



Southwestern CHILD DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION



Excellence in Early Childhood Education
"Providing Quality Services for Young Children since 1972"

May 10, 2018

Dear Jackson County Commissioners:

Southwestern Child Development Commission, Inc. (SWCDC) has for the past seven years worked closely with community organizations, primarily Jackson Neighbors in Need (JNIN) to assist the homeless in our community by providing shelter and case management. For the past four years the case manager has been employed and supervised under SWCDC with financial assistance from the Evergreen Foundation and the Jackson County Commissioners.

In 2016 when JNIN came to the county because the homeless program grew beyond the capacity JNIN could manage through volunteers, SWCDC was asked to manage the shelter along with the case manager. SWCDC agreed to manage the program for the remainder of the 2016-17 season and for the transition year (2017-18) while a taskforce prepared options for the county to take. In February 2017 SWCDC assumed responsibility for the homeless program. In addition SWCDC provided leadership for the Homeless Manager Task Force and delivered a final report in October 2017.

As the transitional year comes to a close, June 30, 2018, SWCDC has evaluated its role managing the homeless program. During the past year and a half we have experienced several personnel challenges, not the least of which was the resignation of the full-time case manager in the middle of the Cold Weather Shelter Season. In addition there continues to be an increase in the number of homeless, specifically single adults and those which chronic homeless, who require more time and therefore put a strain on the budget. This change in the population from families to single adults has been seen across the state and is not unique to Jackson County.

SWCDC has been honored to have served in the leadership capacity for the homeless program and is open to continuing that role while the county develops a plan for the homeless management. Two barriers that will need to be addressed are staff recruitment and maintaining a positive relationship with hotel owners. We will need until June 30, 2018 to resolve these two barriers. We appreciate the Jackson County Commissioners' progressive stance on the issue of homelessness and are proud to continue to partner with the county to offer services to the families and children in need in our community.

Sheila Hoyle
Executive Director

Report for Homeless Program

The Jackson County Homeless Program is a year-round program that offers case management, housing support, and a Cold Weather Shelter. The JCHP transitioned from a five month shelter to a year-round program in 2016-17. The full time case manager hired in December 2016 continued to serve clients throughout the year, providing mental health, substance use, and job training referrals; landlord negotiations once the clients were housed from the previous shelter season; and assistance with obtaining housing during the non-shelter season. Funding for housing was obtained from Rapid Rehousing program, Section 8 Voucher Program, Permanent Supportive Housing, and a Vaya Health Housing Grant Fund. Attention was also given to fostering landlord relationships and working with clients who were still negotiating a new job and new household finance responsibilities.

April 2017 – November 2017

Number of people served: 74

- 34 Children
- 40 Adults
- 32 were new clients, and 42 were continuing from the shelter period.
- 43 Households
- 65% of the households were housed
- 32 received case management only (referred to other services (rehab, dv, mental health), helped with connecting to resources (DSS, Section 8 housing, Job searches), checked in with clients at three month and six month period before transitioning them from services.

In addition to working on with the homeless during this period, SWCDC worked with other agencies on the Homeless Shelter Management Task Force. Marilyn Chamberlin led the Task Force and a final draft of the report was presented to Jackson County in October 2017. The report outlined the best practices for homeless programs, a description of the Housing First Model of homeless programs, and a comparison of three shelter models including expenses and services (Brick and Mortar Shelter, Hotel Model and a Hybrid Model). A presentation of the report was made to the Jackson County Commissioners in January 2018.

Additional funding was obtained throughout the non-shelter season. In addition to county funds the JCHP received the following funds:

- Jackson County: \$85,000 for shelter and case management plus \$3,778.88 (from 2016-17)
- Evergreen Foundation: \$20,000 for salaries, travel, and communication
- The Church of the Good Shepherd Grant: \$5,000 for clients services including: gas cards, application fees, laundry services, storage rental (for household items, clothing and furniture for the clients), transit, and other incidental expenses clients had.
- Great Smokies Health Foundation Grant: \$1000 for medical expenses for clients
- Emergency Services Grant (HUD): \$3,740 for shelter cost (hotels) and case management
- JNIN: \$11,800 for shelter cost (hotels)
- Total \$130,280.88

Cold Weather Shelter Season

A contract was negotiated with the Quality Inn owner to provide rooms for the Cold Weather Shelter at a rate of \$57 per night. The shelter opened on November 1st with four rooms and added rooms each week of November until the room count reached 10. In December the region experienced unusually cold temperatures and snowfall, so additional rooms were added at the Microtel Hotel at \$58 per night. The weather pattern continued throughout the winter season resulting in maintaining 6 additional rooms per night than was originally planned. Every effort was made to move people into permanent housing but rental properties were not available during the months of December and January. The rental market began to open more in February and the clients began to move into housing. As with every year as people move out of shelter more need to come in and so we maintained the higher number of rooms while diverting people to families and friends as much as possible. The client population this year shifted somewhat from last year and we had more households without children this year. This is a trend seen across the state. In addition we were faced with more households that had chronic homelessness. Those with chronic homelessness require more services and take a longer time to locate housing due to a history of financial, mental health, health or substance issues.

November 2017-March 2018

Number of people served 104

- 23 children
- 81 adults
- Sheltered: 63 people – 51 adults and 12 children; 41 were either housed quickly, referred elsewhere or were put on a waiting list but contact was lost.
- The average number of rooms per night was 16.
- The total cost for shelter was \$100,483.34 with a rate of \$41.54 per room per night
- 61 households left the shelter before it closed: 24 were housed, 34 were removed from shelter due to violations of the rules (drugs on site, violence against another client, time limit expired, hotel violation, visitation violation); 3 left on their own to another shelter or moved on
- Of the 61 households served 19 have been housed which is 32%.

Continuing services

- Connecting to natural supports
- Prevention and Diversion assessment
- Rapid Rehousing and Permanent supportive housing
- Referrals for services that are available

While the program went through some growing pains, this year with the resignation of the case manager, there were many successes both programmatically and with the clients. Programmatically, JCHP developed a working relationship with JC Transit so that clients could use the services and the program would be billed. This reduced the need for clients to have cash when the transit arrived. In addition a network of support was created with county churches. Fifteen churches in Jackson County helped with donations of items, providing food on Wednesdays and delivering food on other days from

Community Table. And we continued to have meals provided by Community Table. We also had the continued support of Jackson Neighbors in Need, United Christian Ministries, Mountain Projects, and the Department of Social Services. In addition two part-time case managers were hired to assist with the caseload.

Our clients also experienced success.

Homeless Client Success Stories

2017 Family of a single mom and 7 children were housed in February 2017. They needed to move again and we assisted them with finding new housing in July 2017 and they have been there successfully since.

2018 A WCU graduate in August 2018 became homeless upon graduation. He was 60+ years old when he received his BS. He struggled finding employment. We helped him find housing and he got a job. He is currently doing well. He recently had to move when his landlord died and the family sold the home.

2018 Couple was evicted from their home. They came into shelter December 2017. She was pregnant and neither of them was employed. He found work and in April they moved into housing. They have paid their rent and the baby is due in July.

2018 A chronically homeless man, who suffers from mental illness issues, who came to live closer to family, but could not live with the family due to the mental health issues. He was housed in February 2018 and has been successfully in housing ever since. He had worked a number of jobs across our country including Alaska but as he was getting older he decided he wanted to be closer to family and reconnect.

2018 A young women whose fiancée died left the area to try to deal with her grief. She owned a home, has a BS degree, had a full time job before she left, but quit and sold the house to help with her recovery from her loss. She returned and tried to live with her mother, but her mother was abusive and asked her to leave the house. She entered our shelter in December 2017 and was working two jobs. In January 2018 she moved into a trailer with the help of Rapid Rehousing. She talked to both jobs and one offered her full time hours so she began working full time and is still successfully in housing.

2018 A young man with a criminal background entered the shelter at the end of February. He was homeless due to the difficulty he had finding a job because of his record. He had a job by the middle of March and housing by the end of March. He is still in his housing and enjoys his job and reports he is doing well.

During the 2017-18 year, SWCDC also oversaw the Rapid Rehousing Program for Western North Carolina. This program assists homeless households with rent and deposits as they work toward housing stability. Administering this program and coupling it with JCHP provided a continuum of services for the homeless population in Jackson County.