

City of Lawrence Homeless Outreach Team Quarterly Report for 2nd Quarter 2011

The outreach team remains committed to using HMIS to enter client contact information however have been unable to get information from the system yet to report. We have been working with the Bert Nash IT department to develop a way to enter information into both HMIS and Bert Nash's electronic record. This will allow both the city as well as Bert Nash staff to retrieve information they need to improve services to the city's homeless population.

This quarter we have been able to house 3 individuals and 4 families (4 individuals and 6 children) One individual received assistance using a transitional voucher through LDCHA, and the other two individuals were assisted with a combination of City Outreach money and Pastor Fund money to help with deposits and rent. All four families received assistance from HPRP money through Kim Wilson Housing.

This quarter the State SRS office announced they plan to close the Lawrence SRS Office, requiring clients to travel to Topeka or Kansa City to receive services. The team is very concerned about the impact this will have on their ability to service homeless families

It is estimated that the closing of the Lawrence SRS office will impact the functioning of the Homeless Outreach Team in terms of time and efficiency of service to clients. The Team estimates we make an average of at least 16 trips to SRS a week and make an average of at least 20 contacts with SRS a week. The Team estimates that at least 90 percent of the persons we are working with are currently utilizing SRS services.

There are times when contact is less and times when it is significantly more. The variety of individuals we work with are vast and thus the time spent with SRS can fluctuate depending on the client need of the moment.

The closing of the office will likely result in an increase in travel, which would then mean less time spent in Lawrence and thus more mileage expenses to go with it. The office closing will also result in a less human aspect of assistance should the discussed computer and paperwork access points that have been mentioned recently go into effect.

Having an SRS office and a staff here in Lawrence has made responses to contact timely. Without an office it is very possible that there will be a delay in contact and if a new caseworker takes over a current case there would be a greater incidence of a lack of connection between the client, SRS staff, and the Outreach Team. Our clients will have their health put at greater risk due to the lack of the timely assistance that a local office could provide.

The outreach team will have another master's level KU student start in August. She will be supervised by Brad Cook. Brad also supervises two to three students who are placed at the Lawrence Community Shelter.