



United Way
of Lancaster County

Minutes:

**CROSS PROBLEMS AND
HOMELESS SERVICE PROVIDERS NETWORK**

Monday, November 16, 2015

2:30 pm, Blair Room, Community Services Center

ATTENDANCE

Doug Hopwood, TLC, Chair, presided. Attendants: Amedisys Home Health, Fay Schwartz; BHDS, Autumn Nauman, Rhonda Slinghoff; Bridge of Hope Lancaster & Chester Counties, Amanda Nissley, Jaleen Leon; Community Action Program, Regina Begley; CHI: St Joseph Children's Health, Sol Pellerito, Tricia Warfel; Clare House, Taraya Wright, Mia Gansalves, Chelsea Dougherty, Cocalico School District, Paula Fleming; Columbia Borough SD, Carol Arena; Community Services Group, Kristin Labezuis, Vicky Stuart; Conestoga Valley SD, Katie Reiff; Drug & Alcohol Commission, Matt Barnett; Elanco SSN, Joan Yunginger; Good Samaritan Shelter, Ashley Eager, Hannah Graham; lhelp@CSG, Samantha Vollrath, David Miller, Janize Longacre; Lancaster Co. Council Of Churches, Lindsay Hess; Lancaster Co. Housing Authority, Teresa Danforth; Lancaster Co. Office Of Aging, Kristin Jones; Lancaster CAO, Lori Walton, Shannon Wolpert; LCCEH, Jason Harnish; LGHealth, Wendy Walton, Marcy Mercer, Francesca Zola, Dave Ostertag; Love, Inc.-Homes Of Hope, Beth Crosby; Manheim Township SD, Carla Sarricuita; Pennsylvania Link To Aging & Disability, Brian L. Long; PPL, Gladys Malone, Tabor Community Services, Marge Mowrer, Guy Boyer, Dominique Miller, Sara Fritz, Sonia Cirico, Kristine Forry; The Lodge Life Services, Amanda Grosh, Kimberly Stoner; United Way 2-1-1, Toni Gainer, Jovianna Castro

WELCOME

Doug opened the meeting with welcome and introductions.

FOCUS TOPICS- ENERGY ASSISTANCE

LIHEAP- Lancaster CAO, Department of Human Services, Presented by Shannon Wolpert

Lancaster County residents in need of heating assistance (whether it's electric, gas, oil, coal, etc.) are encouraged to apply for LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program) online at www.compass.state.pa.us or by calling the Lancaster County Assistance Office (CAO) at 717-299-7543 or the State hotline at: 1-800- 857-7096.

Households can apply for LIHEAP as a stand-alone program. LIHEAP does have access to income verification from unemployment and social security benefits and some employers are starting to report income. LIHEAP needs income verification from the month prior to when a person applies.

The Cash and Crisis components of the LIHEAP grant, which serve households who fall at or below 150% FPIG, will operate at the same time this year: **November 3, 2015 thru April 3, 2016**. Utility shutoffs will be handled throughout the entire time period as well.

If a client does not have a computer, they can go to the library or use the computers in the lobby of the CAO to apply. If applying for heating oil, households must also have an account number for a fuel vendor when filling out the application. When applying online they also need to make

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sure they get the screen that says the application **has been sent!** Also note the W + 9 digit # attached to it. This identifies the client assigned to that application and makes it searchable in the system. If applications are complete, they are processed the same day. If you have any questions it is best to email; voice messages go to a cluster voicemail box which can take longer for a response.

Grant amounts, based on household income:

- CASH grants: \$100-\$1000, 1 per season
- CRISIS grants: \$25-\$500 (CAO only authorizes the amount that will resolve the current crisis; clients can reapply until their maximum is used up)

Additional Notes:

- Benefit eligibility is determined by household size, income, county the applicant lives in and the heating source
- Renters whose heat is included in their rent may apply for LIHEAP. If deemed eligible, the client may choose to have the benefit check sent directly to them or to their secondary heating source.
- Persons living in subsidized housing where heat is included in the rent may still apply, but if they receive a utility allowance, it counts towards their income for LIHEAP eligibility; however it is not counted as income for any other program. They will need to provide their allowance amount from the Housing Authority.
- Weatherization component through LIHEAP: if the person is RENTING, they will need a written permission form from the property owner and present it to the contractor when they come to the house to begin the work (furnace repair, etc.)
- There are additional funds for vulnerable households: a household that includes someone who is age 65 or older; a child, 5 and under; or someone with a disability. If one of these criteria is met, they may qualify for additional funds which will go directly to the vendor where the cash grant is going to.
- Do NOT use old forms. Make sure client has the correct application-in the bottom right it is marked: PWEA-1-7/15, any older versions will be rejected and a new one will be mailed out.
- Clients can choose what heat source they want the grant to pay for. However, LIHEAP will only pay a secondary source if the primary account is active.
- Regina mentioned that CAP outreach workers will try to help seniors over 60 complete the LIHEAP applications. If an in-home appointment is needed, CAP will work with Office of Aging to get that set up.
- Questions about LIHEAP – better to call the statewide LIHEAP Hotline- someone WILL answer! Shannon also said staff at the local office will help people fill out their applications.
- Community Action Program administers the UGI and PPL assistance programs. Still best for customers to call their utility first to see if they are eligible for programs, the utilities will then connect the customer with CAP.

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PPL Utilities, presented by Gladys Malone

PPL offers 3 programs similar to LIHEAP to help low income households.

- Operation Help which is administered locally by Community Action Program. The income limit is 200% of the poverty guidelines. It is funded by shareholders and can be used for any fuel source. It's typically a once a year grant and for customers who may not be eligible for LIHEAP, but still struggling to get their service turned back on. Operation Help is not an entitlement program and the customer must have shown some effort to pay the bill.
- OnTrack, is a personalized, budget billing for low income customers. Customer must be "in trouble" to qualify. If a customer comes into the program with an arrearage balance, that balance is forgiven over the next 18 months provided the customer keeps up with their OnTrack payment. The other benefit that it provides is the difference between the OnTrack payment, which is a flat set amount based on their income and household size, and the actual electric usage. PPL will write off that difference monthly. OnTrack is a win-win situation, it allows for the customer to stay in their home and maintain the utility by providing an affordable re-payment program and it reduces PPL collection fees.

Effective today, PPL customers who are enrolled in OnTrack, and move to another address-- their OnTrack account will move with them automatically.

- WRAP (Winter Relief Assistance Program) is PPL's weatherization program. PPL does an energy audit to determine what needs to be done at the property (heating/cooling systems repair/replace, refrigerator, etc.). Having electric heat is not a requirement. Customers can own or rent, if they rent, the landlord will be solicited to get permission. Application is online.
- Medical Certificates: a medical certificate is an exemption for 7- 30 days that prevents a service termination at that time. A doctor must also sign the release. However, it does not alleviate the customer's responsibility to pay their bill. Once the exemption runs out, the utility can be shut off if the customer has not fulfilled their payment responsibility.
- PPL is the only electric DELIVERY company in Lancaster County.

UGI presented by Brian Ravel

Programs offered:

- CAP (Customer Assistance Program) - provides a more affordable monthly payment based on income, household size and usage. Over time, with consistent payments, past debt may be forgiven. Customers must have an active UGI account, the property must be the customer's primary residence and their annual income is at, or below, 150% FPL.

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UGI partners with Community Action Program of Lancaster County to administer this program.

- LIURP (Low Income Usage Reduction Program) – UGI’s free weatherization program offers measures to limit heat loss and provide energy savings. Must have active account with 12 or more consecutive billing periods and higher than average usage. Renters can also qualify with written permission from the landlord.
- Operation SHARE – for those experiencing a hardship and having difficulty paying their heating bills. Must be at or below 200% FPL and have an active UGI account. One grant awarded per 12 month period. Also administered by CAP.
- UGI staff will also make referrals to other agencies that may be able to help their customers. LIHEAP applications are mailed out daily.

Note: SACA’s Tec Centro location offers on-site, drop-in assistance on Wednesdays from 9am-12noon. Staff will help with completing energy applications and shopping for electric providers. Bring proof of income and account numbers.

United Healthcare, presented by Amy Shaffer

This plan is available to anyone who has both Medical Assistance and Medicare. Amy reviewed some of the benefits:

- \$2500 toward dental services
- Transportation up to 48 one-way trips per year
- Hearing Aid coverage -\$1000 every 2 years
- Health Products, includes OTC medicine, up to \$600
- Member services include a welcome call and 24/7 on call access to a nurse
- House calls made to help members understand and use their benefits
- 99% of the providers in Lancaster county participate with this plan
- Bilingual staff available

LCCEH UPDATES

Winter Shelter Programs

Operates from November 30, 2015 thru March 28, 2016 (will extend if weather stays cold)

- Woman and children (boys up to age 12) sheltered at YWCA
- Men stay at the Mission
- Families with boys over age 12 sheltered at Mission or TLC, if space available

The Authorization process will be through CaseWorthy this year, guests will be receiving scan cards. CHART will do it during the week, walk-in 9am-4:30pm and at St James Breakfast on Mondays; Water Street on weekends.

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- Hours at the YWCA have been expanded in the morning until 8 am, that way they can leave and go right to breakfast. The “Boats” (same as the men have at the mission) have been purchased as well.

YWCA Check in at night is 7:30-8:30 pm for those who are pre-authorized. Open enrollment will be 8:30-9 pm for anyone seeking shelter (up to 40). Priority will be given to Lancaster County residents. *211 should continue to discourage out of county folks from just showing up, no guarantee there will be a bed for them.* After 9 pm, same as last year, they will need to go to the police station. The WINTER SHELTER at the YWCA cannot accommodate a person in a wheelchair officially. However, they will try and accommodate if there are absolutely no other resources. The YWCA building IS handicapped accessible.

- Columbia opens on November 30 also. Operates 7 pm – 8 am. 4 churches will rotate as the sheltering site. Columbia Presbyterian Church will be the hub for intake. Intent is for Columbia residents, but will also allow those with a “strong” connection to Columbia. Open to single men and women, but will try to accommodate families if needed. The Day Drop-In Center is open Monday-Friday, 9am-5 pm. Located at 360 Locust Street.
- Elizabethtown shelter still in works, but most likely will open on December 12. Intake will be thru the Community cupboard, more details to come.

UPDATE: the E-town shelter opened at St. Paul’s on December 19. Hours: 7:30pm-8 am. Accommodations are available for anyone who is homeless and connected to the Elizabethtown area. Intake at Community Cupboard on Wednesdays and Saturdays, 10am-2 pm. Open enrollment, Monday- Friday, 8:30-9pm. After hours, police escort required.

- No Ephrata shelter this year.

For information on locations, times, eligibility and screening, persons should still be calling 211. 211 is available 24/7.

Christmas Food Baskets

- The Council of Churches is NOT doing food baskets this year.
- Christmas food basket giveaway at Clipper Stadium on Christmas Eve morning, no preregistration needed. Doug noted that people DO NOT need to get in line at 3:30 am! Everyone gets served and the line moves pretty fast!

CaseWorthy:

None.

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CHART:

Doug encouraged people to not go outside the system. CHART will make the determinations for each shelter. Staff do respond within the day. For households who are locked out of their residence, they need to call 211 on THAT day.

Jen noted that the Coalition is working on building a system that addresses those at risk but not yet on the street.

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER UPDATES

None

GOOD NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Tabor announced they have hired a new CHART worker: Sonia Cirilo
- The Council announced they are hiring for an intake coordinator position, FT, bilingual, BSW
- United Way VITA begins scheduling tax prep appointments on January 1, 2016

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Monday, January 25, 2016 at 2:30 pm in the Blair Room, 630 Janet Avenue.

Focus Topics: TBA

Minutes and Agendas are posted to: www.PA211East.org/Lancaster. Scroll down to HSPN section.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Toni at gainer@uwlanc.org or 717.824.8118; or Doug at dhopwood@tabornet.org.

Prepared by:
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United Way 2-1-1