

CFP TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BULLETIN

COMMUNITY FOLLOW-UP WORKERS

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Background

In the 2007 Program Guidance for the Community Follow-up Program (CFP) Request For Qualifications (RFQ), Community Follow-up Workers (CFWs) are described as staff members whose main responsibilities may involve assistance to clients when necessary to ensure clients' access and receipt of needed services. Experience has demonstrated that successful use of CFWs improves the quality of CFP case management and client outcomes, and facilitates client engagement and maintenance in HIV medical care. The following Technical Assistance Bulletin explains the role of CFWs, and describes AIDS Institute expectations for the use of CFW's in the, Community Follow-up Program.

Program Standards and Guidance

The CFP, RFQ and Standards, describe a program that "...provides intensive, family centered case management services to...persons identified as having difficulty accessing medical and/or other services, and who require frequent personal contacts ...to ensure their return for medical care and other needed services". Client need for frequent personal contacts is the primary reason why the CFP model was developed with a team approach to provide case management. More specifically, the model requires the use of CFWs as non-billable staff providing hands on direct and intensive assistance that many clients require in order to access needed services.

The Medicaid Rate for CFP Services includes the cost of non-billable CFW staff necessary for a fully functional program, therefore, all programs must hire CFWs to complement CFP teams.

CFW Roles and Responsibilities

As members of the Case Management Team, CFWs provide a wide range of direct and indirect support services to clients to help clients access services, engage and maintain medical care, and achieve positive outcomes.

The most effective use of CFWs is to include CFW activities in clients' case management service plans. This means that the CFW is a key team member who plays an important role in clients' access and retention in services. CFWs can also promote the empowerment of clients, and assist with case management activities.

The CFW Role – Examples

- Encourage client empowerment through peer education and support.
- Assist clients in accessing and negotiating service systems.
- Assist clients with translation, clarifying treatment plans and medical care, and providing advocacy to ensure access and receipt of services.
- Perform regular home visits to assess clients' living environments to ensure appropriate housing.
- As an outreach worker, build caseloads, find clients lost to contact, and contact clients to help keep them engaged in care and services.
- Do basic case record documentation of client contacts and assist in collecting initial assessment/reassessment client information. Documentation training is recommended for CFW staff.

- Assist CM Team in completion, tracking and timely follow-up on paperwork for client entitlements through different service systems.
- Engage clients' collaterals in order to encourage and promote testing for HIV.

CFW Qualifications

Minimum Qualifications are: ability to read, write, understand and carry out directions. Community residents with knowledge of community resources and sensitivity towards persons/families living with HIV are preferred.

Ideally, CFWs should be recruited from the communities being served. People who live in and have grown up in communities heavily impacted by HIV should, by the nature of their ties to their community and their cultural sensitivity, be in an excellent position to reach persons infected and affected by HIV. They have a familiarity with community resources, and an understanding of the barriers and ethnic/cultural influences that affect a client's adherence with their plan of care and utilization of other available services.

Former clients, peer educators, family members of clients, or people from neighborhoods served, can be good candidates for the job of CFW. (Attached is a sample job description). The Bureau of Community Support Services (BCSS) encourages and supports the use of peer training programs as a mechanism to identify potential CFWs, and as a means to link former clients and other persons living with HIV/AIDS to employment.

Supervision & Support

CFWs should receive orientation to agencies and programs that operate a CFP, so that they understand staff roles, policies and procedures, and be included in staff meetings and in-service training. CFWs need ongoing supervision and support to ensure the appropriateness of client interventions. Training in client confidentiality, boundary setting, and the process of case management and basic documentation is fundamental to the success of a CFW as a member of a team. Training of CFWs is also important to ensure their acceptance and recognition, not only by the team, but also by the agency that employs them and other agency staff.

CFW input should be sought and used as appropriate. With structure, support and guidance, CFWs play an important role in the delivery of quality, case management services to families affected by HIV disease.