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NEBHANDS
Nebraska Behavioral Health Integration Project
Semi-annual program progress report

1. **Cooperative Agreement Number:** 90EJ0010/01
2. **PERIOD COVERED BY REPORT:** OCTOBER 1, 2002 THRU MARCH 31, 2003
3. **MAJOR ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING THIS PERIOD**

Highlights of major accomplishments during this period:

- Interim Executive Committee established
- Project staff hired
- Stakeholder Advisory Group convened
- Sub-award plan completed and accepted
- Sub-award plan implementation begun
- Request for proposals issued
- Web site established
- Project was named by Interim Executive Committee: “NEBHANDS – a faith-based and community initiative” (NEBHANDS = Nebraskans Expanding Behavioral Health Access through Networking Delivery Systems)
- Project mission, vision, and guiding principles were established

The three project objectives are listed below along with the activities defined in the grant. The period in which the activity is scheduled is next to the activity in parentheses. A narrative follows each activity as an update.

Objective 1. Enhance and Expand Capacity of Nebraska’s CBOs and FBOs to provide a range of supportive behavioral health services.

Activities associated with Objective

I. Provide Technical Assistance

- a. Select & Convene Kick Off Committee (Yr 1 - Qtr 2)

This objective was successfully completed within the timeline set by the Interim Executive Committee. The committee was selected and is co-chaired by Joanne Komenda, Farm Mediation Services; MaryBeth Rathe, Community Action Nebraska; and John Spatz, Legislative Aid to Senator Werner, Chair of the Nebraska Legislature’s Health & Human Services Committee. The committee has set the dates of June 9 –11, 2003 for the conference and has begun publicizing/accepting registrations for it.

- b. Convene Kick Off Conference (Yr 1 - Qtr3)

The conference is scheduled June 9 – 11, 2003 at the Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln, Nebraska. The title of the conference is “High Expectations for Behavioral Health: a dialogue on Nebraska’s faith-based and community initiative.” Speakers of national note will be featured the evening of June 9 and all day June 10. Nebraska speakers and over 25 technical assistance workshops will be highlighted on June 11. This event will bring faith-based

groups together with community groups, behavioral health professionals, consumers and family members to explore the possibilities associated with this grant.

- c. Provide Four Regional Workshops (Yr 1 - Qtr 3)
Regional Workshops are in the process of being scheduled in the months of July and August 2003. Identified sites include Christ the King's Priory in Schuyler, Nebraska; High Plains Heritage Center and Museum on the Chadron State College Campus in conjunction with the United Ministries in Higher Education Club; and sites to be determined in North Omaha and McCook, Nebraska. These workshops will reach out to underserved populations in Nebraska and their faith communities.
- d. Provide Technical Assistance open to all (Yr 1 - Qtr 3 thru Yr 2 - Qtr 2)
Technical assistance plans have been submitted from grant partners. The Kick Off conference will feature technical assistance available to sub-awardees and others. This conference will serve as an introduction to stakeholders and conference participants of the type of assistance available through the grant. Technical assistance will also be available at regional conferences scheduled during the next six-month period.

II. Distribute Sub-awards

- a. Select and convene assistance committee (Yr 1 - Qtr 2)
This objective was successfully completed within the timeline set by the Interim Executive Committee. Assistance Committee chairs include Marilyn Mecham, Executive of Interchurch Ministries Nebraska and George Hanigan, Deputy Director of Nebraska's Behavioral Health System. Interim assistance committee members have been meeting throughout the first six months. The interim Assistance Committee will transition to a permanent group during the next quarter. The technical assistance partners have begun meeting in a separate group to successfully coordinate that part of the assistance process. The Assistance Committee plans to continue to convene to determine sub-award grantees
- b. Determine award process and guidelines (Yr 1 - Qtr 2)
This objective was successfully completed within the timeline set by the Interim Executive Committee. The sub-award plan was submitted and approved following a revision of the proposed time-line for awarding assistance. (See attachment for complete sub-award plan and timelines.)
- c. Promote sub-award process and availability (Yr 1 - Qtr3 thru Yr 2 - Qtr 2)
The sub-award process was first publicized at the Stakeholder Meeting at the end of this reporting period. A press release and subsequent interviews on radio (Kearney, Nebraska) and newspaper (Omaha World Herald) followed. The promotion of sub-award availability will continue and be directed during the next quarter by the Dissemination Committee.
- d. Grant Monetary & Technical Assistance Awards (Yr 1 - Qtr 4 and throughout grant)

Provision of technical assistance activity will begin during Qtr 3 with monetary awards distributed according to the approved timelines in the sub-award plan.

III. Work with Sub-Award Communities

- a. Implementation of Initiatives (Yr 1 - Qtr 4 and throughout grant)
This work will begin immediately following identification of sub-award communities.
- b. Identify and Provide Technical Assistance (Yr 1 – Qtr 4 and throughout grant)
Technical assistance is being offered to communities and groups as they begin formulating plans/project ideas. This is taking place via individual contact with project staff and partners as well as through events such as the Stakeholders’ meeting, Kickoff Conference, and planned regional conferences. Technical assistance will be available to project communities identified via the sub-award process. This assistance will be tailored to the needs of the community and sub-awardee.

Objective 2: Develop and disseminate a plan for an integrated behavioral health System of Care at the State and Community Levels.

Activities associated with Objective

- I. *Convene Stakeholder Advisory Group (Yr 1 - Qtr 2 and throughout grant)*
This objective was successfully completed within the timeline set by the Interim Executive Committee. Over 100 stakeholders met on March 31, 2003 in Kearney, Nebraska. Participants were given an opportunity to learn more about the project and to give feedback about possibilities and barriers to its successful implementation. More complete information including the agenda, list of participants, and evaluation by participants is attached. The next meeting of the stakeholder group is scheduled the afternoon of June 9, 2003, to coincide with the Kick Off Conference
- II. *Select and Convene Executive Committee (Yr 1 - Qtr 1 and throughout grant)*
An interim executive group was formed in the first quarter of the grant (see attachment for list of Interim Executive Committee members.) This group met monthly to oversee the project development, the search for project staff, and implementation of grant activities. This group will be reconfigured in Quarter 3 as a permanent group is formed within the parameters suggested by stakeholders at the March 31, 2003 meeting.
- III. *Select and Convene Subcommittees*
 - a. Determine barriers, opportunities, and solutions (Yr 1 – Qtr 2 thru Qtr 4)
The Interim Executive Committee began the process of determining barriers, opportunities and solutions. Members of this committee served as initial chairs of the Assistance Committee, Kickoff Committee, and Integration Committee. The Stakeholder group continued this work through a structured break out session at their March 31, 2003 meeting. The barriers, opportunities, and solutions associated with subcommittee activity will continue to be explored throughout this grant year.
 - b. Determine plan and make recommendations (Yr 2)

Subcommittees will plan and make recommendations throughout the grant. It is anticipated that this activity will be most evident during year two of the grant.

c. Promote, implement, and monitor improvements (Yr 3)

Subcommittees will oversee the grant activities and resulting improvements throughout the grant. It is anticipated that this activity will be most evident during year three of the grant

IV. Community Guides

a. Research and collect materials (Yr 1 – Qtr 3 thru Yr 2)

This activity will begin during the third quarter of this grant year. A survey is being developed with the Gallup organization that will be conducted during the third quarter. The Gallup Organization will conduct focus groups with faith-based representatives and behavioral health consumers from around the state. These focus group discussions will take place during the Kick Off conference in June. These two research tools will be used to begin identifying the readiness of communities to participate in the project and point toward technical assistance opportunities. It is anticipated that this survey can be replicated at the end of the grant to assist in determining the effectiveness of project outreach and activities.

b. Publish (Yr 3 – Qtr 1)

This activity is scheduled to begin during year three. Plans are now being made to publish monographs prepared by speakers at the Kickoff conference in June 2003. This publication will be an overview of differing perspectives related to integrating faith-based and community resources with behavioral health care.

c. Promote and disseminate (Yr 3)

The Dissemination Committee will oversee this process.

Objective 3: Evaluate the effectiveness of the project.

Activities associated with Objective

I. Select and Convene Evaluation Committee (Yr 1 – Qtr 2 thru Qtr 3)

The Evaluation Committee was selected and had its first meeting to begin determining specific evaluation strategies.

II. Develop evaluation plan (Yr 1 – Qtr 2 thru Qtr 3)

The evaluation/assessment guidelines have been prepared internally, reviewed by the Evaluation Committee, and then submitted for approval. It is anticipated that the assessment plan will be completed during the third quarter of this grant year according to the instructions provided.

III. Implement evaluation plan (Yr 1 – Qtr 3 thru Yr 3 – Qtr 2)

Implementation of the assessment plan will begin as soon as it is approved.

IV. Release preliminary findings (Yr 2 – Qtr 4)

This activity is scheduled in year two.

V. Release final report (Yr 3 – Qtr 4)

This activity is scheduled in year three.

4. PROBLEMS

No slippage in task completion has been experienced.

Technical assistance needs for the project are evolving. It would be helpful if dialogue between intermediaries with like projects or similar structures were fostered with structured conference calls or smaller gatherings associated with national grant meetings.

5. SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS AND EVENTS

The committee structure used by this project has been successful in moving ownership of the success of the project from the intermediary to key stakeholders in the state. These stakeholders met in Kearney on March 31 with a commitment to meet 4 times a year throughout the life of the grant. Many of the stakeholders have volunteered to serve on additional committees and have taken information back to their communities regarding the project and its goals.

6. DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

Preliminary dissemination activities have been in the form of press releases coordinated by the University of Nebraska public relations office, communication with stakeholders and interested persons via email, and information posted on partner Web sites. Contact has been made with the Nebraska Educational Television Network and the University of Nebraska Press to create project products that can be widely disseminated. The Dissemination Committee is scheduled to meet during the third quarter to formalize the dissemination planning process and activities.

Grant partners have aided the dissemination process by keeping their constituencies informed of activities. For example, Marilyn Mecham, Executive of Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska, meets monthly Nebraska with Nebraska judicatories of denominations that have voluntarily chosen to cooperate in ministry. She has included a regular agenda item at these meetings that details the events and progress of the grant.

Potential project communities have been touched by grant staff as well as grant partners. Project staff members have been asked to speak about the project at clergy gatherings, church meetings, public health meetings, the state planning and evaluation councils for mental health and substance abuse, hospital grand rounds, consumer groups, and behavioral health provider groups. Project staff and partners have fielded individual requests for information since the date of the grant announcement.

Attached are press releases, articles, and publications to date, which are related to the project or project activities.

7. OTHER ACTIVITIES

It should be noted that trained facilitators were engaged to assist with meeting planning and facilitation for the Interim Executive Committee and the Stakeholders. The use of these facilitators is being evaluated to assess its perceived usefulness to participants by a professor and graduate assistant from the University of Nebraska. The resulting knowledge can direct future use of facilitation within the project structure and assist other intermediaries when making decisions about when to engage outside facilitation.

8. MAJOR ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR THE NEXT REPORTING PERIOD

- April Convene subcommittees
- May Identify project communities through sub-award applicants for year one
- June Kickoff Conference (June 9 – 11)
- July Regional Conferences & distribution of cash assistance; applications for year two assistance will be received
- Aug Regional Conferences & technical assistance provision to project communities
- Sept Continue technical assistance and outreach activities; identify additional project communities; convene stakeholders; continue technical assistance; Year two sub-awards awarded

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