

Barrier Busters Network Action Group

May 28, 2008, LLRC

1:30pm—3:00pm

BBN Attendees: Mary Beth Lampe, CSTS; Co-Chair (recorder)
Paul Sher; Legal Services; Co-Chair
Lisa Anderson, UM Hospital
Alex Bailey, Michigan Ability Partners- MAP
Harriet Bakalar & Tyne Kreiner, Housing Bureau for Seniors
Mike Bell, Center for Independent Living-AACIL
Karyn Boyce, Ozone House
Emily Denay, Housing Bureau for Seniors
Shannon Duffany, Child Care Network
Moonson Eninsche, Washtenaw County Treasurer's Office
Vicki Frederick-Toure, SafeHouse Center
Lisa Keefauver, Jewish Family Services
Angela Killom, Michigan Ability Partners- MAP
Michelle Leaphart, SOS
Kelly Martin, Peace Neighborhood Center
Angela Moore, Women's Center
Patricia Parker-Self, Veteran Services
Helena Prince, Friends in Deed
Sandy Reeber, ETCS
George Ridenour, Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living
Anne Rogers, CSTS
Maxi Sherman, Jewish Family Services
Rebecca Shiemke, Michigan Poverty Law Program
Kelly Stupple, Public Health
Julie Young, Turner Clinic
Naomi Williams, Hope Clinic

Staff Present: Candace Cadena, Office of Community Development

I. Welcome/Introductions

Meeting began at 1:30. Members and guests introduced themselves.

II. Announcements and Public Comment

Michelle Leaphart from SOS announced that she is assuming Barrier Buster duties for Christina Oliver of SOS, who recently had a healthy baby boy. Congrats to Christina and thanks to Michelle!

Mike Bell from CIL reported that he is assisting people in transitioning from nursing home facilities, in conjunction with Area Agency on Agency and Ombudsman's Program. He welcomes referrals. Purpose is to avoid people staying in nursing homes longer than necessary by properly setting up supports needed quickly and efficiently, prior to discharge. Some people with disabilities tend to remain in nursing homes longer than necessary because there is a lack of housing or lack of supports available (personal assistance/staffing, physical accommodations, ramps, income, furnishings, are examples). Also receives referrals directly from nursing homes.

III. Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Agenda was approved by consent. Minutes from the May meeting were approved with no changes.

IV. New Business

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Rebecca Schiemke from Family Law Project & Michigan Poverty Law Program presented about Child Support Basics (in Michigan) and provided a detailed outline and answered questions. Her contact info is: 998-6100 x 27; rschiemke@umich.edu. Information presented included:

*Custody is a separate issue from support orders. Paternity must be established before a support order can be pursued.

*If a child is born during a marriage is it presumed (or assumed) that the married couple are the parents unless evidence is presented to the court otherwise

*DHS can help start the process of applying for support, regardless of whether the household/children are currently receiving public assistance. Applying for child support and providing relevant information is likely required when receiving public assistance. Exception: If custodial parent is a domestic violence survivor, she/he is exempt from having to cooperate with pursuing a support order if it would endanger self or children.

*DHS has a statewide contact number that people can call – they help to connect to local Prosecuting Attorney's office. **[Note- it was reported after the meeting that the toll free DHS number to call to apply for child support services is 1-866-540-0008]**

*Parent does not get public assistance PLUS Child Support – rather if child support is higher than public assistance, public assistance will end (Warning: consider & plan for potential Medicaid loss) OR public assistance will be reduced by amount of child support, minus a \$50 exemption per month

*Participant noted that sometimes cases are closed at DHS for not following through with calling worker back about child support. Encourage people to be in contact with their DHS worker – you may want to do this on their behalf, in writing, particularly when there are language barriers since DHS often communicates by letter.

*Impute Income – if either parent is not working court can “impute income” which means they are assessed based on past income. Applies if parent voluntarily left last job or declined work. A lawyer files a motion to request court to do this. Either Parent can ask court to “modify” previous support order. Court must “review” orders every three years – many courts send a letter asking parents to contact court if review is desired to meet this requirement.

*Friend of Court has powers to potentially intercept funds, driver's licenses, add liens on property, tax returns, also lump sum non-income related benefits may be assessed (such as Social Security Disability).

*Payment Plan: For arrearages, if on time payments are made as agreed for minimum of 2 years state may elect to waive money owed to state. Otherwise custodial parent must agree.

*Minimum Support Order Assessment: For people incarcerated, they must contact Friend of Court otherwise time while incarcerated they will continue to accrue support money owed --- this does not automatically get stopped when a person is incarcerated. Even if person does not have any income to pay while incarcerated responsibility exists unless FOC has agreed to modify support order due to incarceration.

*Legal Resource Center at the court – in 14B this may be on Wed mornings – can help with connection to Friend of Court, and also advising about how to get fees waived to start a new case

*Parenting Time cannot be stopped if support is not paid, especially if there is an order requiring parenting time --- this is a misconception – visits usually must occur even if support not paid. There is no formula for parenting time – purpose is to “preserve relationships”.

*Court order will be enforced if either party goes to court to say that it isn't being enforced

Rebate Tax Stimulus: Mary Beth Lampe reported and lead discussion about Rebate Tax Stimulus 2008. The Delonis Center is assisting people with filing during workshops. Call 662-2829 x 257 Mandy Briggs for times. (Appt not necessary, not necessary to be a current or past shelter client). Women's Center 973-6779 and Catholic Social Services 973-6779 may also be able to assist. Please submit resources and workshop dates as they become available – many people have not filed yet and therefore cannot be considered for eligibility. 211 is also collecting info regarding assistance.

Universal Utility complaints: Paul Sher lead discussion. Reported that Universal has been warned by state for marketing problems such as unfair notice, lack of information to customers, and unfair

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switching. It is not known whether the Attorney General's office will take action to revoke their license. Nothing is known as to whether Pricing was also a concern.

V. Old Business

[Agency agreements are due – please submit if yours are outstanding.]

VI. Case Consultation

Suggestions were requested on behalf of a household with 4800 DTE balance, before applying possible agency commitments. Problem is that none of the commitments are large enough to reduce the payment plan to an affordable amount and DHS commitment expires soon. Suggestions included: could the homeowners re-finance, covert from an ARM or high interest rate if they have one, is bankruptcy an option? Helena Price, FID, took suggestions and hopes to have more contact with household.

Topics for future meetings or need for information were discussed including: Hoarding Task Force, MPRI- Prisoner Re-entry Initiative, Social Security eligibility, Veteran Administration outreach, DTE online training, teaching budgeting/financial management.

VII. BB Emergency Unmet Needs Fund Update

Candace Cadena reported funds are low but please submit requests, while also keeping in mind the resources available through Barrier Buster Network agencies. Also, Bill Price at DHS is now working on the funding aspect of the DHS grant, replacing S. Reynolds.

VIII. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:00 pm.

***The Next Meeting is scheduled for
August 27, 2008 –
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm (July meeting cancelled)***