

# Housing and Health Services Coordination Council 2010-2011 Biennial Plan

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **COUNCIL ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

The Housing and Health Services Coordination Council has been very active throughout this first year since inception. As detailed in the Background chapter, the first step undertaken by the Council was to engage in a public outreach process, inviting stakeholders from across the state to attend a series of public forums to provide feedback on the concept of service-enriched housing and the possible future directions of the Council.

Using this feedback, along with research on best practices from other states, the Council developed a definition of service-enriched housing that was adopted as a rule by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) Governing Board. This definition helped to frame future actions of the Council, particularly the creation of its first Biennial Plan.

Upon adoption of the rule, the Council next chose to embark on a series of Committee work sessions. The Council's two committees, the Policy & Barriers Committee and the Cross-Agency Education & Training Committee, each attended biweekly conference calls to discuss and develop concepts and recommendations for meeting statutory directives and increase service-enriched housing. These work sessions resulted in the creation of the Council's first Plan.

### **CONTENTS OF BIENNIAL PLAN**

The Biennial Plan is separated into four distinct sections. Additionally, within each chapter of the Plan, the Council sought to address a different statutory directive.

Section One addresses the need to contextualize the issue of service-enriched housing by assessing the current need for such housing models amongst persons with disabilities and persons who are elderly and identifying the barriers that prevent them from obtaining it. These barriers include those attributable to regulatory requirements, administrative limitations, funding constraints, and ineffective coordination. The public forum series played a critical role in informing the Council on the issues of existing need and barrier identification and also provided invaluable input as the Council crafted a comprehensive definition of service-enriched housing and other relevant terminology.

Section Two of the Plan focuses on the research and information gathering efforts undertaken by Council staff to help inform the Council of methods for the implementation of service-enriched housing. Staff identified existing funding resources that could potentially be utilized for service-enriched housing. Additionally, staff presented the Council with an overview of efforts implemented in other states to increase service-enriched housing, a set of best practices which the Council evaluated for possible use in Texas.

Section Three of the Plan proposes recommendations to overcome the barriers identified in Section One and to achieve the overarching goal of increasing state efforts to offer service-enriched housing.

Recommendations relating to the cross-education of state housing and health service agency staff were formulated and opportunities were identified for providing training and technical assistance to local provider organizations. Finally, policy recommendations for furthering state service-enriched housing efforts were developed.

Section Four of the Plan looks ahead to the possible implementation of Council recommendations, as well as the future direction of Council actions.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COUNCIL**

The Council created several broad recommendation categories for developing a system to cross-educate selected staff in state housing and health services agencies. First, the Council sought to address the need for standardized educational training opportunities and resource materials through the creation of a simple, user-friendly reference guide and accompanying series of training modules. Second, the Council recommended a greater utilization of information technology to facilitate communication between State agency staff through partnership with the Texas Information and Referral Network, the creation of a “Quick Facts” webpage within each State agency’s website, and creation of a monthly interagency listserv email announcement system. Third, the Council sought to improve intra-agency communication through an increased utilization of each agency’s intranet as a tool for information dissemination as well as through the creation of a periodic agency newsletter. Finally, the Council emphasized ways of incorporating information sharing and training into current staff activities and encouraged each agency’s executive leadership to promote cross-agency training and communication with their staff.

In establishing recommendations for assisting and training local entities, the Council again offered the use of a reference guide and training module, but this time geared toward community service providers. Additionally, the Council recommended a Service Enriched Housing Specialist training and certification be established. The Council next addressed the need for increased communication and collaboration between local organizations by encouraging the state’s Aging and Disability Resource Centers to establish relationships with local housing providers and by increasing rural capacity through annual community roundtables. Finally, the Council sought to meet the need for increased outreach and education for consumers through various recommendations, including: modification of the Your Texas Benefits website to become an information clearinghouse for housing and health services, creation of a cross-agency informational brochure for consumers, utilization of the Council’s website as a resource for outreach materials, and the creation of an educational presentation for property managers and owners.

Finally, the Council offered eleven housing policy and eleven service policy recommendations for increasing and promoting production of service-enriched housing. On the housing side, the Council first sought to promote the use of multifamily rental housing funding sources for the set-aside of housing units for very low income persons with disabilities and persons who are elderly and establishing a targeting plan for connecting these individuals with off-site services and supports. Second, the Council recommends incentivizing partnerships between housing providers and local service entities and establishing criteria for measuring the strength of these connections. A third Council recommendation is to pursue collaborations with community development finance institutions and private foundations whose mission is to assist persons with disabilities and persons who are elderly. Finally, the Council seeks to address the need for greater outreach efforts, including outreach to private sector housing developers to promote service-enriched housing models, as well outreach and assistance to consumers at risk of institutionalization.

In regards to health and human services policy recommendations, the Council sought to support the expansion and increased funding of those programs and services that have proven successful at assisting persons with disabilities and persons who are elderly to remain living independently in community based settings. These include Medicaid 1915(c) waiver programs, nursing facility diversion programs, Aging and Disability Resource Centers, and nursing home relocation activities. The Council additionally sought to increase supports for persons with mental illness or substance abuse disorders by recommending the inclusion of behavioral health services within all Medicaid 1915(c) waiver programs, increasing funding to the Assertive Community Treatment service packages of the Resiliency and Disease Management Program, expanding the Peer Specialist Program to Local Mental Health Authorities statewide, and allocating additional funding towards community based services and supports for individuals leaving the state mental health system.

## **NEXT STEPS OF THE COUNCIL**

Given the statutory directives which guide the activities of the Council, the following outstanding tasks will direct the future actions of the Council moving forward:

Funding Requirements. In this first Biennial Plan, the Council was able to identify sources of state and federal funding that may be used to provide integrated housing and health services. Future plans will further this work by determining the requirements and application guidelines to obtain those funds.

Training Materials. In this first Biennial Plan, the Council made recommendations pertaining to the type and content of training modules for state agency staff as well as local provider organizations. Upcoming tasks for Council staff involve using Council recommendations to create such training materials and disseminate them, so to assist in the future development and financing of service-enriched housing.

Financial Feasibility Model. Another upcoming task for the Council and Council staff is to create a financial feasibility model that assists in making a preliminary determination of the financial viability of proposed service-enriched housing projects. Further communication and coordination with identified best practice organizations will aid in the completion of this task.

Tracking Database. In this first Biennial Plan, the Council identified a number of current service-enriched housing projects underway in Texas, as well as in other states. A future task for the Council and Council staff will be to develop a database that identifies, describes, monitors and tracks the progress of service-enriched housing projects developed in Texas.

Capacity Evaluation. A barrier to service-enriched housing mentioned during the public forum series dealt with the lack of capacity by local provider organizations. In order to delve further into this issue, Council staff will conduct an evaluation regarding capacity of statewide long-term care providers and interest by housing developers in investing in service-enriched housing.

Information Clearinghouse. In this first Biennial Plan, the Council made recommendations pertaining to the creation of central online resource for information regarding service-enriched housing. Council staff will build upon these recommendations to craft and maintain a clearinghouse of information that contains tools and resources for entities seeking to create or finance service-enriched housing projects.