

The Boston Private Industry Council

Report on the Baseline and Year One Progress of HomeWork

Funded by:

the U.S. Department of Labor
and the U.S. Department of Housing and
Urban Development

Evaluators:

Commonwealth Corporation
Laurie Bozzi, Ed.D and
Sunny Schwartz

Project Directors:

Eleni Papadakis, Vice President,
Center for Workforce Innovation

Johan E. Uvin, Ed.D., Vice President,
Center for Research and Evaluation

October 2004





The study described in this report was conducted by Commonwealth Corporation evaluators. The interpretation and implications of the findings presented in this report reflect the view of the evaluators and do not necessarily represent official opinion or policy of the Boston Private Industry Council and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Mitt Romney, Governor

Kerry Healy, Lt. Governor

Jane C. Edmonds, Department of Workforce Development

Jonathan Raymond, Commonwealth Corporation

REPORT ON THE BASELINE AND YEAR ONE PROGRESS OF HOMEWORK

Table of Contents

I. Context of the HomeWork Project	1
II. Background on Ending Chronic Homelessness Through Employment and Housing and the HomeWork Project	3
Goals of DOL/HUD Program	3
HomeWork Design	4
III. Baseline Report and Review of Year One Progress	8
At the baseline—prior to the start of the HomeWork Project—what was the level of coordination between employment and housing services and organizations?	8
What progress has been made on providing housing and employment support for people who have disabilities and are chronically homeless?	11
What progress has been made on improving the coordination of services between employment and housing providers?	14
IV. Profiles of HomeWork Partner Organizations	24
Housing organizations	25
Employment Support and Services organizations	27
Disability counseling and rehabilitation	32
Project review and evaluation	32
V. Recommendations	34
Appendix 1: Interviews Conducted And Homework Partner Meetings Attended By Commonwealth Corporation	36
Appendix 2: Diagram of the Three Tracks in the HomeWork Project Intake Process	37

REPORT ON THE BASELINE AND YEAR ONE PROGRESS OF HOMEWORK

I. Context of the HomeWork Project

The HomeWork Project was funded by a grant from the U.S. Departments of Labor and Housing and Urban Development in October 2003 to provide housing and employment assistance to individuals with disabling conditions and who are chronically homeless. This initiative is designed to provide some of Boston's most vulnerable residents with urgently needed assistance and to provide a platform for changing the way that those services are delivered.

In the annual Homeless census conducted on December 8, 2003, 6,241 people were counted as being homeless in Boston.¹ Of these, 3,447 were men, 1,503 were women, and 1,291 were children. Past research suggests that almost half of the adults who are homeless on a single night and ten percent of all those who are homeless are likely to fit the definition of being "chronically homeless".² People are considered to be chronically homeless if they have had periods of homelessness that last for a year or longer or they have experienced repeated episodes of homelessness within the span of four years. People who are chronically homeless generally have disabilities including mental illnesses, problems with substance abuse, physical difficulties, and/or other disabling conditions.³

In the past, four distinct service communities have served most individuals who have been chronically homeless, including those that provide services in the following areas:

- Homelessness
- Housing
- Employment
- Disability counseling and rehabilitation

Each of these service communities provides essential assistance to homeless people, but they have not in the past been as integrated with one another as far as they could be. Many of those who have worked with chronically homeless individuals have found that they need multiple types of services simultaneously. Disabilities, personal and economic circumstances, low education and/or job skills combine to make it difficult for people to maintain stable housing even if it is obtained. Employment concerns may be put on the back burner while homeless individuals receive assistance from providers whose focus is on other, more urgent, areas of

¹ "*Homelessness In The City Of Boston Annual Census Report*," K. Fernandes, C. Green, J. Greene, E. Greenberg, C. Mays, and H. Nichols, prepared for the office of Mayor Thomas M. Menino, Emergency Shelter Commission, Jim Greene, Acting Director, December 8, 2003.

² U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Banking and Financial Services, Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity, H.R. 217, Homeless Housing Programs Consolidation and Flexibility Act, Testimony of Dennis P. Culhane, Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania, March 5, 1997.

³ "*A Preliminary Look at Boston's Homeless Population*," Michelle Hayes, Michelle Kahan, and Tatjana Meschede, Center for Social Policy, McCormack Institute of Public Affairs, University of Massachusetts Boston, January 2000.

concern such as housing, rehabilitation, or substance abuse counseling. Yet it can be difficult to maintain sobriety or stable housing in absence of income and employment.

The HomeWork Project coordinates services for homeless people—including employment assistance, housing support, substance abuse counseling, and mental health services—in order to provide them more seamless, integrated and comprehensive support in which their multiple needs can simultaneously be met. Central to the HomeWork initiative is the belief that these services—especially housing and employment—be provided at the initiation or very early in the service provision process. In addition, the project is designed to develop a structure through which providers can more closely coordinate or integrate their services in the future.

Overview of Baseline Review of HomeWork

This report presents an initial review of the HomeWork Project. It includes a description of the project, the organizations that participate in it, and how and to what extent they have integrated employment and housing services prior to the HomeWork Project. It will serve as the baseline from which to measure how far HomeWork has progressed toward meeting its goals and objectives during the remaining four years of the project. In addition, it documents and reviews the progress of the project after its first year in operation. Finally, the report concludes with recommendations for strengthening the HomeWork Project based on the review of how the project has been developing during the first year.

This review is based on observations made at 18 HomeWork meetings that took place between December 2003 and October 2004 as well as interviews with 12 people who work in almost all of the organizations participating in the HomeWork partnership. In September and October 2004 the evaluators reviewed notes from meetings and interviews as well as project documents. This report is based on the issues that emerged from the review of these notes as well as discussions with other participants in the HomeWork Project

In the interviews, people working on the project expressed their excitement about the project and their belief that it would provide important services to chronically homeless people. HomeWork is an important project and we hope that this review contributes to its early development as a flexible and committed coalition of programs partnered together to provide early and more integrated employment and housing assistance to people who need these services urgently.

II. Background on Ending Chronic Homelessness Through Employment and Housing and the HomeWork Project

HomeWork—a grant projected to be funded for five years—is designed to provide full housing and employment support to twenty chronically homeless individuals in Boston and employment services and housing search assistance to twenty additional people. Participants will receive:

- Subsidized housing—supported by Shelter Plus Care.
- Housing support—including a counselor who will help clients overcome barriers to maintaining stable housing.
- Employment services—which may include transitional employment, job counseling, job search assistance, or job matching.

As of October 15, 2004, HomeWork had enrolled seven people for housing and employment services and one additional participant for employment services only. Thirteen housing and employment slots as well as nineteen employment slots remain available. Five individuals are pending admission into the program.

Goals of DOL/HUD Grant Program

The US Departments of Labor (DOL) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issued a joint grant solicitation on July 18, 2003 called “Ending Chronic Homelessness Through Employment and Housing”. The lead agency for DOL was the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), working in cooperation with the Employment and Training Administration and the Veterans Employment and Training Service. The grants provided funding for up to four awards up to \$625,000 each to “increase and improve employment opportunities for persons who are chronically homeless.” In addition, HUD provided \$2-3 million for each award to support permanent housing for chronically homeless individuals with a disabling condition. DOL funding would be awarded for one year, renewable for up to four more years with decreased funding in years four and five. HUD funding was for three or five years, depending on the housing program used. DOL and HUD received thirty-one applications and funded five projects: Los Angeles, San Francisco, Indianapolis, Portland, and Boston.

Goals expressed in the solicitation included:

- Foster **collaboration** between employment agencies, disability-related services, and permanent housing services.
- Develop the **OSCCs infrastructure** to support more comprehensively chronically homeless people with disabilities.
- Promote **customized employment** for this population, tailoring employment services to individuals’ needs, interests, and skills.

- Provide **services** to chronically homeless individuals with disabilities so that they can live independently and self-sufficiently.

DOL/ODEP emphasized system change goals, especially integrating housing and employment services. ODEP has offered considerable technical assistance to grantees, has visited project sites, and is selecting a technical assistance provider to all grantees.

HUD, on the other hand has deemphasized system change goals and focused more on the provision of housing, according to the City's conversation with the local HUD office. The definition of chronic homelessness that is used to guide the admittance of applicants to the project is that of HUD's, and no message has been conveyed from HUD that system change or service integration are priorities. Shared goals and cooperation between HUD and DOL at the federal level have not been transmitted down to the local level. The City's HUD office was notified of the project after awards had been made and it treated the project like its other Shelter Plus Care initiatives. The local HUD office in its conversations with lead HomeWork partners did not mention the employment services in the grant. This apparent bifurcation of goals made local goals difficult to ascertain.

HomeWork Design

Original Partners

Since the Boston Private Industry Council (PIC) would be the designated DOL applicant for the city of Boston, several organizations in the city approached it about applying when the solicitation was issued. Project Place, Community Work Services, AIDS Housing, and the city's Commissioner for the Emergency Shelter Commission first approached the PIC, urging them to apply for the grant. Interested partners met over the summer of 2003 and submitted a proposal on August 20. Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) wrote the HUD application and Commonwealth Corporation wrote the DOL application. The Boston PIC coordinated the grant writing and submission process. The partners included in the proposal were:

- Boston PIC—the applicant for the DOL Cooperative Agreement.
- City of Boston Emergency Shelter Commission, Department of Neighborhood Development and Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership—the applicant and sponsor for the HUD grant.
- Massachusetts Department of Mental Health—a housing sponsor.
- Pine Street Inn and Caritas Communities— a housing sponsor.
- Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission—a provider of services to disabled participants.
- Action for Boston Community Development—a coordinator of support services.
- Bay Cove—a service provider to participants.
- JobNet—the employment assistance coordinator in a One-Stop Career Center in Boston.

- Community Work Services, Project Place, AIDS Housing, and New England Shelter for Homeless Veterans—the providers of support services and job training to participants.
- Commonwealth Corporation—the project evaluators and facilitators of the process of continuous improvement.

In the early stages of project development, HomeWork experienced a few changes in its partner organizations. These included:

- The Justice Resource Institute Housing Options Program (JRI-HOP) joined the partnership as the housing support provider for units sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) when the original provider had to drop out.
- Victory Programs joined the partnership to provide employment services for AIDS Housing clients because AIDS Housing is not a direct service agency.
- Pine Street Inn did not in the end become a housing source.
- The New England Shelter for Homeless Veterans has not recently been actively participating in the project due to staff changes.

The most important early issue in the project was identifying the primary housing sponsor. One of the key questions for the submission of the HomeWork proposal was who would sponsor the housing units and provide the necessary match. The employment service agencies considered taking on this role, but ultimately decided that being a landlord was not in their mission, nor did they want to assume the financial risk. The partners were grateful that DMH took on this role and they understood that it would entail shifting the clientele served in order to prioritize people who were eligible to receive DMH services—those with mental illnesses—over those with other disabilities for the fifteen housing slots sponsored by DMH.

Section IV of this report presents a list of the organizations currently participating in HomeWork as well as their roles in the partnership and the types of services that they typically provide. The current HomeWork partner agencies include:

- **Housing and Support**
 - Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD)
 - Caritas Communities
 - Department of Neighborhood Development, City of Boston (DND)
 - Justice Resource Institute, Housing Options Program (JRI HOP)
- **Employment Support**
 - AIDS Housing
 - Boston Private Industry Council (PIC)
 - Career Advancement Resources, Bay Cove Human Services (CAR)
 - Community Work Services (CWS)

- JobNet, One Stop Career Center
- Project Place (PP)
- Victory Programs
- **Disability counseling and rehabilitation**
 - Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH)
- **Review and Evaluation of Project**
 - Commonwealth Corporation

Goals and Objectives

In the original grant proposal, HomeWork outlined two major goals with several objectives. These goals and objectives were reconfirmed by the HomeWork Review and Continuous Improvement Committee in February 2004. They were:

Goal 1: Create a platform for systems reform in order to coordinate, integrate, improve, and document replicable effective services offered by providers in Boston's housing and employment services networks.

Objectives:

- Achieve a fully-functioning service delivery partnership to coordinate, integrate, and improve the services offered by providers in the housing and employment services networks.
- Increase the use of effective disability-related employment services throughout the housing and employment services and training networks.
- Improve the capacity of the One-Stop Career Centers in Boston to service chronically homeless citizens with a disabling condition.
- Identify and document effective practices and the factors that facilitated them in the areas of housing and employment services with replication potential.
- Leverage other funds and resources that can be used to serve the chronically homeless population.

Goal 2: Secure and maintain safe housing, employment, and opportunities to enhance the levels of self-sufficiency and self-determination for the target population of chronically homeless citizens with a disabling condition.

Objectives:

- Reach out to and recruit 40 or more chronically homeless citizens with a disabling condition who are interested in engaging in employment and housing services for participation in the project.
- Complete the intake and self-selection process for project recruits with an interest in employment and housing services.
- Provide assessment, counseling (including benefits counseling and income management), and case management services to project participants.
- Provide permanent housing through a Shelter Plus Care model for all project participants.
- Refer participants to medical, mental health and substance abuse treatments, as required.
- Increase the marketable skill levels of 40 chronically homeless citizens: Teach life skills to project participants; Refer participants to/or place participants in basic literacy, job training, and vocational rehabilitation programs, as needed.

III. Baseline Report and Review of Year One Progress

The three main purposes for conducting this baseline review of HomeWork are to provide a baseline with which to compare the accomplishments of the project as it progresses, document the decisions made and the service delivery systems put into place in the early stages of the project, and make recommendations based on this review to support the development of the HomeWork Project. To this end, we analyzed notes taken at partner meetings and during interviews with twelve of the project partners (listed in Appendix 1).

In this section of the report, we discuss the baseline level of service integration among partner organizations and we review the progress that has been made in the first year of the project. The themes of the review are based on the two main goals of HomeWork—providing customized and integrated housing and employment services to people with disabilities who are chronically homeless and improving the coordination of services between employment and housing providers. The key questions that guided the review were:

1. At the baseline—prior to the start of the HomeWork Project—what was the level of coordination between employment and housing services and organizations?
2. What progress has been made on providing housing and employment support for forty people who have disabling conditions and are chronically homeless?
3. What progress has been made on improving the coordination of services between employment and housing providers?

At the baseline—prior to the start of the HomeWork Project—what was the level of coordination between employment and housing services and organizations?

Knowledge of and coordination among partner organizations prior to HomeWork

A primary goal of the Ending Chronic Homelessness through Employment and Housing and HomeWork is to better coordinate and integrate the services offered by providers in the disability, rehabilitation, housing, homelessness, and employment service networks. In order to establish a baseline of how integrated these service networks have been in Boston, we asked the partners about their level of knowledge of and interaction or integration with other organizations in the partnership prior to the start of HomeWork.

The results were mixed. Some of the employment and housing partners had significant knowledge about others' services and had cooperated with them in the past. Shelter Plus Care (SPC) and ABCD's Supportive Housing Program (SHP), for instance, include employment services. This has provided the opportunity in the past for coordination between housing and employment assistance. SHP grants include job developers and HUD includes in its goals for clients the attainment of income and skills. Thus, the importance of job readiness is recognized in the city's housing agenda. In addition, the continuum of care model in the city of Boston

provides for coordination between employment service agencies and supported housing, where clients are smoothly referred to housing services.

However, many of the partners said that they had no knowledge of others agencies' services. Five of the agencies knew little or nothing about the others' services and had no interaction with them. In some cases, referrals were made in either direction without a detailed understanding of what the others' services were, real connections, or a clear follow up plan. An agency that had linked employment and housing services remarked that this connection occurred only at the service level, and that HomeWork makes the collaboration more explicit and involves a higher level of involvement.

Problems caused by lack of integration

The lack of integration causes serious problems for clients who seek both employment and housing. The services are interdependent—income from employment is often needed to obtain and retain housing; and having an address and stable shelter is crucial for employment. Many agencies said that it is a problem that the current system does not integrate housing and employment. For homeless clients served by housing agencies, the need of shelter tends to take priority, putting employment searches on the back burner. However, once shelter is secured, income is needed to sustain it over time, and employment is then an immediate unaddressed need. Similarly, it is extremely difficult for homeless clients to take advantage of employment services from providers such as One Stop Career Centers (OSCCs) when their basic shelter needs are compromised. For those completing substance abuse treatment, a job is expected by the end of treatment, so much of the clients' and case managers' energy is focused on securing a job. However, as treatment is ending, securing housing is difficult because of waiting lists; thus, it is important to start both the housing and job searches simultaneously.

Integrating housing and employment assistance—as well as other forms of aid such as substance abuse treatment and mental health service—will allow clients to simultaneously address multiple barriers in their lives and put into place a structure of support that will provide more stability than has been possible in the past. In the past, clients might have worked with one agency at a time, or met with multiple counselors, traveling around the city to keep appointments and switch to new programs as their focus shifted from securing housing to gaining employment, etc. In the HomeWork Project, a single coordinated case management team will support clients, as they simultaneously deal with multiple issues in their lives. Many of the partners in HomeWork are excited about the project because they see the promise of coupling employment and housing services as well as other forms of assistance.

Perception of the One-Stop Career Centers capacity for providing employment services to people with disabling conditions who are chronically homeless prior to HomeWork

One of the goals of the DOL/HUD Ending Chronic Homelessness Through Employment and Housing and the HomeWork Project locally is to improve the capacity of the OSCCs to service the chronically homeless. One of the tasks of the evaluators is to measure and document

how these goals are met during and after the project. In this section of the report we provide a baseline of partners' interactions with and impressions of Boston's OSCCs' and their work with chronically homeless individuals with disabling conditions prior to the start of the HomeWork Project.

Interviews with HomeWork partners indicated a range of perceptions about how the OSCCs have worked with homeless clients with disabilities in the past—especially those with mental illnesses. Some partners had no knowledge of the OSCCs. Others expressed a lack of confidence in the ability of OSCCs to work this population. Still others told of positive interactions their clients or staff members had with a specific OSCC. They thought that OSCC staff had done a good job of working with clients and providing individualized employment support to them.

Many of the employment agencies did, however, have previous interactions with OSCCs in the past. They felt that OSCCs were not designed to work with homeless clients or those with disabilities. They explained that clients have so many barriers already in their lives that it makes it difficult for them to effectively use the resources at the OSCCs. They often lack the skills, confidence, and organizational abilities needed to navigate the centers' resources and services independently or with a modest amount of help. The employment agencies felt that they have in the past needed to work with clients for a significant period of time before they were ready to use the OSCCs.

Another problem described was that many chronically homeless clients with disabilities needed personal attention and follow-through in order to maintain their contact with a service provider. Case managers at the employment agencies, for instance, seek contact with clients if they miss an appointment. This is seen as a needed service for many chronically homeless individuals. However, OSCCs are not equipped to provide such time intensive services to many clients.

Other partners from agencies that work with people with mental illness thought that in the past some mentally ill clients have felt stigmatized when trying to use the resources at the OSCCs. It is important to note, however, that this issue is complicated. On one hand, clients have reported in the past that they have approached an OSCC and been summarily referred back to a rehabilitation program or to Employment Connections—a program specializing in working with people with disabilities. This has made them feel like staff was stigmatizing them. On the other hand, others who work with people with mental illnesses described how the fear of being stigmatized can be a serious issue to clients and that avoiding being stigmatized was a priority to them. It is impossible to know from the interviews conducted for this review how much of the descriptions of clients feeling stigmatized could be attributed to reactions they received at the OSCCs and how much to the clients' decisions made in the effort to avoid risking being stigmatized. Nevertheless, it is important to report this perception, because it is one aspect of the way that the OSCCs have been perceived in the past.

One housing partner said that in their experience, OSCC staff had been very helpful, and they said that a particular OSCC staff member helped to give their clients hope. They explained that the OSCC staff came to their agency to explain employment services to clients. It remains

difficult, however, for some clients to follow through on employment goals for many reasons. These can include being very ill, having recurring episodes of substance abuse, and fear of losing Supplemental Security Income. It can be overwhelming for people with mental illnesses to think about or start employment. Dealing with the challenges involved—such as needing to find transportation—can be overwhelming. Respondents made it clear that for many chronically homeless people with mental illnesses, the provision of employment assistance is exacting, time intensive, and important.

In sum, the OSCCs were underutilized by most other service providers and their clients in the past because they did not know about them, they did not feel welcome, or their services and resources were deemed to not suit the needs and abilities of the clients with disabilities who were chronically homeless. At least one provider, however, found the services to be appropriate and supportive. By and large, chronically homeless clients have largely not accessed employment services at the OSCCs.

OSCCs are designed to provide services for people ready to enter mainstream workplaces. They often refer people who need more intensive services to other agencies for assistance. Homeless clients are treated like everyone else—in the past there have been few programs specifically designed for them, with the exception of Employment Connections. Therefore, these clients often did not complete services at OSCCs, as they require more intensive and specialized services to succeed. In the future, it will be important to evaluate how much this changes after involvement with the HomeWork Project.

What progress has been made on providing housing and employment support for people who have disabilities and are chronically homeless?

“This is the first time I have something to look forward to.”

The most demonstrable accomplishment to date of the HomeWork Project has been the enrollment of customers into the program and their receipt of housing as well as housing and employment support. The HomeWork Project was funded October 1, 2003 and partner meetings began in December 2003. Due to reasons explained in the discussion below, the intake process development for the project was slow. The first participant was accepted into HomeWork in June 2004. To date, seven participants have received employment services and housing and one additional participant has received employment services only.

Intake Process

The development of the intake process into HomeWork was complicated and slow. This was due to changes in the organizations participating in the project, changes in personnel within organizations over the course of the year, and difficulties in clarifying and coordinating major eligibility requirements across agencies. These are discussed below. It should be noted that the slow progress in the development of the intake process is not necessarily attributable to failures

in the project. Several of the partners interviewed pointed out that they did not think that the start-up process has been any bumpier for HomeWork than any other new project that they have been part of.

The HomeWork partnership includes more than a dozen agencies each with its own set of services, regulations, and eligibility requirements. Some programs, such as the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) and Shelter Plus Care (SPC) have well-established eligibility requirements and procedures that could not be altered for the purposes of HomeWork. Therefore, the HomeWork Project had to develop an intake process that could knit together these requirements and procedures in a way that was as seamless as possible for clients and as efficient and inclusive as possible for participating organizations. Given the large number of personnel and organizations involved, the fact that the intake process is now in place and running smoothly is a commendable accomplishment. The description below provides an illustration of the regulations and eligibility requirements that needed to be coordinated in order for the intake process to work smoothly.

The process through which customers apply for and receive services in the HomeWork Project was refined throughout the spring and summer of 2004. A model of the current version is presented in Appendix 2. There are twenty slots available for full housing and employment support. In addition, there are twenty slots available for full employment support and *housing search* assistance. All of the slots are reserved for those who are eligible for Shelter Plus Care funding—the chronically homeless. In addition, fifteen of these twenty slots are sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH), and are consequently reserved for customers who have been determined by DMH to be eligible to receive their services. The remaining five slots are open to anyone who is chronically homeless and who motivated to participate in one of the employment support programs. The three types of sponsorship necessitated having three tracks in the intake process, which are described below.

DMH track. In the DMH track, customers are referred to HomeWork directly by DMH caseworkers, or employment agencies refer clients to DMH for an expedited eligibility determination. If they are deemed to be DMH-eligible they proceed down that intake track. If not, they are then referred to the ABCD track. It is important to note that DMH treatment teams may not recommend a potential applicant to the HomeWork Project because they determine that the client can be better served in another program. In other words, being DMH-eligible does not guarantee that a person will be referred to the HomeWork Project.

If DMH recommends a client to HomeWork, a caseworker compiles information for the HomeWork application form and passes it on to the Housing Options Program of the Justice Resource Institute (JRI HOP), which is managing the housing support services for those in DMH slots. JRI HOP helps to complete the application and collects information on its own in order to determine if they can provide the types of supports that the customer needs, and if the customer will be a good fit with the JRI HOP program. They also work with the client and the Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership (MBHP) to determine if the applicant is eligible to receive SPC funding. The two key aspects of this part of the process are (1) being able to document that the applicant has been homeless for one year or has had at least five spells of homelessness in the past two years, and (2) determining that the applicant has no open warrants

or precluding criminal record issues that would preclude him or her from receiving housing. If they are deemed eligible for housing, their application passes on to the intake committee.

ABCD track. Employment organizations participating in HomeWork refer clients they think are appropriate for the HomeWork program to ABCD for the initial screening. ABCD works with applicants to determine if they are eligible for the program—if they are chronically homeless and have a disabling condition—whether they are motivated to take part in one of the available employment support programs, if they have any precluding criminal record issues, and if there is a good fit between the client and the services that ABCD provides. If the applicant is determined to be eligible and agrees to work with ABCD, their application is passed on to the intake committee to be considered by the employment partners.

Employment-only track. People in the employment-only track can be referred by any of the participating organizations and they apply directly to the intake committee. Caseworkers in organizations participating in HomeWork help them secure and complete the application and usher it through the intake process.

Intake Committee. The intake committee is made up of representatives from all of the participating employment agencies, the two housing support agencies, as well as representatives from the OSCC, DMH, the PIC, and Commonwealth Corporation. The intake committee determines whether each applicant is motivated to take part in employment or job training services and is a good fit with one of the available employment support programs.

Once the intake committee determines that the applicant is appropriate for participation in the HomeWork Project, he or she is invited to meet with representatives from the employment partners. After an agreement has been signed between an applicant and an employment support program, the applicant is admitted into the project and is placed in housing. JRI and ABCD work with individual customers to find housing, help them sort out and obtain financial aid and other services needed.

Speed of the development and activation of the intake process

“We are learning as we go.”

The intake process is complicated, and it has taken a long time for it to be refined and clearly understood by all of the participants. The stringent regulations governing the eligibility requirements for receiving SPC funding as well as DMH services require that most of the intake process take place privately within large agencies (DMH and MBHP) rather than in the intake committee with all of the partner organizations participating. Thus, there is less collaboration and sharing of information than there would be if the process were more open.

In addition, the state and federal programs that are included in the partnership—DMH, SPC, and MBHP—have limited latitude to alter their requirements and processes. Thus, the onus is on the smaller, private agencies to be more flexible and accommodating. Also, the amount of true service-integration that can occur is limited if the larger agencies cannot be

flexible and allow for changes in their policies and practices that support integration with other agencies. If integration is not possible, partners may need to do more coordination and information sharing across organizations than actual service integration. The amount of service integration that occurs will be important to monitor throughout the course of the next year as the case management procedures for HomeWork clients are developed.

Virtually all of the organizational partners in the HomeWork Project expressed frustration at the slow pace with which the intake process was developed, refined, and executed. Initially, the pace was slow because it took some time to find an organization to provide housing support services to HomeWork clients in the housing slots funded by the Department of Mental Health after one agency withdrew from the program. Ultimately, JRI HOP stepped in to provide housing support for those in the DMH-sponsored housing slots. The turnover caused a moderate slow-down of progress at the onset of the project, but JRI HOP was swift at getting up to speed with the developing intake process.

This example highlights how important it is for the HomeWork Project to be flexible and able to rapidly respond to changes in funding, regulations, and shifting membership in the project. These qualities appear to be important to maintaining the stability of the program. This example also highlights how well the project has responded to this type of challenge. Partners and program coordinators have actively and successfully sought to obtain and maintain basic stability in the membership of organizational participants. They have also responded to changes in expectations and eligibility requirements with flexibility and decisiveness.

What progress has been made on improving the coordination of services between employment and housing providers?

“Sixteen agencies—and we’re still speaking.”

The second main goal of HomeWork is to integrate housing and employment assistance more than they have been in the past so that clients experience a more seamless delivery of services. The first year’s progress toward meeting this goal is mixed, though it is still too early in the project to thoroughly definitively evaluate. On the one hand, the development of the intake process and the enrollment of customers into the project have been slow and the form that the intake process has taken includes limited cross-organization integration due to the inflexible nature of the eligibility requirements of the funding agencies and programs. On the other hand, the partnership among groups is stable, knowledge across groups is growing, the commitment to making a success of the initiative is unflagging, a project and employment coordinator were each recently hired, and there are several customers who are now receiving coordinated housing and employment services through the project.

Six prominent aspects of the development of coordination across organizations were evident in the interviews and observations from meetings:

- The degree to which goals for clients and service integration are shared.

- The impact of having many organizational partners with diverse services, funding structures, and eligibility requirements.
- The impact of changes in organizations and personnel involvement over the year.
- The role of coordination and leadership.
- Changes within participating groups' knowledge of each other's services.
- The strength of commitment to work together to provide more and better services to HomeWork clients.

Goals of partners in the HomeWork Project

“The ultimate goal is really to help people.”

In order for the organizations involved in HomeWork to effectively integrate their services to chronically homeless people, they need to have well-articulated shared goals for both the customers and for the coordination between groups. In our interviews with HomeWork partners, we investigated the extent to which the participants in the HomeWork Project have goals for both the customers and the participant organizations that are consistent with each other. To this end, we asked each HomeWork partner what their goals are for the project, and how they defined success for participant organizations and HomeWork customers. Their responses suggest that their general goals are similar to each other but their definitions of success—particularly for customers—vary considerably.

Goals for coordinating services across organizations. Discussion in the interviews with participants from various participating organizations made it clear that overall, most of those working within the HomeWork Project share similar long-term organizational goals. These include:

- Increase the amount, the quality, and the coordination between long-term support services to people who are chronically homeless and disabled.
- Increase the capacity of the OSCCs and enhance their services to customers who are chronically homeless and disabled.
- More closely coordinate services across organizations providing social services, housing, and employment.

Increase seamless and coordinated long-term support services. Most of the providers interviewed hoped that the HomeWork Project would be a model for providing more seamless, long-term, individualized support services to people who are chronically homeless and who have

mental illnesses or other disabilities. To this end, people discussed the importance of good case management and coordination between service providers. One provider explained that the key was keeping in “constant contact” without seeming to be “mother hens.” Others described the importance of personal connections and follow-through with clients in order to keep them involved and progressing in the project.

Increase the capacity of the One Stop Career Centers. Another important organizational goal expressed by participants is for the HomeWork Project to increase the capacity of One Stop Career Centers to work with chronically homeless customers with disabling conditions of all kinds and to improve the quality of services as well. In particular, some would like to see the One Stop Career Centers make both people with mental illnesses and their caseworkers more familiar with their services and more comfortable accessing them. This is discussed further below.

More closely coordinate services across organizations. Participants universally pointed out how important it was for all of the organizations to know what each other’s services were. Getting to know each organization thoroughly and passing that knowledge down within each organization through staff and caseworkers was repeatedly described as a key benefit of HomeWork.

In addition, five of the respondents asserted that it was important for the HomeWork Project to change the way that that direct care staff think of service provision so that services are more integrated and seamless. Two partners explained that currently many organizations tend to specialize in a few services, or they provide sequential services. A client seeking multiple services would either have to wait for some of them, or shuffle between agencies to get their full range of needs met. For instance, a person might be homeless, unemployed, and experiencing an acute bout with a mental illness. Their caseworker would likely focus on getting them medical care and/or shelter as priorities. Keeping them connected to employers, job training programs, or classes might take a distant backseat to the emergent concerns. One of the hopes expressed for HomeWork is that employment and long-term housing services be provided in tandem with other services in the interest of providing stable, long-term, and more effective rehabilitation as well as individualized housing and employment support.

Some of the providers, however, felt that their agencies already provided a large range of services, and they were more interested in coordinating services across groups rather than strictly trying to work together. For instance, linking direct-care staff across agencies to more effectively keep in contact with individual clients, knowing who to call when something comes up, and who to contact when clients return for services after a hiatus. Several participants expressed the desire as well to make seamless connections between different services—such as housing support and employment—so that clients will always know how to access support when they want it without experiencing cumbersome bureaucracy or frustrating complications.

Goals for HomeWork Customers. For the most part, partner agencies expressed goals for HomeWork customers that were generally similar, but that varied in terms of how extensive, independent, and stable their employment activities could be expected to be. All of the providers interviewed emphasized their commitment to working with people who are chronically homeless

with disabling conditions, and they expressed the desire either implicitly or explicitly to increase the quality and the amount of support services that they receive—especially in the area of employment. Exactly what they hoped the customers to achieve, however, varied substantially across providers. For the most part, most of the providers talked about long-term goals for clients such as:

- Living independently.
- Finding competitive employment.
- Independently utilizing the OSCCs to find employment.
- Getting a GED or increasing their education and/or job skills.
- Maintaining long-term sobriety.

A few of the participants, however—primarily those accustomed to working with clients who have mental illnesses and substance abuse problems—focused more on the short-term goals that could in their view be achieved within the scope of the HomeWork Project. Most of them believed that it is unrealistic to expect that all customers would find and maintain independent, competitive employment within the term of the project. In addition, they emphasized that the measure of success for HomeWork customers will vary depending on the particular circumstances, needs, strengths, and challenges that each face.

Success for some customers might be maintaining their housing and employment or job training for a few weeks. One interviewee in particular described how people with serious mental illnesses and/or problems with substance abuse often take small steps forward accompanied by setbacks and recovery. They emphasized that flexibility in expectations has to be built into HomeWork in order to be able to appreciate how much progress clients make as well as to avoid erecting obstacles to their success by creating unrealistic expectations that are too overwhelming.

The customers coming into the HomeWork Project have very diverse economic, educational, and cultural backgrounds as well as differing disabilities, challenges, and strengths. Some of the providers explained that many people who are chronically homeless are not ready to move into most employment services. They will need more direct, individualized support than is often available in the OSCCs and other supported employment programs.

For some of the customers, full-time employment may not be an ideal goal, because they have too many challenges and needs. For these clients, the ideal definition of success might be a part-time job that could provide them extra money and the opportunity to be involved in the community rather than a full-time job that could be overwhelming and ultimately unhealthy or impossible to maintain. On the other hand, some HomeWork customers likely will be ready to participate in a job-training program or supported employment with minimal support. For one provider, the measure of failure was more universal across clients than the measure of success—the HomeWork Project would fail if a customer gave up before really trying employment.

In summary, partners interviewed expressed similar long-term goals for HomeWork customers. Their expectations for how to define of the success of those goals, however, diverged

substantially. Some people—in particular those from employment agencies—had high expectations for people to find and maintain independent housing and employment with a limited amount of support. Others—particularly those who work primarily with people with serious mental illnesses—had much lower expectations for customers in the short-term, and they expected that the measure of success to vary great deal across people depending on their particular circumstances, challenges, and backgrounds.

It will be important in the next phase of the project for the HomeWork participants to discuss and re-align their goals and success measures for customers in order to ensure that all partners are working towards the same end.

Impact of having many partners with diverse services and differing eligibility requirements

The development of the HomeWork intake process necessitated the coordination of eligibility determination processes and regulations across many agencies. In particular, SPC and the DMH each had a well-established set of eligibility requirements that could not be altered. Because of this, the intake process into HomeWork could not be completely integrated across groups. Instead, a complex series of intake processes had to be coordinated.

Before they could be coordinated, however, all of the partners, especially those making referrals of applicants to the program had to become familiar with each other's eligibility requirements, internal enrollment procedures, and service limitations. This process had three results. First, it slowed the initial enrollment of clients into HomeWork down because the participating groups first had to clarify the program requirements and develop an intake process that was fair and seamless for clients. Second, it necessitated the sharing of knowledge between groups about each other's resources, limitations, and requirements. Third, it moved much of the momentum of the intake process away from the main intake committee in which all of the partners participated to the relative privacy of DMH and the housing partners—ABCD, JRI, and MBHP. This is because the most time-consuming and essential parts of the intake process involved determining whether applicants were eligible for DMH and/or SPC services. HomeWork tried as much as possible to streamline the various parts of the intake process to make them palatable to applicants and accessible to partner agencies. It is a testimony to the flexibility and persistence of the employment partner agencies in the project that the development of the intake process has been as smooth and ultimately productive as it was. All of the HomeWork agencies have been active and flexible in trying to work efficiently through the incipient project development.

Changes in organizations and personnel involvement over the year

One of the issues that was frustrating to many people working in the HomeWork partnership—especially in the first six months of the project—was the difficulty in maintaining continuity in personnel, information, and decisions over time and across meetings. Overall, many partners attributed this to three sets of issues:

1. Changes in participating organizations.
2. Changes in personnel within participating organizations over time.
3. Inconsistent attendance at meetings on the part of participating organizations.
4. The need for more coordination within the project.

Changes in participating organizations. Over the course of the early months of the HomeWork Project, a few of the original participating organizations left the program and were replaced by others. This necessitated the updating of information while agencies new to HomeWork became familiar with the project. Many of the information updates seemed to be provided primarily within meetings themselves rather than outside of the meetings. Thus discussions in meetings were sometimes duplicated.

Changes in personnel within participating organizations over time. Given the large number of organizations involved, there was surprising consistency across meetings in terms of which organizations and people remained involved over time. Even so, over the course of the year, many of the organizations experienced staff changes or assigned a new staff person to the project. Because the intake process is so complicated and the project encompasses so many groups with diverse approaches and services, the numerous staff and organizational changes slowed the process down over time.

Inconsistent attendance at meetings. In addition to the turnover in groups and staff involved with the Project, there has been inconsistent attendance at HomeWork meetings. Overall, given the large number of groups and people involved, there has been impressive commitment shown to maintaining regular attendance at meetings for most of the groups involved. At various times, however, key HomeWork members have been missing from meetings in which their input was needed to clarify processes or make decisions, causing delays in decision-making and implementation of plans.

One example of this problem is that early in the development of the intake process there was confusion among partners about who was eligible for the HomeWork Project. Many people were not fully clear on what the official SPC definition of being “chronically homeless” was. Part of the problem was that there was no one representing MBHP or the housing-support groups present in some of the early meetings planning the intake process. A lot of time was spent with the non-housing HomeWork partners trying to discern what the SPC rules were without complete information. Once the housing experts began attending meetings, the issues and questions were quickly put to rest and the design of the intake process proceeded more smoothly.

In the meantime, however, many meeting discussions and topics were duplicated as people struggled to untangle the web of rules and regulations involved with the different state, federal, and city agencies involved. In addition, one group was actively recruiting clients from their agency throughout this process based on mistaken beliefs about who would qualify for SPC funding. This process caused some frustration within the organization when HomeWork partners had to go back to their staff with revised definitions of who could apply to the program.

It is unlikely that either of these phenomena could have been completely avoided given the complexity of the HomeWork Project and the large number of people and organizations

involved. What would likely have made a difference, however, would have been having a more active system for coordinating and leading the group throughout the early months of the HomeWork Project (discussed below). It is also important to note as well that though there have been a few periods of frustration and slow progress, there have also been many periods of well-attended meetings and advancement. In addition, meeting attendance has improved over time, as has the communication of minutes and other information between meetings. Finally, the hiring of full-time coordinators designated to the HomeWork project exclusively should facilitate stability and continuity across groups and meetings over time.

Slow development of integrated case-management structure. Another example of inconsistent meeting attendance occurred within the Case Management Committee. This committee has met twice to discuss the case management structure for HomeWork clients. At these meetings, however, the agencies coordinating housing and employment were not in attendance, leaving many key, unaddressed issues—such as clarifying the roles of each agency, developing common intake procedures, and solidifying case management procedures for clients. The original grant proposal outlines a case management process involving the employment coordinator, housing coordinator, and the customer’s sponsoring agency, yet no formal case management system has been developed yet.

As with the earlier two issues, it is unrealistic to expect that every group will have perfect attendance at every meeting, given the large number of people and groups involved. Therefore, it is essential that there is a project coordinator who provides continuity across and between meetings so that information is not duplicated or lost due to temporary changes in or absence of personnel. It is especially important for the coordinator to make sure that partners attend meetings in which they have key information that is relevant to discussions and decisions that need to take place.

Influence of coordination and leadership

HomeWork partners had mixed things to say about the coordination of the project. Many people appreciated the coordinators’ strong commitment to the project, their consistent involvement, the work that they have done to keep the project moving forward and their openness to shared decision-making between the participating organizations. Several partners also expressed the need for more coordination among groups and between meetings.

Meeting notes and partner interviews suggest that the process of designing and implementing the intake process would have been expedited in the early stages by having a project staff person who took initiative in several ways, including:

- Gathering thorough and definitive information about each agency’s regulations and eligibility requirements and communicating them to all participating groups between meetings so that people came to meetings prepared to make decisions and ask informed questions rather than spend time discussing changes to be made in eligibility requirements that they had no control over.

- Providing information about each participating organization including any rules and regulations that affect the HomeWork Project, contact information, and descriptions of services provided so that all partners can learn about what each other has to offer to draw on in the future.
- Keeping in personal contact with partners in between meetings—especially those who missed a meeting—to keep everyone up to date and make sure that people with key information attend the meetings they need to participate in.
- Providing meeting minutes to all partners in a timely fashion. This practice is currently being done in the project and it is informative and appreciated.

The accomplishment of these goals would have been facilitated by the early hiring of a designated employment coordinator as called for in the original grant and HomeWork plan. Unfortunately, it took about a year for the staff person to be hired due to reported bureaucratic slowdowns within the agency that runs the OSCCs. This left the project coordination to two HomeWork partners who also had other responsibilities within their own agencies. Recently a full-time employment coordinator for HomeWork has been hired at the OSCC and in addition a project coordinator has also been hired by the PIC. This will facilitate the progress of the enrollment of clients into the project as well as the development of the case management structure and the coordination between groups.

On the positive side, the administrative style of the HomeWork Project has resulted in most of the participating organizations taking an active role in discussions and negotiations around the development of the intake process. The maintenance of partner participation in the project as a whole has been strong and stable. The coordinators have also been disseminating information about HomeWork to other agencies that work with the chronically homeless. In addition, the coordination of the program has become more consistent over time.

Change within participating groups' knowledge of each other's services

Several of the participants referred to changes that they hoped would occur or that they saw happening within their own organizations as a result of participation in the HomeWork Project. One of the respondents commented that they were excited about the HomeWork Project because it would change the way that people who work with clients in their organization prioritized employment and education. In the respondent's opinion in the past, many direct-care workers put employment off for their clients as they dealt with more urgent problems such as the need for shelter and medical care. Making housing inextricably linked with employment as the HomeWork Project does encourages staff to keep employment in the forefront. The respondent thought that this would be good for clients economically and socially.

In the discussions and descriptions of many of the respondents, there was evidence that being exposed and connected to each other's organizations and services was affecting the way

that they conceptualized employment and housing support for clients. For instance, an employment-oriented agency described adding case-management or psychological services to their own program in order to provide more support to potential HomeWork customers who might have more challenges to face than their usual clients. While these are incipient observations drawn from the dawn of the venture, they suggest that the goal of organizations learning more about each other's services and programs is already being acted on.

Other ways that the HomeWork project is affecting participant agencies are:

- It provides opportunities for all of the participating agencies to learn in detail what each other's services and philosophies are. The amount of knowledge that has been shared up to this point, however, is somewhat limited and varies across partners. Many of the participants expressed the desire to get to know the other agencies much better so that they can draw on their services and knowledge bases in the future.
- It has caused some agencies to stretch the type of services offered in order to provide the support needed by HomeWork clients.
- It has increased the capacity of agencies by augmenting the services provided to clients and/or increasing the number of people who can receive services through the increase in resources.

Strength of commitment to work together to provide more and better services to HomeWork clients

Virtually all of the partners interviewed were very enthusiastic about the HomeWork Project. They all thought that it had the potential to provide much-needed services to people who need them and to bring diverse service communities together in such a way as to expand the types of assistance provided and pool them together more efficiently and seamlessly. Specific positive attributes of the project that people discussed in their interviews included:

- It has a strong spirit of collaboration.
- There is an impressive willingness to invest time and resources on the part of participating organizations.
- Many of the participating agencies have begun to make small changes within their programs to accommodate the HomeWork Project and in response to participating in it.
- The start-up process has not been unusually bumpy in many people's opinion—which is significant given the large number and diversity of the groups involved.

- Despite a few complications, the process of coordinating intake procedures across programs with different funding and regulatory structures, diverse missions, and differing types of services has been relatively smooth.
- The groups came together initially remarkably smoothly and quickly under the leadership of the PIC.
- Almost all of the partners noted that they were already learning rapidly about each other's agencies and services, though several expressed the desire to learn more.

IV. Profiles of HomeWork Partner Organizations

The HomeWork Project consists of is a complex partnership between four of the main service communities providing assistance to chronically homeless people with disabilities:

- Homelessness
- Housing
- Employment
- Disability counseling and rehabilitation

The organizations involved in HomeWork are profiled below, presented in accordance with the role that they play in the project. Each organization has a strong history of providing service to the Metropolitan Boston Community. They have joined together to use their expertise in these areas to develop more coordination across service communities in order to expand the assistance provided as well as to develop a model of more strongly integrated services for the future. The organizations profiled below are:

- Housing and Support
 - Action for Boston Community Development
 - Caritas Communities
 - Department of Neighborhood Development, City of Boston
 - Justice Resource Institute, Housing Options Program
- Employment Support
 - AIDS Housing
 - Boston Private Industry Council
 - Career Advancement Resources, Bay Cove Human Services
 - Community Work Services
 - JobNet, One Stop Career Center
 - Project Place
 - Victory Programs
- Disability counseling and rehabilitation
 - Massachusetts Department of Mental Health
- Review and Evaluation of Project
 - Commonwealth Corporation

Housing and Homelessness Organizations

Action for Boston Community Development

Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) has been an anti-poverty agency supporting “self-help for low-income people and neighborhoods”⁴ since 1962. It is a private, non-profit agency providing services for low-income people in diverse programs, including:

- Job-training and career development.
- Housing support and homeless services.
- Youth programs.
- A two-year college (Urban College).
- Head Start and childcare.
- An independent living centers for people with disabilities.
- Health services.
- Fuel assistance.
- Elder services.

With an annual budget that was over \$1 million in FY 2002, ABCD is reported to be one of the largest independent non-profit human services operating in New England. More than half of its funding (58%) came from the federal government, 33% from state government, and the rest from Boston and private grants and contracts. ABCD reports that annually it serves over 100,000 people.

Housing Services. The Supportive Housing Program (SHP) of ABCD’s housing services is involved with the HomeWork Project. Its mission is to aid homeless individuals and families to find affordable permanent housing as well as provide tenant/landlord stabilization assistance. In HomeWork, ABCD places clients in single room occupancy housing, managed by Caritas Communities

In addition to SHP, ABCD incorporates many other housing-related services including:

- Providing financial support for those needing rental assistance.
- Finding permanent housing for homeless families and those at risk of homelessness.
- Offering Workshops and assistance for Homebuyers.
- Providing information, mediation, support, and education for renters, homeowners, and landlords.
- Providing emergency assistance to women and families at risk of domestic violence.

Employment Services. ABCD’s Career Development Division offers several types of job training, career support, and education programs to adults. Its services include a resource center for job-seekers and employers looking for workers, computer labs and other job-training

⁴ About ABCD, <http://www.bostonabcd.org/about.htm>. 2004, p. 1. The information this profile was found on this website or provided by ABCD staff.

resources and programs, an English for Employment program, literacy programs, college preparatory support, and a Child Care Career services. Some of these programs are run in conjunction with JobNet, a One-Stop Career Center. Within the HomeWork Project, however, ABCD's role is primarily providing housing support.

Department of Neighborhood Development, City of Boston

The Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) was a required partner for the DOL/HUD Ending Chronic Homelessness grant, as they are the Shelter Plus Care (SPC) agency for the city of Boston. DND became involved in HomeWork during the grant submission process. They were the eligible applicant for the HUD funds, and the Commissioner for the Emergency Shelter Commission advocated for Boston to apply for the grant to bring the additional resources to the City.

DND provides comprehensive housing and community development services for City residents including:

- Development and preservation of affordable housing.
- Homeownership development, building new homes for income-eligible first-time homebuyers.
- Rental development, building apartments for low- and moderate-income residents.
- Rental preservation, providing loans to preserve affordable rental units.
- Homeless and AIDS Housing program, administering the McKinney Grant funds from HUD for the Supportive Housing, Shelter Plus Care, and Emergency Shelter Grants programs.
- Grassroots program, providing technical assistance and funding for building community gardens and other neighborhood open spaces.
- Boston Home Center, providing information, education, and financial assistance for first-time homebuyers.
- Homeowner services, providing financial assistance for home repairs, purchase and renovation of abandoned property, and help with de-leading homes.
- Economic Development, including neighborhood business district revitalization (Main Streets), commercial real estate development and technical assistance.
- Management of city-owned tax foreclosed property.
- Funding of a wide range of social service programs for youth, senior citizens and others through the City's office of Jobs and Community Services.

DND operates Boston's Continuum of Care services for homeless individuals and families. DND's annual budget in FY2005 is \$100 million, with 94% coming from federal sources. DND includes 190 staff members. Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership (MBHP) is the housing sponsor for DND.⁵

⁵ Information for DND profile provided by DND staff member and DND Annual Report Fiscal Year 2002.

Justice Resource Institute, Housing Options Program

Justice Resource Institute (JRI) is a large, non-profit human services organization that has been operating in Massachusetts since 1973. JRI provides rehabilitation and support services for children and adults who have learning, emotional, or physical disabilities.⁶ Its programs include:

- Housing support and assisted living programs.
- A mental health clinic.
- A health center.
- Court and probation consultation.
- Outreach to youth on the streets.
- Residential programs for people with mental illnesses, developmental disabilities, and behaviorally problems.
- Services for adults with developmental disabilities.

The Housing Options Program (HOP) is one of the many programs run by JRI that provide housing support and assistance to people who are low income, have disabilities or severe mental illnesses. It is funded by the Massachusetts Departments of Public Health, Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Housing and Community Development, and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. HOP specializes in providing services to about 310 people with mental illnesses, head injuries, problems with substance abuse, and other disabilities.

JRI was described as using an “empowerment-based” model in which their role is to provide support for people as they take control and empower themselves. In one respondent’s view, it is their job to “... shore up the circle of support around clients...” and add to their personal resources rather than try to minutely manage their lives. Their role in the HomeWork Project is to develop individual service plans with clients, help them find sources of financial support, aide them in problem-solving, setting up, and maintaining households.

Employment Support and Services Organizations

AIDS Housing and Victory Programs

AIDS Housing’s mission is to “foster the development of a continuum of care of affordable housing options for people with HIV/AIDS who require supportive services to live with maximum independence and dignity.”⁷ The organization meets this mission through education and advocacy and by providing technical assistance to providers of HIV/AIDS housing. Once Boston was awarded a grant, AIDS Housing sought a service organization to

⁶ Information for the JRI profile was drawn from an interview with a JRI staff member and its website <http://www.jri.org>.

⁷ AIDS Housing Corporation Organization Experience document. Information for profile provided by staff members and materials provided by staff.

provide services to their clients in HomeWork, as AIDS Housing does not provide direct services. It partnered with Victory Programs.

Victory Programs is primarily a residential substance abuse program. They also provide job readiness support, including one-on-one career counseling sessions, case management and referrals, and a job search workshop on resume development, interviewing skills, and job search skills. Most of their referrals come from detox programs and jails; many of their clients are homeless. This partnership is the first time AIDS Housing and Victory Programs have worked together.

AIDS Housing has six staff members. Victory Programs' annual budget for FY03 was \$5.6 million, with 70% of revenue from federal and state contracts and the remaining 30% from grants, contributions, fees, and other sources. They served 1,113 individuals—68% were homeless, 21% had HIV/AIDS, and 39% had mental health problems.

Boston Private Industry Council

The Boston Private Industry Council (PIC) as the Boston Workforce Investment Board was the required applicant for the DOL/HUD Ending Chronic Homelessness grant. The PIC convened the partners to develop the program and apply for the grant. The PIC provides a facilitating and directing role in the HomeWork Project.

The PIC is the workforce investment board for the city of Boston. The PIC, founded in 1979, is a business led organization that “connects the youth and adults of Boston to education and employment opportunities to meet the demands of employers in a changing economy.”⁸ The PIC convenes the Boston Compact, a major school reform agreement in Boston. The PIC, working with Boston's Mayor's Office of Job and Community Services facilitates, coordinates and has policy oversight of skill training and labor exchange services for Boston's youths and adults.

Career Advancement Resources, Bay Cove Human Services, Center House, Inc.,

Career Advancement Resources (CAR) is an employment services program of Center House, inc., of Bay Cove Human Services. The latter is a private, non-profit multi-service organization that specializes in providing myriad, individualized services to people disabilities. Bay Cove is a large agency that provides services to over 9,000 adults, children, and families a year in more than eighty diverse programs. Services include:

- Residential programs
- Supported housing services
- Outpatient psychiatric services
- Educational programs

⁸ www.bostonpic.org. Information for PIC profile provided by this website and PIC staff member.

- o Early intervention
- o Special education
- o Computer classes
- Alcohol and substance abuse programs
- Family support services
- Violence prevention for youth
- Rehabilitation services
- Day support through clubhouses and other group and individual programs
- Individualized job training, support, and career services

CAR provides individualized education and employment services to adults with mental illnesses in coordination with other services provided by Bay Cove. Services include:

- Goal-making
- Skill assessment and development
- Job-search and career exploration support
- Interview, resume-writing, and job-search support
- On-the-job support
- Education and job-training placement and support

In addition, CAR works with managers of specific companies to fill and maintain positions, providing education and support for both job seekers and managers. “All services are designed to help participants regain their sense of self worth, purpose, and vocational confidence. This is achieved by assisting them to become successful in the working and learning environments of their choice.”⁹

Community Work Services

Since 1877, Community Work Services (CWS) has been providing employment solutions for Boston area residents with barriers to self-sufficiency through its quality job training and related support services. Populations served include individuals who experience physical disabilities, cognitive limitations, mental health concerns, learning disabilities, substance abuse issues, and chronic homelessness. The mission of Community Work Services is: “To promote independence through employment for persons challenged by physical, emotional, mental, developmental, social or economic problems by providing quality vocational services that restore and enhance dignity, respect, esteem, and skills.”¹⁰ CWS utilizes a training model, which focuses on assisting individuals with identifying their vocational strengths, building skills through comprehensive training and immersing them in “real” work experiences to reinforce skill development and appropriate work behaviors. Key strategies include:

⁹ Information for CAR profile provided by the website <http://www.baycove.organization>, and CAR staff member.

¹⁰ Information for CWS profile provided by CWS staff members and materials provided by staff.

- **Comprehensive Skill Training** in food service, commercial cleaning, mailing operations and light assembly and computer and office applications.
- **Case Management** assists individuals with addressing obstacles in their lives.
- **Job Readiness** teaches important aspects of “work” culture and life management skills.
- **Job Placement** works with an established network of area employers.
- **Follow up Services** are provided for a minimum of 12 months post-placement and job coaching to ensure long term job retention and success.
- **Strong Collaborations** with other service providers to ensure access to needed support services (e.g. housing, counseling, education, and further training).

The organization includes thirty-five full-time staff members. CWS’ budget in FY03 was \$3 million, serving over 600 people and placing more the sixty in jobs. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is their primary purchaser of services; thus, CWS principally serves people with severe disabilities.

JobNet, One Stop Career Center

JobNet is one of thirty-two One-Stop Career Centers (OSCC) operating in Massachusetts, administered by the Workforce Investment Boards.¹¹ It is partnered with the Massachusetts Division of Career Services, the Massachusetts Division of Unemployment Assistance, and Action for Boston Community Development. The OSCCs provide services to working people and those looking for work, including:

- Providing individualized assistance in searching for jobs
- Presenting workshops on various job search issues
- Offering the use of resources such as computers and printing facilities to aid in job searches
- Setting up groups for networking
- Sponsoring job fairs

In addition, the OSCC’s provide services for employers, including:

- Job postings
- Prescreening of applicants
- Recruitment assistance
- Assessment of potential job applicants
- Labor market information
- Information on grants and tax credits
- Development of workshops on workplace issues

¹¹ Information for JobNet profile was drawn from an interview with a JobNet staff member and its website <http://www.detma.org>.

In addition to the usual services offered by OSCC's, JobNet is the home of Employment Connections, a partnership between the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Massachusetts Division of Career Services. Employment Connections is a program designed to help DMH clients who are or were homeless find work. A JobNet staff member reported that until recently, it was the only OSCC to have on staff a manager with special training to provide employment support to people with disabilities of all kinds.

JobNet's role in HomeWork is the coordinator of the employment services to HomeWork clients. In addition, in the first year of the project it has acted as a coordinator and meeting facilitator for the project as a whole.

Project Place

Project Place, located in Boston's South End, offers direct services to the homeless, focused on education, training, employment, and support. Founded in 1967, Project Place provides transitional employment for homeless individuals for three to six months at a rate of \$6.75/hr. Their services include:

- Case management
- Career coaching
- Pre-GED instruction in Math, English, Social Studies, and Computers
- Computer training
- Life and career skills training
- Daily lunch
- Follow up services for at least 2 years.

Project Place also operates a Homeless Resource Center, which provides basic services to homeless individuals—such as voicemail, postal mailbox, and lockers. In addition, Project Place operates Betty's Place, a residential program for women in transition from domestic violence or emergency shelters.

The projected annual budget of Project Place for FY 2005 is \$1.6 million with 20 staff members. It serves an average of 600 clients each year, with a 59% job placement rate for FY 2004. Nearly half its funding is from government grants and contracts, with the remaining funds dominated by contributions and product and services revenue.¹²

¹² Information for Project Place profile provided by Project Place staff member and materials provided by staff.

Disability Counseling and Rehabilitation

Massachusetts Department of Mental Health

The Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) is a state agency that provides inpatient services and outpatient programs as well as community-based care for people with serious mental illnesses or serious emotional disturbance.¹³ In addition to providing direct services, DMH also sets community-care standards for the state and coordinates private and public resources and services. It also provides substantial housing support services and subsidies through a statewide collaborative network of public and private housing and funding partnerships.

Housing. DMH's affiliated housing served 5,685 adults at the end of FY 2003. DMH continuously works to add to its housing stock and opportunities for its clients. Housing opportunities and support are diverse and include:

- Transitional housing
- Permanent sponsored housing
- Staffed group homes
- Individual apartments
- Residential programs
- Individualized housing support services
- General housing support services

Employment. In addition, DMH provides employment services for clients through private groups, in two main programs. The program, Services for Education and Employment (SEE), consists of twenty-five programs that provide individualized employment, training, and educational services aimed at eventually securing competitive for DMH clients. The Community Support Clubhouses (CSC) provide employment and educational services for clients with an aim to retain or receive transitional employment for DMH clients.

People are eligible for receiving DMH services if they are determined to meet service and clinical criteria (defined in the DSM-IV) for having a severe and persistent mental illness.

Project Review and Evaluation

Commonwealth Corporation

Commonwealth Corporation (CommCorp) was established in 1996 through the merger of two parent organizations with the mission of Empowering People and Businesses to Learn, Earn, and Succeed. CommCorp currently focuses its work in three specific areas; the Center for

¹³ Information for the DMH profile came from the DMH website—<http://www.mass.gov/dmh>.

Youth Development and Education, the Center for Workforce Innovation, and the Center for Research and Evaluation.

Commonwealth Corporation administers a wide range of programs and services for the workforce development community, including:

- Operating sectoral initiative demonstration programs.
- Providing research on workforce development topics for the Commonwealth.
- Evaluating the impact of workforce development programs and services.
- Providing labor force data analysis to determine service needs.
- Increasing the capacity of schools to meet the needs of all students.
- Providing an alternative path to a high school diploma for young people.

Commonwealth Corporation is providing the review and evaluation of HomeWork.

V. Recommendations

Progress on goals, reviews of interviews with partners and notes made during meetings lead us to make seven recommendations. These recommendations are focused on how to strengthen HomeWork in the future and increase its ability to meet system reform and client outcome goals.

1. Further maximize the coordination between groups and meetings over time.

Implementing Partners: Boston PIC with employment and housing coordinators.

Recently, the employment coordinator at JobNet was hired as well as the project coordinator at the Boston PIC. These coordinators, along with the housing coordinators, need to take an active role in managing the project and the partnership. Clarity is needed around who is the Project Director ultimately responsible for the smooth operations of the project. It is important to make sure that all stakeholders attend the appropriate meetings, continue providing minutes from meetings to all participants, actively maintain contact with all program participants in order to gather and communicate important information between meetings, provide follow-through on tasks between meetings, and provide information to all stakeholders prior to meetings so that people are ready to make decisions more efficiently.

2. Develop an integrated case management system.

Implementing Partners: Project director convenes employment and housing direct service agencies.

While the HomeWork intake process has been clarified and refined, the partners have yet to develop a case management system. The proposal says that there will be a case management team of three individuals—the housing coordinator, employment coordinator, and a case manager from the customer’s referring agency. However, this case management structure has neither been clarified nor formally operationalized. Therefore, we recommend that all the partners involved in case management develop and clarify the case management procedures. Further, we recommend that the intake process include a meeting between each applicant and the case management team that they will be working with if they are accepted into HomeWork (as was suggested by a partner in an interview).

3. Make the introduction into the HomeWork Project more exciting and informative for customers and direct-care workers.

Implementing Partners: Intake Committee.

Several people indicated that many HomeWork applicants were not fully aware of the program when they were applying for it. Conversely, some applicants were very excited to part of an innovative program in which they would receive both housing and employment support. In the future—as was recommended by a partner during an interview—potential applicants and direct care staff should receive pamphlets about HomeWork that are attractive and enthusiastic and that explain the elements and requirements of the program in a straightforward way. Also, the intake process, requirements, and program rules should be written out in an accessible way along with information about each of the participating programs and given out to each of the organizations participating in HomeWork. Providing this information will ensure that all stakeholders have a complete understanding of the

process, and it will facilitate the spread of information on HomeWork throughout participating organizations to all direct care workers.

4. Articulate clarify outcome goals and success measures.

Implementing Partners: Commonwealth Corporation convenes Evaluation and Continuous Improvement Committee.

Partners have diverse ideas about what constitutes success for HomeWork clients. While some partners expressed that clients living independently is the goal, others had reservations about such a goal given the circumstance and barriers that their clients experience. It is important for the project to define success—is it short-term temporary employment or long-term stable full-time employment? Is it maintaining supported housing or transitioning to independent housing? The general outcome goals were expressed in the original grant proposal. Now that the project is operational and the intake process is clear, however, it is important to discuss and agree on success measures.

5. Better understand and increase the use of each other's services.

Implementing Partners: Project Director to arrange.

The project goals outlined in the proposal include conducting sessions to learn about each other's services. Knowing more about each agency will facilitate smooth delivery of services to clients, increase the use of shared resources, and minimize the amount of duplication there is across agencies. For instance, if one agency has a well-developed set of workshops for clients then it would be more efficient for HomeWork customers to attend those workshops than have each agency develop its own. HomeWork could streamline its clients into those programs. Recent discussion in meetings has led to the development of the idea of including short presentations about each agency at partner meetings. This will facilitate the process of spreading knowledge across agencies. Partner agencies should also continue to consider whenever possible how to coordinate, use, or share resources across agencies.

6. Clarify the role of JobNet One-Stop Career Center.

Implementing Partners: Project Director, JobNet, Case Management Committee

JobNet plays a key role in the HomeWork Project and enhancing the capacity of the One-Stop Career Centers is one of the goals of the federal initiative. Currently, however, JobNet's role is unclear on two fronts—employment service provision and program administration. We recommend that the partnership clearly delineate the role of JobNet in the project. Questions on service provision to clients need to be answered, such as: when does an employment agency hand a client off to the Career Center and how does the employment counselor at JobNet work with the employment and housing service agencies? In addition, JobNet has taken an administrative lead on HomeWork. This role should be formalized and clarified in conjunction with the role of the Boston Private Industry Council and the housing support agencies.

APPENDIX 1

Interviews Conducted And Homework Partner Meetings Attended by Commonwealth Corporation

Partner Interviews Conducted

Organization	Date	Interviewer
1. Action for Boston Community Development	September 29, 2004	Laurie Bozzi
2. AIDS Housing and Victory Programs	August 5, 2004	Sunny Schwartz
3. Boston Private Industry Council	July 2, 2004	Sunny Schwartz
4. Career Advancement Resources/Bay Cove	September 2, 2004	Laurie Bozzi
5. Community Work Services	July 2, 2004	Sunny Schwartz
6. Department of Mental Health	August 27, 2004	Laurie Bozzi
7. Department of Neighborhood Development, City of Boston	July 21, 2004	Sunny Schwartz
8. JobNet One-Stop Career Center	September 2, 2004	Laurie Bozzi
9. JRI Housing	August 30, 2004	Laurie Bozzi
10. Project Place	June 30, 2004	Sunny Schwartz

HomeWork Partner Meetings Attended

1. December 10, 2003, All Partners Meeting
2. January 22, 2004, All Partners Meeting
3. February 18, 2004, Evaluation/Continuous Improvement Committee
4. April 1, 2004, All Partners Meeting
5. April 15, 2004, Intake Committee
6. May 7, 2004, Intake Committee
7. May 13, 2004, Intake Committee
8. May 28, 2004, Intake Committee
9. June 11, 2004, Intake Committee
10. June 25, 2004, Intake Committee
11. July 9, 2004, Intake Committee
12. July 19, 2004, Case Management Committee
13. August 2, 2004, Case Management Committee
14. August 13, 2004, Intake Committee
15. August 27, 2004, Intake Committee
16. September 13, 2004, Evaluation/Continuous Improvement Committee
17. September 24, 2004, Intake Committee
18. October 15, 2004, Intake Committee

APPENDIX 2

Diagram of the Three Tracks in the HomeWork Project Intake Process

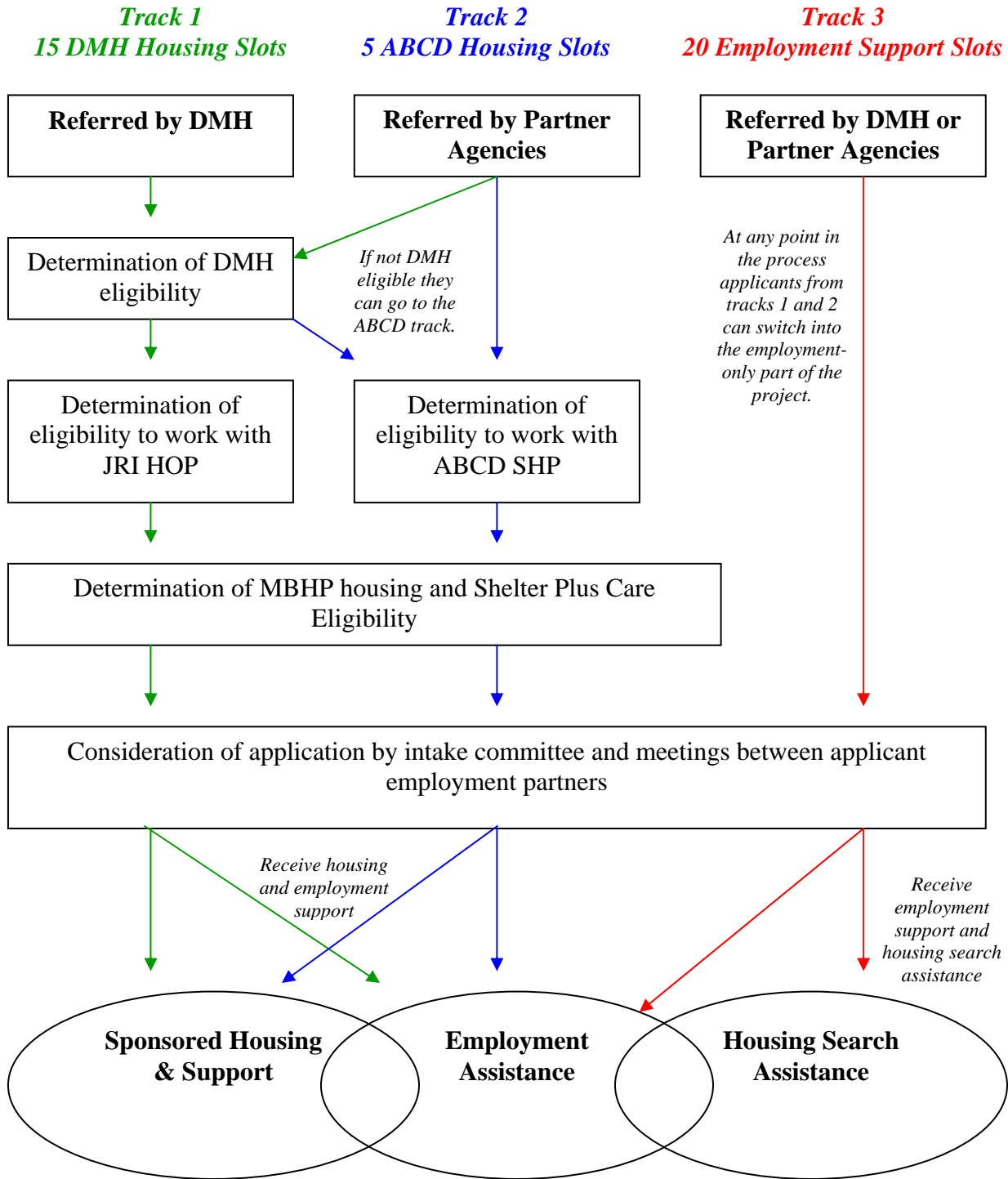


Figure 1 presents the three tracks of the HomeWork Project intake process. The track on the left illustrates the intake process for those applying to the 15 housing/employment slots sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH), the center track displays the process for those in the five housing/employment slots sponsored by ABCD, and the track on the right shows the application process for those in the employment-only part of the program.