

CONNECTICUT -- 2001 Nursing Facility Transitions State Grant

Identified Problems with the State's Long-Term Care System

- Lack of an established system and adequate information to identify nursing facility residents who desire to and are appropriate to live in the community.
- Existing system lacks a method for informing individuals in nursing facilities about services and choices available.
- Existing long-term care system is not responsive to the needs of consumers or their families.
- Lack of training and education about the needs of persons with disabilities.
- Adverse incentives: in some cases it is easier to qualify for Medicaid coverage in a nursing facility than to get comparable services at home.
- Eligibility requirements of the Medicaid waiver programs are restricted based on specific age groups and targeted populations.
- Accessible and affordable housing is inadequate.
- Severe shortage of workers that are needed to provide long-term care services, especially workers who are experienced with the special needs of certain populations.

Perceived Strengths

- The activities of the Community Options Task Force, the Real Choice Task Force, and other consumer advisory groups provide a springboard for the expansion of community-based supports and services.
- Growing recognition and commitment by some state policy makers of the need to increase community options for all persons with disabilities regardless of diagnosis or age.
- Connecticut has a well-established single entry preadmission screening system for persons entering a nursing facility.
- Connecticut is engaged in a comprehensive planning approach for addressing the issues related to the Olmstead Supreme Court decision.
- Connecticut has a well-established cadre of local community service programs and supports.

Primary Focus of Grant Activities

- Research, evaluate, and implement best practices in nursing facility transition.
- Design and implement effective outreach campaign.
- Provide training on independent living and self-determination to a variety of professional target audiences.
- Create flexible resource pool.

- Develop and implement volunteer peer support network.
- Develop effective system to access affordable, accessible housing resources.
- Implement demonstration project to transition 150 individuals out of nursing facilities.

Goals, Objectives, and Activities

Overall Goal. Connecticut will have an effective system of transition for individuals residing in nursing facilities who desire to and are appropriate to live the community along with the necessary services and supports to allow consumers to maintain living in a community setting.

Goal. Develop an effective system of transition for individuals residing in nursing facilities who desire to and are appropriate to live in the community.

Objectives/Activities

- Gather and analyze national- and state-specific data on successful transition practices.
- Evaluate key indicators of success both in terms of efficiency and effective use of resources and in terms of successful transitions.
- Assimilate best practice components relevant to the needs of CT residents into a final document and distribute to state agencies and the Centers for Independent Living (CILs) for implementation.
- Develop and distribute a brochure, a self-assessment tool, and a step-by-step guide to the transition process for residents.
- Create a flexible resource pool, the “Common Sense Fund”, using a portion of the grant funds along with private donations to overcome financial barriers to transition (e.g., security deposits, utility hook-ups, household items, and building modifications).
- Develop and implement a volunteer peer support network that will provide technical assistance.
- Develop an effective system for obtaining affordable, accessible housing resources.
- Transition 150 people out of nursing facilities during the three years of the grant.

Goal. Establish a strong partnership with Connecticut’s CILs

Objectives/Activities

- CILs will provide training in independent living skills to residents.
- The five CILs will form a community-based, statewide network of service providers to facilitate transitions.
- CILs will recruit individuals with disabilities and family members to provide peer support for transition and will provided training and ongoing support for the peers.
- Cross-agency/CILs teams with experience teaching the philosophical concepts of independent living and self-determination will provide training on these concepts to a variety of professional target audiences.

Key Activities and Products

- Best practice components from efforts will be compiled into a final document for distribution to state agencies and the CILs.
- Develop and implement a brochure, self-assessment tool, and transition guide.
- Provide training and materials regarding independent living and self-determination to a variety of professionals statewide.
- Create a flexible “Common Sense Fund” to pay for costs necessary for transition but not payable from other funding sources.

Consumer Partners and Consumer Involvement in Planning Activities

The Real Choice Task Force comprises consumers and family members to collaborate with the state in the development of this grant proposal. The Task Force held an outreach meeting to obtain input from minority communities about issues for persons with disabilities.

Consumer Partners and Consumer Involvement in Implementation Activities

Consumers will form part of the peer support network.

Public Partners

- Office of Policy and Management.
- The State Ombudsman Program.
- Department of Mental Retardation.
- Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.
- Department of Children and Families.
- Department of Economic and Community Development.
- Board of Education and Services for the Blind.
- The Office of Protection and Advocacy.

Private Partners and Subcontractors

- The 5 Centers for Independent Living (CILs).
- Connecticut Association of Centers for Independent Living (CACIL).
- Co-op Initiatives, Inc.

Public and Private Partnership Development/Involvement in the Planning Phase

Public Partners

The Real Choice Task Force worked collaboratively with state agencies in the development of this proposal. State agencies involved in the planning phase included: The Department of Social Services (including the Bureau for Rehabilitation Services and the state Ombudsman Program), the Department of Mental Retardation, the Office of Policy and Management, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction, the Office of Protection and Advocacy, the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Board of Education and Services for the Blind, and the Department of Children and Families.

Private Partners

The Independent Living Centers and Co-op Initiatives participated in planning activities.

Public and Private Partnership Development/Involvement in Implementation

Public Partners

- The Department of Social Services will use data from its functional assessment to identify residents with the potential to transition.
- The Ombudsman Program will help distribute outreach materials to residents and their families.

Private Partners

- Grant funds will be used to subcontract with the Connecticut Association of Centers for Independent Living (CACIL) and to provide dedicated staff (referred to as Community Transition Coordinators) in each of the five CILs to implement the project's objectives.
- CACIL will also manage the flexible resource pool (the "common sense fund").
- CIL staff will assist in designing the brochure, transition guide, and completing the assessment of individuals using the assessment tool. CIL staff will also have the responsibility for independent living skill training, and training and ongoing support of the peers.
- Co-op Initiatives will act as a consulting resource to CACIL and the CILs for problem-solving, supervision, and skill development.

Existing Partnerships That Will Be Utilized to Leverage or Support Project Activities

- DMR will provide technical assistance and share its lessons learned in planning, designing, monitoring and evaluating the accessibility and availability of community supports.
- A DMHAS project advisor will assist the Community Transition Coordinators in identifying appropriate candidates for transition and in identifying community supports.
- This project will continue to build on the partnerships with CACIL, the CILs, Co-op Initiatives, and the other organizations represented on the Steering Committee.

Oversight/Governing Committee

The Steering Committee will oversee the project. The Committee has no fiduciary responsibility, but it does have the authority to approve or disapprove all quarterly reports of the contractor. The Committee will develop policies. Reports will be approved based on consistency with policies and advancement towards goals. The Committee will enable people with disabilities, family members, and state agency representatives to have a leadership role in the design, development, monitoring, and evaluation of the project. In addition, workgroups will be formed that include representatives from the Steering Committee and from the broader community to assist with specific aspects of the project.

Formative Learning and Evaluation Activities

- The Project Director will take responsibility to identify and develop appropriate tools to systematically collect and analyze relevant data. For example, personal achievements and outcomes will be measured, along with client satisfaction for persons who are transitioned to the community.
- Baseline surveys will be conducted to identify the attitudes, needs, and perceived barriers to transition from the perspective of the consumer and the staff involved in the consumer's care. A needs assessment will be conducted to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of the transition system and solicit designs for improvement.

Evidence of Enduring Change/Sustainability

- Tools designed to help the consumer become more involved in his or her transition, such as the assessment tool and the transition guide, will remain in place for CILs to continue long after the life of the grant.
- Investing in the CILs in CT will increase their capacity beyond the three-year term of the grant by building networks in the communities they serve. The partnerships with businesses and other community organizations formed as a result of the grant will provide sustainability.

Geographic Focus

Statewide.