

3/1/2018

NATIONAL FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY EVALUATION

PHA Staff Interviews - (Telephone)

[Protocol 2_PHA Staff Interviews_Telephone_Supervisors]

NOTE FOR INTERVIEWER: FOR THIS INTERVIEW, BE SURE TO HAVE ON HAND A COPY OF:

- Updated "Staff List" Table
- Updated PCC/Partners list

Try to have site complete the tables ahead of the call.

Introduction

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1.5 hours per response for this Government agency staff interview. HUD may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection information unless that collection displays a valid OMB control number 2528-0296, expiring xx-xx-xxxx.

The information requested under this collection is protected and held private in accordance with 42 U.S.C. 1306, 20 CFR 401 and 402, 5 U.S.C.552 (Freedom of Information Act), 5 U.S.C. 552a (Privacy Act of 1974) and OMB Circular No. A-130.

[Note to interviewers: Please read the following script.]

Thank you for taking the time to talk with us. Our goal today is to learn about certain aspects of the FSS program so that we can more accurately describe the way the program operates.

Our discussion here should last about 90 minutes.

I want to remind you that your participation is voluntary. You do not have to answer any question you do not wish to answer. If you need to end the interview for any reason, feel free to do so. If you do end the interview partway through, we will use only the information you shared up to that point.

We will be taking notes so we can later recall your perspectives more accurately. In addition, so we can stay focused on the conversation, we would like to record today's discussion. If at any point you would like me to pause or turn off the recorder, please let me know. If we use quotes

from this conversation in any reports, we would not use your name but may refer to your position, which, due to the limited number of sites in the study, may mean it could potentially be traced back to you.

Do you have any questions before we continue?

General Program & Staffing

1. How many clients are currently [or as of xx date?] enrolled in your FSS program (total number, not the number in the FSS study)?
2. How many mandatory slots do you currently have?
3. What is your annual grant funding amount (most recent)?
4. For sites that have incentives, stipends, or other funding for participants (not including escrow) – We are interested in how those funds are allocated. For each category of funds:
 - a) What is the source of this funding?
 - b) What is the general purpose or goal of this funding?
 - c) How much was allocated in 2016 (calendar year)? 2017 (calendar year to date)?
 - d) How is it determined which participants receive funding and how much they receive? Who makes this determination?
 - e) For each source -- how many participants benefitted in 2016? 2017?
 - f) What were the funds used for? [*Can create a grid to compile responses to “e” and “f” that clearly denotes, # participants, amount of funds received, and use of funds.*]
5. Review the staffing table completed before the site visit. Confirm the number of FSS staff who have case management/case coordination functions and that we have the following data for each staff person:
 - Name
 - Total hours worked per week
 - Hours spent on FSS per week
 - % of salary and benefits that are paid out of FSS funding? % paid from other Housing Authority funds?
 - Total FSS caseload; Of total, how many are HCV? How many are PH?
 - Do FSS staff also have HCV responsibilities? If yes, for how many FSS clients? How many non-FSS clients?
6. Besides yourself – are there other supervisory staff working on FSS? For all supervisors (including yourself):
 - Hours worked per week
 - hours spent on FSS per week
 - % of salary/benefits that are paid out of FSS funding? % paid from other Housing Authority funds?

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- Role with regard to FSS/FSS staff
7. Do any FSS case managers or supervisors also work with clients in the Homeownership program (i.e. are they involved with mortgage counseling, meeting with lenders, and other activities beyond homeownership preparation that FSS case managers often work on with clients)? If yes, how many? Are these cases included in FSS caseloads?
 8. Are there any other staff whose salaries are at least partially paid out of FSS funds? What are their responsibilities?
 - Hours worked per week
 - % of salary/benefits that are paid out of FSS funding? Paid from other Housing Authority funds?

Update Policies

9. Does your Housing Authority currently operate a Homeownership program? If so, is participation in FSS a precondition for the homeownership program? Has that always been the case? Are there other ways that the Homeownership program intersects with FSS?
10. Are interim escrow disbursements permitted? If yes,
 - a. Are there limits on the percentage of the balance that can be disbursed?
 - b. Are there limits on the number of disbursements?
 - c. Are there any other restrictions?
 - d. How would you describe your approach to using interim escrow disbursements?

[If responses represents a policy change (see IR Table 9) – ask why the changes were made.]
11. Is there a requirement about how many months participants must be employed prior to the contract end date in order to graduate? If so, are exceptions ever made? [If response represents a policy change (see IR Table 9) – ask why the changes were made.]
12. Are there requirements in terms of the number of hours per week someone must be employed to graduate? If so, are exceptions ever made? If response represents a policy change (see IR Table 9) – ask why the changes were made.]
13. Are there requirements about the wage rate/earnings? If response indicates that the earnings must be “sustainable” (or something analogous) -- how is this determined? Who makes the determination? Is there leeway or exceptions? [If response represents a change (see IR Table 9) – ask why the changes were made.]

14. Does a participant's field of employment have to match the goal on the ITSP if a field was specified in order for the participant to graduate? If yes, who makes this determination? How are grey areas dealt with?
15. How close to the contract end date are clients able to make changes to their goals on the ITSP?
16. Are there other requirements for graduation (i.e. attendance at workshops)? Describe.
17. Is there a policy that calls for terminating/exiting from FSS participants who do not respond to case managers' attempts to reach them? What is the policy? How strictly is the policy enforced? [compare with numbers from MIS and ask follow-up questions if don't align]
18. We are interested in earnings reporting requirements and what this means for escrow accrual. When are households required to report increases in earnings/ income? Do earnings increases go into effect/change rent payments immediately or at the next annual recertification (i.e., when does TTP change and escrow credited)? Are there different rules for FSS participants?

Program Approach

19. What would you rank as the top three factors that influence how much progress participants make towards achieving their goals? Which are the least important factors?
 - a. Local job market
 - b. Case managers' skills in motivating clients
 - c. Participants' internal motivation and drive to succeed
 - d. Quality of the external services that exist in this community
 - e. Participants' job skills and education levels
 - f. Local housing market
 - g. Escrow incentive

Case Management

20. What is the minimum frequency that case managers are expected to contact participants? Does this contact typically occur by written update? In-person? Phone? Or email? Do these requirements differ at different stages of program engagement – for example, Year 1 and Year 4? [Walk through IR Tables 8 and 9 and ask to describe changes]
21. Are clients required to have any face-to-face meetings with their case managers? How many are required per year (what is the minimum)? How many face-to-face meetings would case managers like to have with their clients? Does this vary by type of client

(working v. not working)? [If response represents a policy change (see IR Table 8) – ask why the changes were made.]

22. Are there participation requirements (e.g., workshops) [confirm participation requirements; are these required to graduate?]
23. Have the caseload sizes changed? (*compare numbers in pre-visit questionnaire to previous numbers*). If they have changed – what is the reason?

The PCC and Referral Service Network

24. Have there been changes in the organizations on your PCC in the last year? (Review updates to the PCC table.) Please explain the changes -- who was added/dropped, and why?

Questions for Cost Analysis

25. How does [PHA] track FSS costs? Is there cost data from [PHA] that MDRC could have access to?
26. Does [PHA] spend their entire FSS grant amount each year for FSS activities?
27. Does [PHA] incur other FSS expenses that are not covered by the grant? If so, what types of expenses? Are these tracked in some way?
28. If we used information in Financial Assessment of Public Housing Agencies (FASS CFDA #14.896) as a data source for staff costs, would this be an accurate and complete recording of FSS staff costs? Are FSS staff costs being recorded under another CFDA? If so, which ones? (If they don't know codes I'll get them from someone else at the PHA).
29. If there are staff working only part-time on FSS, how is their FSS time tracked versus other work?
30. In general, does the amount of time that case managers spend with a specific FSS client vary over the 5-year FSS contract? If so please characterize how the amount of time varies over the 5-year period (e.g. a lot in the first year, not much in the middle, etc.) Depending on their answer, ask for breakdown of current caseload – how many clients on their caseload are in their first year? Second? And so on.
31. Is there any tracking of the amount of time case managers spend with specific clients?
32. Are there any in-kind contributions from other organizations (outside of the PHA) for the FSS program? [Examples: rent/space, holiday give-aways, gift cards/incentives]

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33. Are there specific organizations that the FSS program contracts with or that are compensated by the PHA?
34. Does the [PHA] have an overhead or indirect cost rate that they typically use?
35. If we have additional questions about costs of the FSS program at [PHA] whom should we contact?