- **Assistance Moving into Permanent Housing**
- **Home-Based Case Management (time-limited & transitional or long term)**



STEP 1: CRISIS INTERVENTION AND SHORT-TERM STABILIZATION

Typically, this phase includes emergency shelter services and short-term transitional housing geared to special needs, i.e. domestic violence, substance abuse treatment, etc.

Immediate relocation of families from Skid Row area into motels within 24 hours of referral by County Team.



STEP 2: SCREENING, INTAKE & NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

- A “needs assessment” is conducted with each family, resulting in an Action Plan, including short and long-term goals and objectives with concrete action steps.
- Occurs before motel placement, if possible, or next day.
- After hours referrals are vouchered and monitored by the County Team, and then referred to Beyond Shelter.



- **The intake process is not rushed, in order to get to know families.**
- **Screening and assessments identify low, moderate, or high intensity service needs, in order to develop an appropriate level of case management contact or “family advocacy plan.”**
- **Families are relocated from motels to other short-term housing, including master-leased apartments.**



STEP 3: ASSISTANCE MOVING INTO PERMANENT HOUSING

- **Families referred to Housing First Program within 30 days of enrollment.**
- **Assistance applying for housing subsidies, move-in funds, etc.**
- **Tenant education.**
- **Assistance conducting housing search, presentation to owners, negotiating.**



STEP 4: PROVISION OF HOME-BASED CASE MANAGEMENT

- **Intensive during the first 90 days, but varies depending on individual need.**
- **Intensifies during crises.**
- **Includes connecting people to community resources and services to meet their particular needs.**
- **May include longer-term case management for vulnerable and at-risk families and individuals.**



Assessing Family Service Needs



The Continuum of Service Needs

- **Low to moderate to high intensity**
- **Service needs and the intensity of those needs change over time**
- **Regular assessment and monitoring is critical**



From an assessment standpoint, it is important to differentiate service needs from special needs. While there is some overlap, the two are not the same. For instance, a large family with five or more children may or may not have high intensity service needs, but that family would be considered to have “special needs.”



Typology of Needs: Two Distinct Categories

- **General Family Service Needs**
- **Income and Employment-Related Needs**



This dichotomy recognizes that some service needs present greater challenges than others from a case management perspective and that certain needs, particularly those related to income and employment, are best addressed after a family is in permanent housing.



However, in communities where housing resources, including rental subsidies, are scarce, it is necessary to focus on income-related needs and employment strategies sooner.



General Family Service Needs

- **Substance abuse (in recovery? active use?)**
- **Mental health (functioning level, not a diagnosis *per se*, is what's important)**
- **Domestic violence history (recent?)**
- **Criminal history (when? type and nature of crime?)**
- **Eviction history (multiple? for what reasons?)**
- **Homelessness history**



General Family Service Needs (Cont'd)

- **Health/disability status**
- **Child welfare involvement (open case? reason(s) for involvement?)**
- **Age of parent (transition-age youth? teenager?)**
- **Foster care emancipation (yes/no? recent?)**
- **Legal status (any members documented?)**
- **Single fatherhood (yes/no? age of children?)**



Income/Employment Needs

- **Welfare/TANF status (sanctions/loss of benefits? time limits?)**
- **Work history (sporadic? no experience?)**
- **Income (source? amount?)**
- **Education (how much? what kind?)**



Some Examples of Moderate Intensity Service Needs:

- **One time homeless more than six months**
- **Head-of-household has demonstrated sustained abstinence**
- **Head-of-household has suspected psychiatric disorder but still undiagnosed; depressed**
- **Head-of-household is free from batterer and has completed DV counseling**
- **Recently reunified family**
- **Single father with teenage child(ren)**



Some Examples of High Intensity Service Needs:

- **Multiple episodes of homelessness and/or long-term homelessness**
- **Head-of-household is currently abusing drugs or newly undergoing treatment and/or in recovery**
- **Head-of-household has undiagnosed or untreated dual disorders**
- **Recent or current domestic violence victimization**
- **Current child maltreatment or a high risk of such endangerment**
- **Single father with child(ren) under 12**



Matching Services to Need: A Moving Target



Why a Moving Target?

- **Experience has shown that you cannot predict outcomes for families based on initial screening and needs assessment.**
- **Service needs change over time.**
- **The response to those needs, therefore, must continually be evaluated and adjusted on a case-by-case basis.**



Developing A Family Action Plan



DEVELOPING A REASONABLE PLAN

It is important to divide the case plan into short- and long-term goals. Each goal is divided into several tasks, with clearly delineated responsibilities for the client and the worker. At every meeting, these tasks are reviewed for follow-up and revised accordingly.



General Questions

- **What does the family need?**
- **What should the priorities be?**
- **How will they achieve these goals?**
- **What are the barriers they are confronting?**
- **How will they attain and maintain permanent housing?**



- **How could their income situation be improved?**
- **What are the issues for the children?**
- **Are there mental health or recovery issues that should be addressed?**



SETTING PRIORITIES

Once the basics have been addressed – safety, food, shelter, and clothing – the head-of-household and case manager together must prioritize other issues needing to be addressed. NO matter what your sense of the priorities, if the client does not really believe the issue is a priority, he/she is not going to follow through with the plan.



Family Action Plan

**The objectives for the period from _____
to _____ are:**

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Specific Tasks/ Responsibilities

**What we plan to do to meet these objectives/
achieve goals are:**

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



Transitional, Home-Based Case Management



Matching Services to Need


**Intensity
of Needs**



**Intensity of
Case Management**



Matching Services to Need

HIGH INTENSITY  **Weekly home visits during the first 90 days after move into permanent housing.**

Minimum of one home visit per month for the next 90 days, with phone contact weekly.




Matching Services to Need

MODERATE INTENSITY  **Weekly home visits during the first 30 days after move into permanent housing.**

Bi-monthly during the next 60 days, and monthly for the next (final) 90 days, with phone contact as needed.



Matching Services to Need

LOW INTENSITY  **Monthly home visits during the first 180 days after move into permanent housing.**

With weekly phone contact for the first 90 days and thereafter as needed.



Provision of Home-Based Case Management

- **Intensifies during crises.**
- **Includes connecting families to community resources and services to meet their particular needs.**
- **Should be intensive for some families during the first 90 days in permanent housing.**



- **May include longer-term case management for vulnerable and at-risk families, including those with histories of chronic homelessness and/or families identified as having high intensity service needs (see service needs matrix).**



Generally, the case manager provides the core level of services and refers families to “mainstream” programs for specialized services (i.e., substance abuse intervention, mental health services, family counseling, child care, etc.).



Some families require more intensive home visits that may include demonstrations of housekeeping skills, money-management and budgeting, development of grocery lists, child assessments and referrals for parenting support, etc.



Many homeless families, however, will primarily need assistance in identifying and accessing resources in the community at-large, with periodic monitoring and support during the first few months in permanent housing.



Examples of Home-Based Case Management Support after the Family Moves to Permanent Housing

- **Tenant education**
- **Household management**
- **Money management**
- **“Survival skills”**
- **Welfare advocacy**
- **Legal advocacy**
- **Family and individual counseling**
- **Liaison with schools**
- **Parenting education**
- **Health/nutrition counseling**
- **Children’s special needs**

(may be provided directly or by referral)



- **Child abuse & neglect intervention & prevention**
- **Child care resources**
- **Child care subsidies**
- **Health care services**
- **Job training**
- **Job placement & retention**
- **Literacy, GED & other education**
- **ESL classes**
- **Substance abuse intervention/treatment**
- **Mental health services**

(may be provided directly or by referral)

