

Barrier Busters Network Action Group

November 17, 2010

1:30 – 3:00PM

I. Welcome and introductions

- II. Agenda:** approved unanimously
Minutes: approved unanimously

III. Member Agency Announcements

- a. SAWC Warming Center (WC) is now open. More info on eligibility, including BAC levels, can be found out by contacting the SAWC.

IV. New Business

- a. Nancy Harbor, EMU professor in Paralegal Studies and representative of the Legal Resource Center (LRC): The Legal Resource Center is a collaborative (roughly 12 years) between the courts, Washtenaw County, the Bar association and LSSCM. It is staffed by paralegal students under the supervision of an attorney, and it is a viable option for individuals who cannot afford an attorney. With offices at the courthouses, the paralegals will walk clients through civil court forms (not criminal or immigration) and will provide information on family law (*e.g.*, changing custody, divorce), landlord-tenant issues, small claims, and probate (guardianship). Clients can get access to LRC through 2-1-1.
- b. Jennifer Whittaker, DTE Jennifer Whittaker (Wayne): Jennifer is here in place of Paul Ganz (Washtenaw). She encouraged clients to engage DTE as soon as they can. DTE is working with DHS, MPSC, THAW and federal block grants to provide utility assistance and matching programs. However, clients must meet eligibility requirements that include federal low-income poverty guidelines. A DTE case manager and Paul Ganz have more specific details, and Jennifer and BB staff will attempt to schedule them for the next BB meeting. Jennifer also explained that evidence of gas service theft will result in immediate shut-off and the DTE worker will call 911. 2-1-1 can be utilized to connect with utility assistance.

Members encouraged all case managers to utilize DTE's Online Resource for Agencies (ORA) to see clients' current utility statuses. Some members expressed that while winter protection plans are helpful, the plans often result in a high back balance in the spring. A clearer education program/brochure was requested. Jennifer encouraged members to call the DTE agency case management line. Long holds might happen, but it is due DTE case managers doing their best to find helpful solutions to callers.

V. BB Emergency Unmet Needs Fund Update:

- a. No new updates were reported

VI. Evaluation Survey Update

- a. No new updates were reported

VII. Public Comment

VIII. Adjourn