

BEAS Title XX Contractors' Focus Group
October 28, 2010

A focus group of contractors providing Title XX services met on October 28 with Kathleen Otte, Cathy Cormier and Tracey Tarr. Kathleen welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed that BEAS wants to hear contractors' concerns about the current system, and to look at how BEAS can be more effective and efficient in the delivery of contracted services.

Review of Current Contracting Process

BEAS has 96 social service contracts and 64 agencies that we work with. Cathy Cormier discussed the current contracting process, which begins when BEAS sends out an RFP and includes review of the completed RFPs, DHHS/BEAS work on the contract, review of the contract by the Attorney General's Office and submission to Governor and Council.

The remainder of the meeting time was spent reviewing "pain points" of concern about the contracting process, as well as ideas/opportunities for change.

Pain Points

Roles and responsibilities need to be better defined.

The contract requirements are cumbersome- do these stem from federal laws/regs? Are there some that could be eliminated?

The service system is fragmented. Consider making the counties the contractors- they would then subcontract with other organizations. Counties are the major payers of long-term care costs in NH and should therefore have decision-making authority. Counties do not currently believe they are full partners in the service system, in spite of being the major payers.

Not enough time is allowed for an agency to prepare a contract once they receive the RFP.

The formula for allocating the number of service units is unclear.

The amount of service dollars available to the contract is not known until nearly the end of the contract process.

There are not enough service dollars to cover the administrative costs of providing services.

Although service demands continue to increase, the available dollars don't increase.

It is difficult to deal with reductions in the number of service units and to have to implement a waiting list.

The turnaround time for returning a contract with signatures is too short, especially when the contract needs to be signed by all members of the board.

The two-year contract period is too short.

Who's the boss? It is the contract agency that must manage the everyday aspects of the contract.

There is duplication regarding information requested by BEAS.

BEAS lacks service data- there needs to be software system that will allow BEAS to gather information on unduplicated services by county.

The service system is fragmented- it's difficult to get a general picture of the client when there are multiple programs and the client, by necessity, goes from one to another.

Staff limitations make it challenging and time-consuming for contract agencies to respond to all the clients calling in, especially when an agency administers multiple programs.

Sometimes there are too many contracts in one area for the same service, but in other places there are no contracts for a particular service.

Other Comments

We need to improve the contract process, but our actions should not make things more cumbersome for our clients.

Does the State of NH have to be the entity to administer federal funds, or could it be a non-state agency that meets federal requirements (it was noted that for purposes of Title III and Title XX funds, BEAS has been designated by the federal government as the state agency on aging)

If contracts are regionalized, is there an administrative entity that would get a percentage of available funds in return for administering those funds? (The answer is yes.)

The "one-stop shopping" concept, i.e. that the consumer will want to go to one entry point to obtain information and assistance with services, is starting to shift. More agencies, including private for-profit organizations, are advertising their services, and consumers are doing their own research on the Internet.

People often don't make an effort to learn about available services until they're in crisis.

Within NH, service needs vary by region. For example there might be a need for particular service in Berlin but not in Concord.

Quality assurance is key to service delivery.

When providing services, there are situations where you need to be sure you are dealing with a licensed facility, or you may encounter difficulties in that area. It was noted that it may be helpful at some point to invite a representative from the Bureau of Health Facilities (Licensing) to join these discussions.

Ideas/Opportunities

Simplify the contract process and forms.

Offer training to counties and make them full partners in the LTC system.

Extend the contract period, i.e. to more than two years.

Consider the cash and counseling model, which would allow the consumer more flexibility.

Consolidate multiple contracts that exist with respect to larger agencies.

Make the required contract documents available sooner and place them on the BEAS website.

Regarding the reports required by BEAS, consider standardizing these- right now, the reports required for agencies providing Title III services are different than for Title XX.

Obtain standardized reporting software.

Make sure there is consistent access to services statewide.

Increase partnerships at the regional level.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will not be held on November 18 as originally planned because there is a transportation summit scheduled on the same day, which many people at today's meeting would like to attend. Cathy Cormier will email with some alternate meeting dates.