

Support Services Program Year End Report FY 2014

**Employment Services
Representative Payee Services
Home to Stay
Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)**



**City of Portland, Maine
Health and Human Services Department
Social Services Division**

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What is Support Services?

The Support Services Program consists of four components: Employment Services, Representative Payee, Home To Stay and Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA). These programs assist our consumers in the transition from public assistance and homelessness to self sufficiency.

Employment Services

The Division's Employment Services Program provides assistance with the location of full time and part time employment. Services provided include pre-employment workshops, employment counseling, resume writing, job placement, and job retention/follow-up services.

- **Homeless Employment Project**

The purpose of this project is to provide employment training and support to homeless persons experiencing multiple barriers to employment such as limited skills and education, poor work history, and health, mental health, and/or substance abuse issues. This program is funded by Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Homeless Assistance Grant funds and is currently in its fifteenth (15th) year of operation.

At the time of intake, project participants must be considered homeless per the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development federal definition; living on the streets or in emergency shelters. Services provided include support groups; skills training related to locating, applying for, and maintaining employment; assistance in accessing training programs; job development and retention services. The goal is to help homeless people gain and maintain stable employment, which will allow them to secure permanent housing and reduce the risk of future homelessness.

Employment Services provided assessments to 95 individuals this year. Employment placements for the year resulted in 20 full-time placements and 53 part-time placements (totaling 73 placements; a decrease of 2 from FY13), with 16 individuals being offered benefit packages as part of attaining employment (Attachment #1). In FY 2013 a total of 97 individuals were provided employment assessments and 75 individuals located full time or part time employment.

The Employment Workshop series topics include appearance and dress, communication skills, interviewing skills, positive attitude and job retention. Workshop trainers present a custom training curriculum designed to help increase self- esteem and overcome barriers to attaining and retaining gainful employment. These workshops serve as a gateway to other job readiness activities including individual assessments, one-on-one employment counseling, identifying and eliminating barriers, skills identification, and job searching strategies.

Employment Counselors provide outreach services on-site at the City's Family Shelter and Preble Street's Women's Shelter during afternoons and evenings on a regular basis in an effort to increase recruitment. In addition, the employment workshop curriculum was revised this year to include hands-on computer instruction for creating resumes and navigating through the online job market.

- **Job Training**

The Job Training Program (JTP) is another HUD-funded program and is also in its fifteenth (15th) year of operation. The JTP mission is to provide homeless individuals with a challenging training experience, which will lead to employment. We look at strengths, past work history, and employment goals and interests to help in our selection of an appropriate work site. This project provides job training stipends to homeless adults experiencing multiple barriers to employment such as limited skills and education, poor work history, and health, mental health and/or substance abuse issues. At the time of Intake, project participants are living in the streets or in homeless shelters. Stipends are used as an incentive for homeless who are transitioning back into the workforce to participate in work experience placements which can lead to permanent, unsubsidized employment.

Job Training funds are used to create stipends to help homeless people transition into employment. Stipends are paid directly to participants, at a rate of about \$4 per hour for 24 hours per week, for up to eight (8) weeks. Placements may lead to permanent employment with that particular employer; they are intended to provide an opportunity for people who have worked sporadically or not at all to gain experience and skills that will support permanent employment. Clients are given a weekly evaluation by the site-supervisor including skills learned. Clients may use these as tools to assist in securing future employment once the JTP is completed.

This year, 13 individuals participated in this program and 7 participants secured employment (attachment #1). In FY 2013 a total of 13 participants secured.

Job Training Program offers consumers a training experience in the following fields: Food Service Worker, Institutional Cook, Laundry Worker, General Maintenance Worker, Housekeeping Services, Custodial Worker, and Clerical. These sites are located within the City of Portland's Health & Human Services Department.

Representative Payee Program

While most individuals receive their Social Security and Supplemental Security benefits directly, some are mandated by the Social Security Administration to have a Representative Payee to provide assistance in managing their funds. When an individual applies for Social Security Supplemental Income (SSI) a determination may be made that the individual needs a representative payee to manage the money that is received. Also, the need for a representative payee can occur post-entitlement, after an individual has been receiving SSI. For example, a parent serves as a payee for an adult child, and the elderly parent is deceased, or is no longer able for health reasons to continue to serve as payee. Representative payees can be family members or friends of the recipient or agencies that serve as representative payees. The agency can collect a fee to help cover the cost. The fee is \$40 per person (\$77 for certain individuals deemed to have a drug addiction/alcohol problem) or no more than 10% of the total month's benefit, as mandated by the Social Security Administration, is charged to each client on a monthly basis.

The Representative Payee Program provides assistance with:

- Monthly money managing/ payments to landlords, vendors, utilities
- Budgeting skills education
- Information and referral services
- Long term fiscal planning
- Reports/forms for SSA and Disability Determination Services
- Housing recertification forms

Consumers are typically referred to the Representative Payee Program directly from the Social Security Administrative offices, area social service provider agencies, hospitals, family members and attorneys.

Consumers must be mandated by the Social Security Administration Office to have a representative payee as a condition of eligibility. Staff works very closely with local provider agencies to coordinate support services on behalf of the consumers who often have difficulty making these important community connections.

This year the Representative Payee Program served 399 unduplicated individuals with financial management and casework services. The average number of open cases each month was 322 which is consistent with last year (Attachment #2). The vast majority of our consumers gain and maintain stable housing as a result of being connected to our program and also become well connected with other community resources. This remains a highly respected community program meeting the important goals of stable housing, advocacy and financial management.

Home To Stay Program

The Home to Stay (HTS) Program is modeled after a rapid re-housing approach that provides housing stability services to persons who are experiencing homelessness. This project is funded by Maine Housing and is in its first year of operation (August 2013), the program covers both city-operated shelters: the Oxford Street Shelter and the Family Shelter. The Home to Stay Program assists homeless clients seeking permanent housing with education, services and support to meet their health, housing, and employment needs in order to overcome barriers to obtaining and maintaining housing. The goal is to help participants achieve permanent stable housing. Participants are assigned a Navigator who has experience in working with people who are experiencing homelessness. Navigators conduct assessments to determine best course of action and customize a plan that best suits each individuals housing needs.

The program has provided assessments for 114 individuals residing at the Oxford Street Shelter. Of the 114 participants, 47 have exited the program, including 39 or 80% who have secured housing. 69 participants remain actively engaged in housing search. 100% of participants were offered and received case management services throughout the enrollment in Home To Stay.

The program provided assessments for 39 families, totaling 119 individuals residing at the City of Portland Family Shelter. Of the 39 families, 22 families or 88% secured permanent housing with 13 participants remaining actively engaged in housing search.

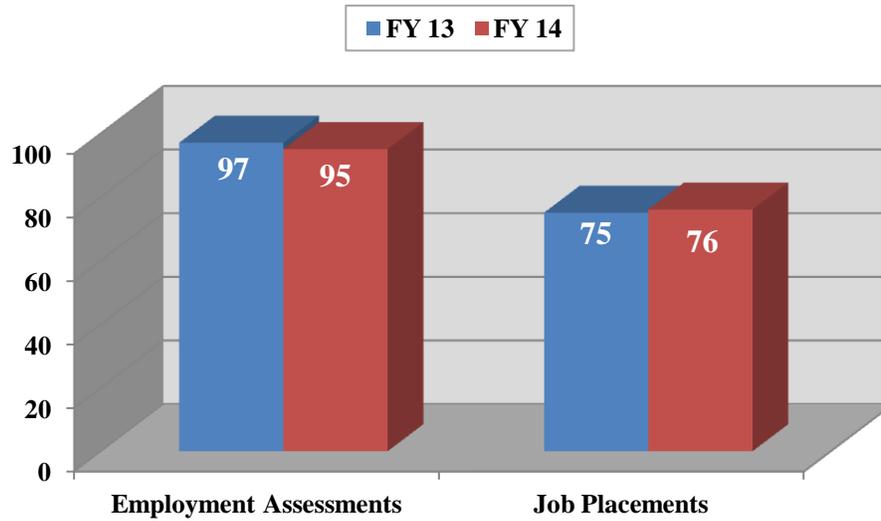
Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program

The Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) Program, funded by the Community Development Block Grant, has allowed the Social Services Division to implement programming in line with the Homeless Task Force Recommendations published on November 16th, 2012. These funds have been used to pay security deposits and short term rental assistance for individuals and families residing in homeless shelters.

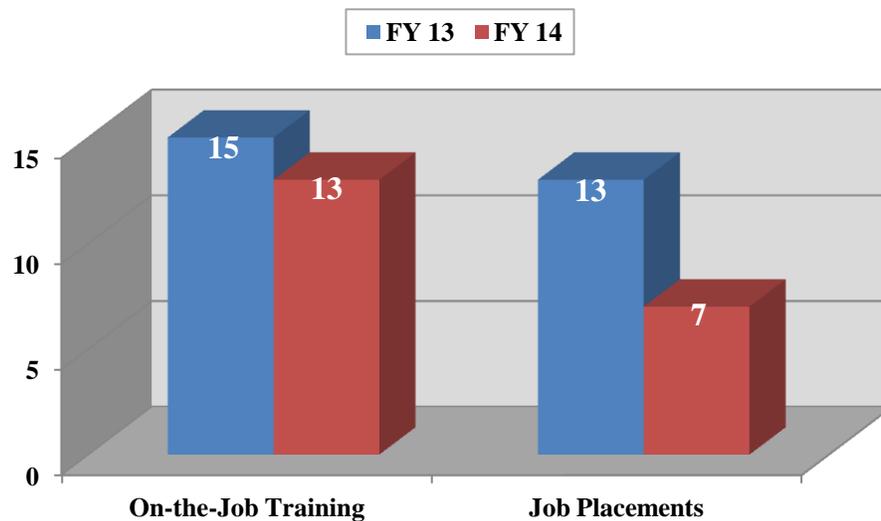
There is a centralized intake with a single point of contact located at the Oxford Street Shelter and Family Shelter, utilization of a rapid re-housing approach with a particular focus on reducing recidivism; as such clients are assigned a case manager to provide follow-up care services. Follow-up services provided will have a strong emphasis on connecting clients to other mainstream resources to ensure long term housing success. The program began March 1st, 2014, and has successfully assisted 30 households totaling 70 individuals move out of emergency shelters into permanent housing, accounting for \$23,168 out of the \$135,662 available (or 17%).

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HOMELESS EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM*



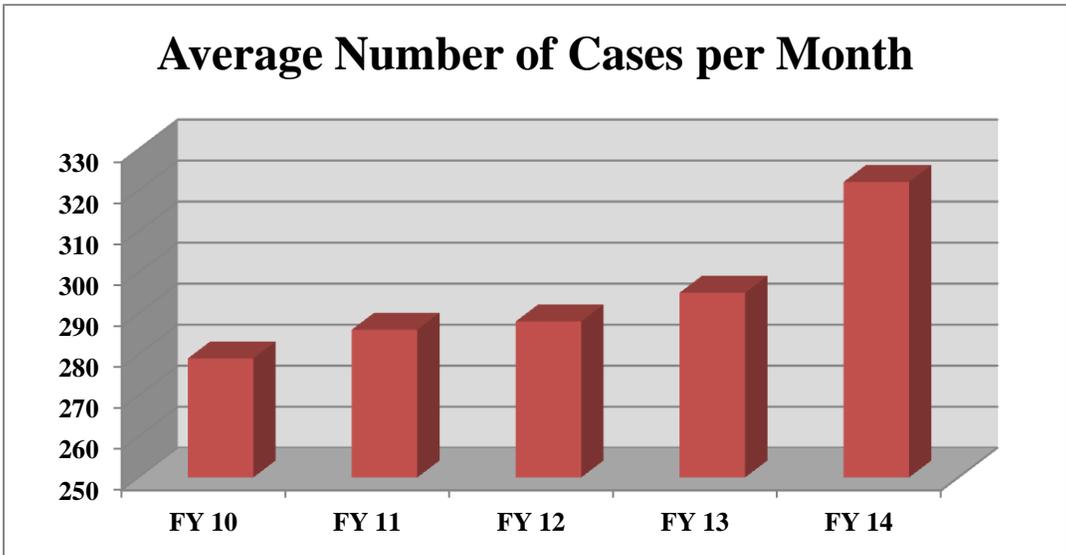
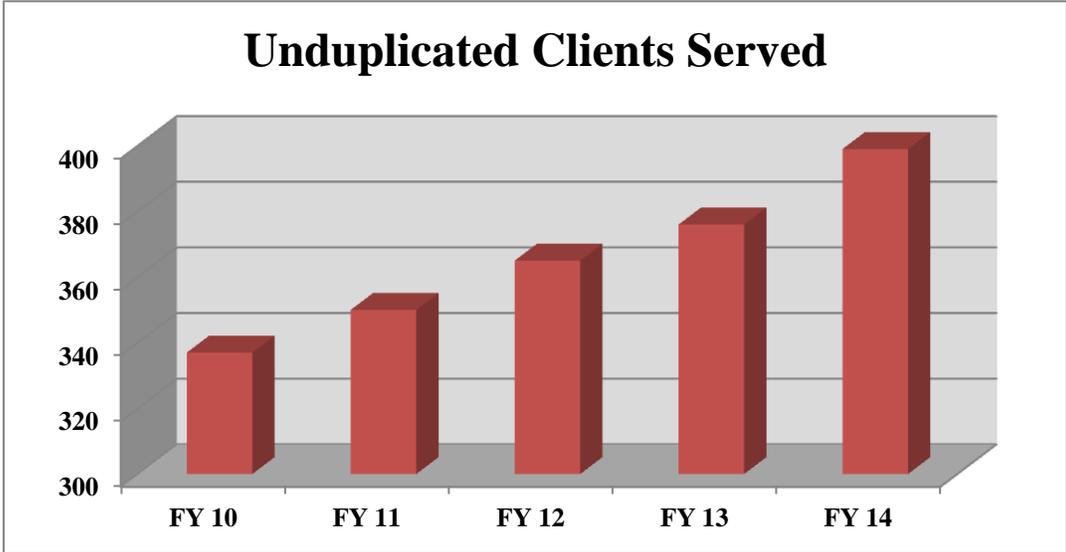
JOB TRAINING PROGRAM*



*Programs are funded by Federal Housing and Urban Development Homeless Assistance Program

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REPRESENTATIVE PAYEE PROGRAM



The Representative Payee Program began in 1993 with the SSI Outreach Demonstration Project. This was a federally funded grant ending in June, 1995. The Program continued through the Social Services Division and is funded through a combination of municipal tax dollars and client fee for services.