

LEARNING FROM FSS: A Working Session ***"The Challenge"***

Background: This session allowed workshop participants to brainstorm ideas for improving WtW programs by trying to incorporate successful aspects of our FSS programs into our WtW programs. Both FSS and WtW have self-sufficiency as the major goal, so there should be ways to incorporate aspects and successful techniques of your agency's FSS program into your agency's WtW program.

All workshop participants (WtW and FSS Staff, HUD representatives, TA providers and even FSS participants) were divided into 4 working groups. Each group included people with different WtW and FSS experiences in order to get different perspectives of program strengths and weaknesses.

Activity: Each group spent 30 minutes discussing one of the following 4 questions. A representative of each group then summarized the group's discussion in plenary session.

- 1. What can your agency offer to its WtW families to keep them committed to the goals of the program?**
- 2. How can we better track and monitor WtW family progress in achieving their family goals?**
- 3. What do you need to do to keep your WtW partnerships strong and foster new partnerships?**
- 4. What can you do to ensure that your WtW program meets family needs?**

Try This Exercise with Your Team: If you couldn't attend the workshop, spend a few minutes thinking of your own answers to these questions. Maybe you could bring these questions up at your next staff meeting and get additional input. Remember that participants, as well as staff, may have good suggestions for improving your WtW program. Often hearing different perspectives of "what works" and "what doesn't" can lead to substantive changes in the program.

To read about some of the solutions discussed at the workshop, go to The Solutions [LINK TO Solutions on next page](#). You'll find good ideas as well as links to helpful areas of this website that give you tools and ideas for implementing these or similar solutions.

If you have any solutions to these questions that are not listed, please e-mail them to your TA Provider and we'll add them to the list.

Learning from FSS: A Working Session

“The Solutions”

CHALLENGE 1: What can your agency offer to its WtW families to keep them committed to the goals of the program?

Solutions:

- *Help make educational opportunities available to your WtW families. You can partner with other agencies, service organizations, community colleges and faith-based organizations to provide your WtW families with skill-based training.*

Check out this link!

<http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/wtw/resources/bs1/>

- *Motivate WtW families by using not only WtW graduates, but also FSS graduates, as peer counselors and speakers.*
- *Help families stay focused on their goals. Set time limits for achieving goals so that individuals move from goal to goal, instead of getting stuck on one goal.*
- *Try to understand your clients and their barriers, for example: what motivates your clients? What are their goals and aspirations? What obstacles keep coming in the way of your client achieving his/her goal?*
- *Use homeownership as a motivating factor. Even if your agency doesn't have a homeownership program, there are many resources that you could provide to your WtW families that explain the benefits of homeownership. Even doing something as simple as taking time to list the benefits of homeownership during lease-up might be a good way to start!*

Check out this link!

http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/wtw/ppp/learning/montgomery_pa.cfm

CHALLENGE 2: How can we better track and monitor WtW family progress in achieving their family goals?

Solutions:

- *Remember that the size of your WtW events, classes and meetings can help or hinder your ability to know what's going on in a client's life. Aim for occasional face-to-face meetings that create a more intimate atmosphere for sharing goal progress and setbacks.*

- Use surveys as a way to monitor your families' progress. You can create your own survey or tailor another agency's survey to fit your needs.

Check out this link!

http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/wtw/resources/bs7/bha_survey.pdf

- Develop an internal monitoring system to identify WtW participants currently unemployed. For employed participants, request copies of pay stubs on a bi-weekly or monthly basis in order to track participant's work experience.
- Continue developing partnerships that will counsel and serve your WtW families' needs. Don't duplicate efforts, but partner to share time and money.

CHALLENGE 3: What do you need to do to keep your WtW partnerships strong and foster new partnerships?

Solutions:

- Network with State & Local Agencies. Try to find a contact person at each agency who will work with you **and** who has the power to get results. Make multiple contacts if one person doesn't seem to be helping your agency as much as needed. Remember that you can contact your TA Provider for help in establishing partnerships and MOU's.

Check out this link!

<http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/wtw/ppp/learning/alaska.cfm>

- Continue outreach to community partners, service providers, local businesses and faith-based organizations. Organizations constantly are evolving: staff changes, new areas of focus arise, etc. Opportunities for partners to provide more services may come up, so make sure your agency stays in their mind as a potential and grateful receiver.

Check out this link!

http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/wtw/resources/bs8/potential_partners.cfm

- Use the Internet as a tool for finding potential new partners. Again, change is constant in organizations. The Internet can help you identify new organizations or changes within the structure of organizations you're currently partnering with.
- Get commitments with local businesses. Think creatively about what types of services these partners could provide for you. For example, a local business might not have any job openings for any of your WtW clients, but maybe that business does have a surplus of goods it could donate that you could then use as incentives to increase WtW attendance at monthly status meetings.

CHALLENGE 4: What can you do to ensure that your WtW program meets family needs?

Solutions:

- *Provide initial family assessments for all your WtW families so that you can identify individual needs. Then provide follow-up based on the initial assessments. Follow-up may include referring your clients to partner agencies or other local organizations that provide access to the services your client needs.*

Check out this link!

http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/wtw/ppp/learning/lauderhill_fl.cfm

- *Continue monitoring family progress and needs through regular client meetings. If possible, make home visits to clients. If resources prevent face-to-face meetings as often as desired, utilize other monitoring and tracking techniques, such as phone calls or mail surveys.*

Check out this link!

http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/wtw/ppp/learning/perthamboy_nj.cfm

- *Utilize community resources that could meet family needs. Remember that here's no need to "reinvent the wheel": if you have community resources providing services that your clients need, refer your clients directly to those resources instead of trying to offer those resources at your housing agency.*

Check out this link!

http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/wtw/ppp/learning/manassas_va.cfm