Barriers to Emergency Shelter Services in Maryland Continuums of Care: A Needs Assessment

Presented by Anne Wagner

Prepared for the Maryland Interagency Council on Homelessness
Purpose of the Study

- To contribute to the tenth goal of the ICH
- To understand how this impacts safety of clients and staff
- To identify resource gaps that may create barriers for shelter
Coordinated Entry Requirement

- HUD requirement for “Coordinated Entry Process” by January 23, 2018

- Low Barrier Checklist by the 100,000 Homes Campaign

- Goal Six of Maryland Homeless Services Framework Goals
Interviewed CoCs

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<th>Type</th>
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Prioritization Tools

Prioritization Tools Used for Emergency Shelters

- VI-SPDAT: 2
- None: 1
- Custom vulnerability tool: 1
- Self Sufficiency Matrix tool: 3
- Housing Assessment: 7

Total: 12
Client Advocate Interview – Perceived Safety Concerns

- Theft of Personal Property
  - Medicine
  - Identification
  - Money

- Mistreatment from other clients/staff
Concerns that Threaten Safe Environments in Emergency Shelters

Number of CoCs Reporting

- Disruptive Behavior due to Untreated Mental Illness
- Perceived Lack of Personal Safety
- Disruptive Behavior due to Substance Use
- Attempt to Bring Substances into Shelter
- Theft
- Concern of Overdose

Urban
Suburban
Rural
Client Advocate Interview – Admission to Shelter

- Older children, especially males, in families
- Physical disability
- Open Arrest Warrants
- Bed availability due to client’s gender identity
Barriers - Space

- 10 CoC leads reported capacity issue when open beds do not meet family/individual characteristics

- 7 CoC leads reported congregate living spaces, limiting private areas and spaces to accommodate behavioral needs

- 4 CoCs have shelters with limited ADA accessible units
Barriers – At Intake

Entry Requirements that Create Barriers

- Rural
- Suburban
- Urban
- Used but Not a Barrier to Entry
- Not Reported

Number of CoCs Reporting

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Barriers – Rural CoCs

- **Transportation**
  - 6 Rural CoCs report limited public transportation as a barrier to services

- **Programmatic Requirements that do not keep low barrier status**
  - 6 Rural CoCs report shelters having sobriety, church attendance, and similar requirements
Data Needed for Further Assessment

- Collect turn away data
- Survey CoCs on low barrier checklist
- Assess privately-run shelters for prioritization tools, safety concerns, and barriers
- Survey people experiencing homelessness who do not access shelters
Recommendations

- Expand cold weather entry policies
- Improve staff training
- Add professional and clinical staff members
- Encourage more interagency partnerships and on site services
- Increase funding for ACT teams
- Conduct a cost projection
Questions?

For more information please contact me at awagner5@terpmail.umd.edu

Thank you