



Maricopa

HMIS News



Achieving Cohesion

A successful collaborative empowers participants to communicate, contribute and cooperate. Through modern technology and personal interaction, the Maricopa HMIS project embeds all these critical action steps into its implementation structure

The professional team members of Cannon & Associates, TechSelect Consulting , Symmetric Solutions, Inc. and the CI&R Executive Director form the Project Team--the HMIS foundational cornerstone. This team meets bi-weekly to review and refine the project time line and budget, to evaluate the end-user training process and to define future steps in broadening further relationships within the community. The Project Team provides the nucleus for communication between funders, the community, and the participating agencies. Team members participate in, facilitate and guide the Advisory and User Group Meetings, report project updates to MAG, CoC, HUD and other funders, and maintain a HMIS website.

(Continued on Page 2)

Frank Rojas from Central Arizona Shelter Services (CASS)



Background

In 1987, Congress enacted the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act in response to the 1980's homelessness crisis. Renamed the McKinney-Vento Act in 2000, the Act authorizes the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to fund the Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness (CoC) planning process and federal homeless assistance programs. In a congressional conference (Oct. 2000), legislators issued a three-year directive to HUD asking for data related to homelessness. This data includes a count of all homeless persons, an unduplicated bed count, services received and needed, as well as basic client demographics and income information. To capture this data, HUD funneled 2001 McKinney-Vento Act funding through each regional CoC to develop a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), on behalf of the CoC and the Community Information & Referral, Inc. (CI&R), began a community wide planning process to identify HMIS specification and to select a software, which meets local community and HUD requirements. Representatives of homeless provider agencies, city, county and state government agencies, private foundations, and private information technology experts, joined with MAG and CI&R to design the Maricopa HMIS structure.

(Continued on Page 3)

HMIS News

Snap shots of various implemented agencies.



Issue #1

2

Sept. '03

Achieving Cohesion

(Continued from Page 1)

While the Project Team monitors the pulse of the HMIS, the participating agencies provide the heart beat. Each agency sends staff members to the User Group Meeting, where they weave vision, commitment and leadership into a community action plan. The members not only identify goals, benchmarks, partner roles, barriers and issues but also actively create resources and documents, which address these concerns. The partner agencies nurture the diversity of the collaborative through open, respectful dialog. A viable sense of interagency commitment and trust expands as members gain an understanding of one another's flexibilities, restrictions, diverse perspectives and intentions. The User Group equally supports small and large agencies and encourages growth and change as the collaborative continues to build.

The driving power for community impact stems from the broad base of committed stakeholders. The Advisory Board, comprised of the business community, advocacy groups, governmental and social services agencies, supports a comprehensive service system and offers their experiences and expertise to address all aspects of prevention, intervention and treatment services. The Advisory Board opens the avenue to alter existing public and private sector policies, to develop future funding and to educate the community about the issues surrounding homelessness.

In addition to regular meetings, the three groups communicate through modern technology. The Project Team manages a HMIS Web site, which regularly posts meeting agendas, minutes and documents, offers an on-line discussion section and spotlights HMIS related news articles and participating funders. The Maricopa HMIS Help Desk operates a 24-hour technical assistant program, monitors database and training issues and reports back to the User Group and Advisory Board. Finally, the implemented agencies receive important database messages through an on-line bulletin board built into ServicePoint.

In summary, every individual, from volunteer to executive director, may access current information and feel a part of the HMIS process.

Implemented Agencies

- The Salvation Army - Outreach Activities*
- The Salvation Army - Family Shelter*
- Labors Community Services Agency*
- Central Arizona Shelter Services*
- Native American Connections*
- HomeBase Youth Services*
- House of Refuge - East*
- Arizona Housing Inc.*
- Nova Safe Haven*
- Homeward Bound*
- Phoenix Shanti*
- Save the Family*
- YWCA*



ServicePoint™

ServicePoint, a revolutionary, web-based application, empowers service providers, coalitions, and communities to manage real-time client and resource data. ServicePoint™ offers robust client and referral tracking, case management, agency/program indexing, and reporting. Combining the ease of the Internet and performance of an SQL database, ServicePoint™ provides the easiest and most secure way to manage information.

ServicePoint™ provides the following features:

- Client intake & assessment
- Service transactions
- Case management
- Real-time data sharing
- Agency & program database
- Eligibility
- Shelter management capability

Background*(continued from page 1)*

Under the guidance and approval of the CoC's Planning Subcommittee, the planning participants developed a Request for Proposals, identified potential software vendors, issued a public invitation to bid on the requirements and finally chose SERVICEPOINT, a Web-based software. CI&R, the HMIS grantee and implementation host agency, entered into negotiations for the software and co-location of the database servers with SERVICEPOINT developers, Bowman Internet Systems, LLC. SERVICEPOINT allows communication among and reporting from all of the homeless provider agencies in the Maricopa geographic area.

During the designing and implementation process, CI&R hired three professional teams to facilitate building the Maricopa HMIS collaborative. Cannon & Associates provides planning, facilitation and oversight services, TechSelect Consulting supplies web and financial services and Symmetric Solutions, Inc assists with planning, end-users training, interface development, and project management.



Alicon Reuter from Phoenix Shanti Group.

HUD APR Nightmare-a thing of the past

Producing the HUD annual report is the primary reason agencies join the Maricopa HMIS. In the past, agency staff labored for grueling hours in order to summate the required data, which includes client household information, general demographics, income amount and the types of received serves. Three Maricopa HMIS agencies boldly stepped forward and produced their annual HUD APR using SERVICEPOINT. The staff of House of Refuge-East, Labors Community Services Agency and Home Base Youth Services back entered their client information from the previous year. Initially this too proved to be labor intensive, however, once properly entered, the data flowed smoothly into SERVICEPOINT's HUD 401 18 APR and the staff only needed to transfer the statistics to a HUD worksheet. APR reports no longer haunt these agencies!!

First HUD APR Award presented to Tony Johnson, House of Refuge-East by Scott Rich, Project Director.



HMIS News

Sponsors

The creation and implementation of the Maricopa HMIS could not have become a reality without the support of six funding partners: **The Lodestar Foundation, The Arizona Department of Housing** (formerly The Governor's Office of Housing Development), **The Arizona Community Foundation, The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust, The Valley of the Sun United Way,** and **the Maricopa Association of Governments/AZ Department of Economic Security.** Local funds were utilized for both the planning and implementation phases of project.

A 20% local match totalling \$239,000 was required in order to leverage almost \$1 million dollars in HUD funding to support the implementation of the system. The first to provide some of the needed funding was the Lodestar Foundation providing a Challenge Grant of \$100,000. This lead grant helped raise the additional funds needed --with the Arizona Community Foundation, The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust, and The Valley of the Sun United Way each stepping in to contribute \$20,000 to the effort. The Governor's Office for Housing Development also committed \$79,000 to cover some of the equipment costs. We are very grateful to these funders for recognizing the importance of technology to improving the homeless service delivery system and homeless planning efforts in Maricopa County!!

For more information

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Roberto Armijo, CI&R Executive Director with CI&R operator.



CI&R

The Community Information & Referral, Inc. (CI&R), founded in 1964 and incorporated as a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization in 1979, serves as a vital link between the people who need help and community social service organizations. CI&R services include a free, 24 hour, confidential telephone Helpline; a computerized database of over 2000 agencies including government and private nonprofit organizations, self-help support groups, civic clubs, professional associations. CI&R also publishes the Directories of Human Services & Self-Help Support Groups, and is a cofounder of AzTeC (Arizona Telecommunication Community) Computing, a Free-Net providing free, text-based internet access. CI&R focuses mainly on the ten central and northern counties of Arizona (Apache, Coconino, Gila, La Paz, Maricopa, Mohave, Navajo, Pinal, Yavapai, Yuma); however, some of its special programs (Flu/Pneumonia Immunizations, Income Tax Assistance, various holiday activity calendars) cover the entire state.

As a founding member of the Alliance of Information & Referral Systems (AIRS), an international professional organization with over 900 members throughout the United States and Canada, CI&R takes the lead in providing information to those in need.