

MEMORANDUM

TO: Fort Bend County Commissioners Court

FROM: Connie Almeida, PhD
Director, Behavioral Health

DATE: November 29, 2017

SUBJECT: County Based Community Collaborative

As authorized by SB 292, 85th Texas Legislative Session, Texas Health and Humans Services Commission (HHSC) has established Mental Health Grant Program for Justice Involved Individuals, that provide a county-based community collaborative, which must include the local mental health authority and the county, grants to reduce recidivism arrest and incarceration of individuals with mental illness.

The **Fort Bend County Jail Diversion and Recovery Program** will provide community based jail services to individuals identified with a mental illness or co-occurring psychiatric and substance abuse disorder (COPSD). The individuals enrolled in this program are at risk of recidivism. The program is designed to reduce recidivism and length of incarceration by: increasing access to evidenced based mental health services for person involved in the criminal justice system such as Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), housing, recovery coaching for substance abuse disorders, social and peer supports, employment opportunities, case management and enhanced continuity of care.

The proposed program is a community collaborative between Texana Center (the LMHA), Fort Bend County, Fort Bend Regional Council, and A Place to Live Foundation (not for profit foundation focused on housing for the chronically mentally ill.) Other partners will be added to the collaborative as needed to support the development of a system that supports recovery among individuals with mental illness and COPSD.

As required by HHSC, the Lead Applicant for this proposal is Texana Center, the local mental health authority. Fort Bend County is the providing the local match for the collaborative application. Texana Center and Fort Bend County are considered the lead agencies in this collaborative application and have joint fiscal and programmatic responsibility for the program. Texana Center will be the fiscal agent contracting directly with HHSC for the proposal.

Texana Center and Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services will be responsible for tracking budget, all service encounters and outcomes for the project. Texana Center will be responsible for reporting to HHSC on a quarterly basis as per Forms F and M or other required reporting.

Texana Center and Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services will be responsible for reporting fiscal and programmatic data to the other partners in the collaborative on a quarterly basis.

The funding provided by the mental health grant program will allow Fort Bend County to continue to provide programs that reduce the recidivism rate in our jails by expanding the jail diversion programs already in existence as well as develop other key services such as housing, employment, substance abuse recovery services, assertive community treatment and continuity of care.

Project Implementation:

The proposed project will be collaboration with the Texana Center, Fort Bend County, Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse, Inc. and A Place to Live Foundation. The proposed project will attempt to reduce jail recidivism by identifying adults that have a serious mental illness who are at risk of being rearrested because they have ongoing needs related to mental health services, lack of housing, crisis services, possible co-occurring substance abuse issues, no income or income below poverty level, lack of transportation, help in interfacing with the probation or parole departments, and lack of primary healthcare. All partners in the collaboration will come together to provide needed services and to apply their expertise to address these unmet needs in the individual's life.

The eligibility criteria for receiving services through this project are for the person to have a documented serious mental illness, to have at least one or more arrests in the past 12 months, and must be a Fort Bend county resident. We propose to serve 50 individuals within a 12 month period.

This project will require hiring new staff in most cases but will also reallocate some existing staff to dedicate a percentage of their time and expertise devoted to this project. Texana will hire 2 ACT QMHP-CS that will dedicate 100% of their time to this project. It will be required that they have the QMHP-CS credentialing and have experience working in the mental health field. There is an ACT Team Leader that will focus on supervision and guidance for the full time ACT staff that will be an experienced ACT Team worker and understand the fidelity of the ACT model. A Texana intake worker will be hired to work in the jail to help identify eligible candidates for the program and to provide continuity of care among all of the project partners. Texana Center will work toward allocating and/or hiring a part-time psychiatrist to meet the needs and requirements of the program. The Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse, Inc. will hire a full time Substance Use Disorder Recovery Coach dedicated to the project. Licensing and credentials will be standard for each practice required by the State Of Texas to hold the license or credential for the job each role will perform.

Fort Bend County will develop a new position for the project to assist with continuity of care, develop employment, housing resources, assist with follow-ups as well as monitoring of program outcomes. This position will work closely with the Texana intake worker and Fort Bend County jail staff, CIT, and Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services. Fort Bend County will also provide in-kind support for transportation, through the Fort Bend Transit.

Grant funds will also be used to contract for necessary housing and provide flexible supports to support employment and housing as well as basic needs such as food.

Screening will occur at the Fort Bend County Jail or at the Texana Center. Other partnering agencies may request that a screening for eligibility occur. The assessment instruments that will be utilized to determine mental health history will be a full psycho social assessment that addresses all life domains including mental health history, symptoms, past diagnosis, hospitalizations, and substance abuse history. The GAINS Reentry Checklist may also be used at the Fort Bend County Jail that is a recommended tool for the Sequential Intercept model at Intercept 4 Reentry. An ANSA (Adult Needs and Strengths Assessment) will be conducted, the Columbia Suicide Scale will be used, a diagnosis and Intake Questionnaire will be completed. A Recovery Plan will be developed for each client.

Each service the ACT Team staff provides and every referral they assist with is documented in an electronic medical record progress note. The ACT Specialists have team meetings at a minimum of once per week and have morning meetings discussing the goals and needs each individual is working on. There are regular reviews by staff and management to see progress made and if any referrals have not had any movement to follow up again to inquire about the status of the referral. There will be regular communication among all staff and agencies trying to assist the client in accessing their needs.

The treatment that will occur in this program related to mental health will follow the evidence-based practice and will have a forensic focus since the overall goal is to prevent jail recidivism by assisting the client in the on the path of recovery with every aspect of their lives which includes mental health services and medication management, co-occurring substance use disorders, homelessness, lack of income, legal problems, employment problems, lack of access to primary healthcare, case management services, transportation services, addressing trauma, crisis services, mental health and substance abuse education and any other identified that will improve the quality of life for the individual.

The person that has been assessed and voluntarily agrees to participate in this program may initially be seen at the Crisis Residential Unit to gain additional mental health and / or substance use stability and then will receive a housing option through A Place to Live Foundation or another identified boarding home in the community. ACT and Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse, Inc. and if needed Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services will provide intensive and frequent services with the client. The Stages of Change and Motivational Interviewing will be used to attempt to keep the client moving forward in progress towards recovery goals. Good communication with the county's Adult Supervision or the courts will be required to assist the individual in meeting all probation or parole requirements. Client needs and progress towards goals will be reviewed weekly. The Jail Diversion Coordinator will play a critical role in communicating with the criminal justice system. Best practices will be followed and all HHSC guidelines and rules shall be followed for this project.

The same organizations that participate in the community collaborative will be able to refer to this project. Other social service agencies could refer individuals that meet eligibility requirements but the bulk of referrals are expected to come from contributing partners.

Fiscal and Programmatic metrics will be monitored by the lead agencies in the collaborative, Texan center and Fort Bend County. Outcomes will be disseminated to stakeholders at least quarterly. Other partners will be added to the collaborative as needed to support the development of a system that supports recovery among individuals with mental illness and COPSD.