

December 2, 2009
Monthly Advocates' Meeting
Minutes

DWS Notices - Spanish/English: (Debbie Herr)

- 4 dated dedicated Spanish teams. In 2002 agreed to notice in Spanish at top until reached certain threshold, and then will just make all forms available in Spanish.
- what happens is sometimes people get through to non-Spanish workers, but are sending request in English.
- Gina - how do people get routed to Spanish speakers?
- Can route internally. But with notices, have a lot of customers in outreach locations, where most of staff speak Spanish. Need to make sure are marking in system that are Spanish speaker. Could be comments section not in Spanish. Can see who is sending the notices. With new teams, this should be addressed. Need to make sure staff is taking the time to translating the comments. Do have issues, going to address that with the staff.
- Lincoln - is eQuery available in Spanish? [FOLLOW UP]

Covenant Contract (Karla Aguire & Marion Eckersby)

- Have had contract for many years, was with Valley Mental Health, now with Covenant because have more workers. Have more resources for referred customers. Voc Rehab has their own contract with Covenant. Spend 10-40 hours a week with the customer. Is very intensive case management.
- Karen - is this cost-effective?
- Wanted incentives for the customer, are getting jobs and meeting their outcomes, so, is cost-effective, and not on TANF. All are FEP family customers with serious barriers.
- Karen - success rate?
- Contract will be a year in March, and can share the outcomes when do the monitoring. [FOLLOW UP MARCH]

General Assistance (Helen Thatcher)

- Was a big effort to redesign GA to get it in much reduced budget. Intent was to try and keep grant going to keep people in housing and getting people on social security with SOAR. Implemented changes Aug. 1st. Report shows we are not on target, are \$1.8 million over budget forecast. Thought could get caseload down to 855, but that is not happening, caseload went up in August and September. Budget numbers not specifically valid until end of a Quarter. Have saved money, are not spending as much, closed 436 people, caseload did drop, but demand for all services is just off the charts. Expected eligibility costs to go up because they took over the whole process, no more employment counselors, simplified this. Eligibility is tougher, harder to get. Did forecast that long-term group would be about 75% of the caseload and short-term would be 25%. It's not that, only 17% are short-term, so more people on longer

program than expected. Talking about what to do about this, need to do something. There are a lot of people applying and are not approved.

- Looking at:
 - making caseloads higher for case managers, now is around 50. But don't want to increase it to point it becomes ineffective.
- Lincoln - how do you determine administrative cost of the program?
 - admin staff, computers, letters, etc. Cost of staffing. If 50% spending time on FEP, then 50% of admin costs are TANF, etc.
- Gina - if not getting GA, then are at least getting on Food Stamps.
- Yes. Huge increases there. 1 in 5 families nationally on FS, third highest growth in Nation - Utah.

DWS Budget & Legislative Priorities

Budget

- FY10 - about \$8 million (projected for year) deficit. About \$4 million is health eligibility. FS is about \$3 million. Requested a supplemental appropriation. Legislature is asking 3-5% budget cut from FY10 budget in addition to this. Rate of increase has decreased, but it is still increasing. Tied to the programs they have, way that they have funded it.
- In discussion with fiscal analyst office because of audit.
- Revenue numbers coming out at Exec Appropriations and in-depth budget review of DWS at 2:30 on the 15th. Audit will be right around the start session. Have asked for 1, 3 and 5% for FY11 - rumor is will be between 3-5%.
- GA program for Governor's Budget - discussed it with them, but couldn't request it as a building block - is "May" not "shall" -- because was not a required budget in the statute. Will be getting fiscal audit, haven't got the final version, but GA may or may not be in there. Won't be public until January. No recommendations to increase or decrease the funding so GA.
- FY11 - FS - around 24-25% increase (even though been over 45% over the last year) and Medicaid - 12% increase DOH projecting.
- Using partnership TANF replacement for match funding, did get sufficient to make it through FY09 and carried over a couple million dollars, but not much with an \$8 million deficit. Legislature intent on forcing into separate line-items, which will not allow for TANF replacement. There are several agencies that have a few line-items, in a hard economic times may blend line-items to make it easier. Legislature likes line-items for accountability, but Bill doesn't think it gives any more accountability.
- Gina - has there been more talk from the feds about getting additional admin funds for admin/eligibility? Last years stimulus was very small, hardly made a difference.

Legislative

- Dunnigan Bill - federal government and state statute didn't match - under 18 and can get a financial grant, you must, according to feds, go to school, our state statute gave the parent an option to work or go to school, so just a technical fix.

- Wimmer Bill - Ally has not talked to him, not even sure if he filed it. In news said his co-sponsor with Stowell, but Stowell said he thought it had been exhausted.
- Bill Greer - haven't received any numbered bills yet.

WIA Customer Training (Helen Thatcher)

- WIA training quickly ran out of dollars, there is TANF training, so have to have kids and be at 200% of poverty level (also can have other income to qualify).
- 842 WIA only adult cases. With regular and stimulus, have 2,058 people in adult alone in training right now. Dislocated worker from 529, now 2,229 who are receiving training.
- Youth program - 892 kids and this year, not counting stimulus funds, regular youth 1,417
- There is a huge demand and have expended the funds very quickly. Was supposed to last 2 years, and will be spent in the first year.
- \$5 million in TANF training in this year (usually spend \$3 million), hope it is enough.
- Didn't have to pull anyone out of training for WIA, but there is no more money available for new cases.

Cheetah and other Homelessness Employment Initiatives [FOLLOW UP JANUARY]

DWS Phone Wait Times

- 1-800 number option for agencies - for out of state agencies calling in, not sure what number to pick, but that agency option is not for local agencies. Not prioritized, just gives them an option to get to the team that is administering that case.
- Wait times - E-Rep implementation will be fully completed by June 2010. About 7 teams are in the system right now, beginning to ramp up interviews that are going into system, another 10 teams in January, and then rolling in 10-20,000 cases a month so should all be in by May. About 50-75 staff a week that are in training or labs for E-Rep, so that impacts the phone wait times. Interviews take the most time, about 1,000 applications coming in a day.
- Are trying to mitigate - about 12-16 minute average wait time. In January will have phone options that let people know about wait times and to give them options. A lot of calls are to just verify got information, so can route them to eQuery. Also will say when are good times to call, etc. Best time to call is early morning.
- No longer need an interview for medical programs, so DWS will call them if need more information, implements in January. Do have some direct dial teams for adult, disabled, blind, refugee, long-term care to reach people with more barriers through outreach.
- What to tell agencies? Get same information that is given out to employment centers to get out to our CAP agencies. ****SEND OUT FLYERS TO AGENCIES, etc****
- 98% of cases - are issuing benefits with in five days. Are meeting outcomes. There may be a little delay getting in, but once are in, the benefits are processed fast.

ESD Team Approach (FOLLOW UP)

- LoAn - are all the team members in the same office?
- most of them are centrally located in the geographical area, but not necessarily in the same office.