

# **Ideas for Targeting & Assessment for Homeless Families (Preliminary Findings)**

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# Agenda

1. Project Description
2. Methodology
3. Literature Review
4. Preliminary Findings from Interviews in Marin County
5. Preliminary Bay Area Survey Findings
6. Questions To Discuss

# Project Description

- Objective: Examine the targeting, assessment, and matching of homeless families to the services they need to stabilize
- Focus is on Marin County
- Possible applications to other service providers in the Bay Area

# Methodology

- Interviews with service providers and homeless families
- Conversations with researchers and policy experts
- Survey to RSC members
- Review of research on family homelessness, matching, targeting and assessment, better practices

# Literature Review

- Characteristics and Needs of Homeless Families
- Strategies for Needs Assessment and Service Targeting
- Better Practices

# Characteristics of Homeless Families

- Families constitute 34% of the homeless population in the United States
- The most common profile of a homeless family is a single woman with two young children
- Women of color are at a higher risk of becoming homeless.
- Many homeless women have histories of trauma and violence

# Targeting and Assessment Strategies

- Given the limited literature on targeting and assessment for homeless families, we broadened our focus to include research on similar populations
  - We found mixed findings on the effectiveness of assessment and matching in improving service outcomes

# Better Practices

- Needs Assessment
- Information Sharing
- Organizational Strategies for Assessment
- Matching
- Evaluation

# Better Practices: Needs Assessment

- Family assessment should include:
  - Extent, nature, and duration of family's homelessness
  - Medical, psychiatric, and psychosocial needs and functional status
  - Financial and employment situation
  - An evaluation of the relationships between members (London)
  - Strength of a homeless family's social networks (Nottingham County)

# Better Practices: Information Sharing

- Needs assessment information should be shared between agencies to identify gaps in community (London)
- Common assessment tools and monitoring systems for local agencies (London)
- Develop a resource facility as a “hub” of information on all homelessness issues (Nottingham)
- Building local service support networks (London)

# Better Practices: Organizational Assessment Strategies

- Standardized needs assessment tools (Nottingham)
- Centralized Intake (Norfolk, London)
- Client-centered approach / Self-sufficiency Matrix (Nottingham)

# Example Self-Sufficiency Matrix, Arizona

Domain	Scale
1. Income	<p data-bbox="1213 477 1514 521">1 = In Crisis</p> <p data-bbox="1213 630 1577 673">2 = Vulnerable</p> <p data-bbox="1213 782 1415 826">3 = Safe</p> <p data-bbox="1213 935 1751 979">4 = Building Capacity</p> <p data-bbox="1213 1088 1604 1131">5 = Empowered</p>
2. Employment	
3. Housing	
4. Food	
5. Childcare	
6. Children's Education	
7. Adult Education	
8. Legal	
9. Health Care	
10. Life Skills	
11. Mental Health	
12. Substance Abuse	
13. Family Relations	
14. Mobility	
15. Community Involvement	

# Better Practices: Matching

- Because of the complexity of family needs and the scope of services required, matching is best accomplished through:
  - 1) Assessing (ongoing)
  - 2) Selecting the most appropriate services and providers (cost-efficient)
- Different methods:
  - Individualized plans (common practice)
  - Typology to group families into categories of services (DC, Columbus, Hennepin County, MN)

# Better Practices: Evaluation

- Program Evaluation
  - Identify what success means for the organization and for individual families
  - Establish measurable indicators of success
  - Document family progress
  - Regular assessment and follow-up
- Staff evaluation
  - Self-evaluation
  - Peer evaluation
  - Evaluation by families
- Examples: Arizona, Marin

# Preliminary Findings: Interviews

- Case Management
  - Case Managers
    - Varying qualification standards
    - Varying evaluation standards
  - *Common thread*: team work and client interaction
  - *Sources of variation*: organizational skills, individual relationships with community partners

# Preliminary Findings: Interviews

- Family Assessment
  - Allocation of families to Case Managers
    - Team assessments
    - Individual assessments
  - *Common thread: availability*
  - *Sources of variation: inclusion of linguistic and cultural preferences*

# Preliminary Findings: Interviews

- Organization Strategy
  - Center around two areas:
    - Establishment and maintenance of relationships within the community, whether through individual contacts or organizational contacts
    - Communication—the extent of this varies

## Preliminary Findings: Surveys

### **How are organizations gathering information about targeting and assessment?**

- Forms (Intake, Survey, Assessment) 95.8%
- Meetings 66.7%
- Contacting References 50%

# Preliminary Findings: Surveys

## When cultural barriers are encountered, how are they being addressed?

### Types of Cultural Barriers Encountered

- Linguistic 42.3%
- Cultural Differences 15.4%
- Socioeconomic 7.7%
- Education/Literacy 7.7%

### Methods of Addressing Cultural Barriers

- Bilingual Workers/ Translators/ ESL 23.1%
- Bicultural/ Culturally Competent Staff 19.2%

# Preliminary Findings: Surveys

## How are services being provided?

- **Client Input into Services Received**

- Client Input 84.6%
- No Client Input 15.3%

- **Meeting Client Needs When Your Organization Does Not Provide Needed Service**

- Referral 76.9%
- Solutions within Organization 7.7%

# Preliminary Findings: Surveys

## What methods are being used to evaluate family progress?

- Meetings/Follow-up with Clients 30.8%
- Observation/ Monitoring 23.1%
- Forms 19.2%

# Preliminary Findings: Surveys

## How are organizations creating and coordinating partnerships?

- Interdisciplinary Team Meeting 34.6%
- Regular Communication 23.1%
- Memoranda of Understanding 19.2%
- Personal Contacts 19.2%
- Staff Onsite 15.4%

# Preliminary Findings: Surveys

## What do organizations believe is working and not working in targeting and assessment?

### Working:

- Good Forms & Procedures 15.3%
- Communication 11.5%

### Not working:

- Poor Information Sharing 23.1%
- Lack of Resources 19.2%
- Services Too Spread Out 11.5%
- Not Enough Training for Staff 7.7%
- Strict Regulations 7.7%

# Preliminary Findings: Surveys

## How are organizations evaluating family progress?

- Meetings/Follow-up with Clients 30.8%
- Observation/ Monitoring 23.1%
- Forms 19.2%

# Questions To Discuss

- How is targeting and assessment for families occurring in your community?
- What gaps exist between needs and services provided in you community? How are these being identified and addressed?
- Ideally, what would you like your targeting and assessment system to do in your community?
- How might such a system function?