Operationalizing a Community Supports for Work Strategy

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Community Supports for Work is a process – not a series of events

- A set of strategies that build a *culture of work* within a community
- Reduce social isolation, build new social networks
- Organize residents so they support one another

Success Strategies

- Involve residents in designing and implementing CSW activities
- Know your community, connect residents to resources, eliminate barriers to work
- Continuously engage with residents
Is it CSW . . . or something else?

- Supporting a resident gardening club
- Organizing a “Latchkey kid” program in the development
- Sponsoring a 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament
- Advertising availability of in-home daycare providers
- Organizing “Back to School” events for kids of working parents
- Publicizing car pools to the local industrial park
- Organizing a resident Clean-up project
- Co-locating public services in the development
- Creation of a monthly Jobs-Plus newsletter
4 Basic CSW Strategies

- “Joining” social networks within the development
- Resident to resident
- Residents to external networks
- Mutual aid among residents
How Can Sites Promote a CSW Strategy?

- All components must be working in sync
  - Strong employment services generate excitement
  - Strong financial incentives add to motivation
  - “Bad news spreads faster than good news!”

- Relationship building
  - Responsive to resident needs and wants
  - Welcoming environment in the office
  - Build a connection to the residents

- Effective Use of Community Coaches
  - “Don’t abdicate CSW to the Coaches”
The Role of the Community Coach

- **Considerations**
  - Full-time or part-time; one coach or many coaches?
  - Permanent hire or rotated (“on-ramp”) position?
  - WHO is this person within the development?

- **Defining and supervising the role**
  - Defining clear responsibilities, goals and deliverables
  - Messaging: “What are they saying and how are they saying it?”
  - Assessing performance: CSW can be measured!

- **CSW is a Team effort**
  - By all means market the brand – but don’t forget to market the message!
Selecting the Coaches

Finding a good Coach isn’t a Slam Dunk!

- The development might offer a limited pool of candidates
- Employed residents probably too busy
- Need to screen out the ill-educated, those with drug problems, and those who otherwise aren’t good role models or appropriate “faces” of the community.
- Elderly/retired persons are sometimes appropriate because the position offers an opportunity to be involved in the community.
Managing the Coaches

- When tried as a *resident-led* component, the focus sometimes switched to conflicts with the PHA having nothing to do with employment

- Coaches should be supervised and managed by program staff

- Having staff responsible increases the likelihood that CSW is treated seriously

- Compensation for coaches was essential
Importance of Training

A learning curve to becoming a good coach

- Ensuring they provided accurate information
- Current information about real job openings
- Prepare them for potential conflict situations
- Ensure cultural sensitivity in multi-ethnic communities
Additional CSW Considerations

- Use of social media
  - Facebook advertising
  - Twitter, Instagram, etc.
- Use of Incentives
- Anticipate high turnover
- Ensure their safety in all parts of the development