



State of Connecticut Department of Social Services

State Efforts to Encourage Development of an Integrated Service Delivery System

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The context for the HSI Initiative

- 2003 state budget crisis put extra pressure on human services delivery system
- All human service providers, including Department of Social Services (DSS), faced significant budget cuts
- State budget mandated DSS office closings and staff lay-offs
- From 2001 to 2004, CAA state funding decreased by 31%
- Needed a plan for a more cost-efficient and comprehensive human services system



The Vision

- A coordinated statewide social service system that helps people “easily” access the services they need to gain or maintain self-sufficiency



HSI Goals

- Better use of existing resources
- Connect clients to community resources before, during & after DSS intervention
- Get clients to DSS better prepared to use services efficiently
- Coordinate all “helping” services within the human service infrastructure
- Identify client barriers early in the process



HSI Foundational Partners

- CT Department of Social Services (DSS)
- the state's Community Action Agencies (CAAs)
- 2-1-1 Infoline



Why 211 Infoline?

- 24/7 information & referral service, w/certified counselors for crisis intervention
- Telephone access, multi-lingual and TTY
- Continuously updated database of over 4,000 providers in Connecticut
- Responded to over 400,000 service requests in SFY04
- Specialized service in child care, health coverage, Birth-to-3, & child & maternal health



Why CAAs?

- CAAs are the federally-designated Anti-Poverty Agencies
- CAAs served over 235,000 low-income people in 2003
- CAAs provide a diverse array of services in all 169 cities and towns
- Linked together in a single, results-oriented management and accountability software system (ROMA)

HSI Implementation:

A New Way of Doing Business

- Multi-agency coordination established
- “Breaking down the silos” between programs and among agencies
- Cross-trained over 1,000 staff at DSS, CAAs, and 211 on HSI process
- Standardized client intake and assessment
- Can show individual and family outcomes – not just count client services provided
- Allow return-on-investment calculations and documentation of the impact of Community Action in CT

HSI Implementation ... continued

- Statewide implementation of a standardized data system that includes
 - Universal client intake
 - Client assessment
 - Interventions
 - Outcomes
 - Tracking client progress towards self-sufficiency





HSI Implementation continued...

- State funding targeted to HSI implementation at CAAs to complement CSBG funding
- CAA staffs provided “read only” access to DSS eligibility management system (EMS) for tracking referrals and to reduce requests to DSS for income verification for various CAA-delivered programs



Benefits of HSI

- Better integration across programs utilizing multiple funding streams, including (but not limited to):
 - Federal: CCDBG; CDBG; CSBG; Head Start; HUD; LIHEAP; Medicare/Medicaid; Older American Act; SSBG; TANF; Weatherization; WIA; WIC
 - State, local and private sources



Benefits

- Minimum standards established
 - Incorporated into contract language and monitoring
 - Required incorporation of ROMA into CAA practice, behaviors and philosophy
 - Principles of ROMA-based Case Management
 - Principles of MIS for ROMA Implementation
 - Principles of ROMA Implementation in CT

Building Capacity

- Training Academy established
 - DSS training division provided training to CAA staff on DSS programs and on the DSS client eligibility management system (EMS) to support DSS benefits pre-screening and tracking at CAAs
 - Train-the-trainer model implemented to expand training within the CAA network





Building Capacity continued...

- Further technology improvements
 - Development of data warehouse to pool client data from multiple systems and reduce duplicative data entry
 - Automated Benefits Calculator – on-line tool to screen clients for DSS benefits as well as agency program / benefit offerings



Challenges

- Addressing concerns of DSS staff that CAA staff were taking over their job functions
- Culture change within DSS and the CAA network
 - Moving from program “silo” approach in the delivery of human services to a client-centered, holistic approach



Challenges...continued

- Maintaining the balance between standardization and flexibility in implementing the approach
- Understanding and explaining HSI as a philosophy rather than a program



HSI Outcomes for CT

- Individuals and families are better served
 - Client-centered services
 - “Breaking down the silos” between programs and among agencies for customer-focused service delivery
- Ability to track individual and family progress toward self-sufficiency
 - Standardized client intake and assessment
 - Can show individual and family outcomes – not just count client services provided



HSI Outcomes for CT ... continued

- CAA staff and agencies have been renewed – vibrant, not stagnant, agencies
- Multi-agency coordination established
- Identified agency strengths, weaknesses and gaps in service
- Enhanced and continuing focus on quality of service delivery within CAA network



For further information ...

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