

Priority: Basic Needs **Lead Agency:** County Human Services
Program Offer Type: Innovative/New Program **Program Contact:** Mary Li
Related Programs: 25063A, 25114A, 25133, 25140, 25063B

Program Characteristics:

Executive Summary

The Homeless Benefits Recovery Project (HBR) will utilize a proven program model to assist 120 chronically homeless individuals with mental illness, addictions and disabilities in accessing federal benefits and services to which they are entitled but have been unable to receive because their disabilities prevent them from successful navigation of the appeals system. Locally, only 11% of those eligible receive benefits. HBR is a tested, evidence based program that can expect a 50-70% success rate in gaining benefits for eligible individuals.

A smaller pilot for the Homeless Benefits Recovery Project can be implemented. To reduce costs while at the same time preserving the number of clients served, flexible client support funds and 1 FTE Hearings Specialist position have been eliminated from the original model. Since the proposed target population will come from homeless individuals receiving service through the Multnomah Treatment Fund, a level of services does exist for these individuals - although meeting housing and other basic needs will continue to be a challenge. The Department believes that this compromise will still support a thorough testing of the program model, while taking into account the reality of the County's current economic situation.

Program Description

HBR will provide benefits eligibility determination, systems advocacy, and short term case management to approximately 120 individuals annually who are Multnomah Treatment Fund eligible. The Multnomah Treatment Fund is a general fund program serving a limited number of individuals with mental illness without insurance or benefits.

Services include: eligibility screening, appeals process advocacy, case management, and medical and other documentation to individuals evaluated to be potentially eligible while the appeals process continues. In the first year of service, approximately 120 Multnomah Treatment Fund eligible clients will be served.

Studies estimate that as many as 60% of those living on the streets are living with disabilities. Often the nature of those disabilities makes it impossible for an individual to successfully complete the benefits eligibility process. Nationally, 60% of all applications for assistance are denied at first request. The average wait time between first application and receiving assistance is 30 months. Without those benefits, individuals are either without services utilizing expensive, locally funded safety net services – jail, hospital/medical care, other safety net services – or have to be served with scarce local community (non-federal) funds. Providing this unreimbursed care creates significant impact on the County's general fund.

Program Justification

HBR will meet the Basic Living Needs (BLN) priority area goals to provide intervention and coordination of services and assure care for vulnerable members of the community. HBR will target those who would be on the County's caseload if they had access to the benefits for which they are eligible or those currently on the county's caseload for which the county is not reimbursed. Local estimates identify 39% of the chronic homeless population is eligible for SSI/SSDI as a result of mental illness and 46% eligible as a result of their physical health. Only 11% of the chronic homeless population receives the benefits to which they are entitled.

Benefit recovery efforts are a key strategy of the county-city of Portland 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness.

Performance Measures

Measure Type	Primary Measure	Previous Year Actual (FY07-08)	Current Year Purchased (FY08-09)	Current Year Estimate (FY08-09)	Next Year Offer (FY09-10)
Output	# of chronic homeless individuals with disabilities served	0	0	0	120
Outcome	% of individuals served that receive benefits	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%
Outcome		0	0	0	0

Performance Measure - Description

Legal/Contractual Obligation**Revenue/Expense Detail**

	Proposed General Fund	Proposed Other Funds	Proposed General Fund	Proposed Other Funds
Program Expenses	2009	2009	2010	2010
Personnel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Contracts	\$0	\$0	\$393,397	\$0
Materials & Supplies	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Internal Services	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subtotal: Direct Exps:	\$0	\$0	\$393,397	\$0
Administration	\$0	\$0	\$1,401	\$0
Program Support	\$0	\$0	\$4,202	\$0
Subtotal: Other Exps:	\$0	\$0	\$5,603	\$0
Total GF/non-GF:	\$0	\$0	\$399,000	\$0
Program Total:	\$0		\$399,000	
Program FTE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Program Revenues				
Program Revenue for Admin	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue:	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Explanation of Revenues

County General Fund - \$499,576

Significant Program Changes**Last year this program was:**

#25115A, Homeless Benefits Recovery Project is a scaled program offer in response to BCC request.