

2008 NCSHA Awards Submission
Special Needs Housing: Housing for Persons with Disabilities
South Carolina State Housing Finance and Development Authority
Empowering People with Special Needs: From Residential Care Facilities to Less Restrictive Environments

Executive Summary

Overview

The South Carolina State Housing Finance and Development Authority (the Authority) recognizes the power of partnerships when it comes to achieving its mission to create quality affordable housing opportunities for the citizens of South Carolina through the vision that all South Carolinians have the opportunity to live in safe, decent and affordable housing. Each year every state receives \$20,000 in Olmstead monies from the Center for Mental Health Services. The funds are to be used by states to demonstrate compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The primary goal is to assist people with disabilities and special needs in moving from the hospital into the communities. The secondary goal is to assist people with disabilities and special needs who are already in the community to move to a less restrictive environment such as from a community residential care facility (CRCF) into their own apartment. During the 2007-2008 Fiscal Year, the Authority partnered with the South Carolina Department of Mental Health (SCDMH) to assist with the housing costs of clients transitioning into the communities. The SCDMH received \$50,000 in funding from the Authority to use in conjunction with the Olmstead Program Fund for rent, utility bills and security deposits.

The Program

South Carolina is the *only* state that uses Olmstead monies as “vouchers” to assist individuals with special needs to move into the community or into less restrictive environments with choice and dignity. These vouchers provide clients with opportunities they would not be able to have otherwise – especially those wanting to move from CRCFs into their own apartments. In a CRCF clients only receive a \$55.00 monthly allowance that is used to pay for medication co-pays, clothing, toiletries, snacks and recreational activities. Without the Olmstead Fund, coupled with funding from the Authority, these individuals would never have had the funds to move into less restrictive environments and pay a security deposit, utility deposit or first month’s rent.

Summary – Who was Assisted?

A total of 221 clients received vouchers from pooled Olmstead Monies and Authority funds. More than two-thirds (72%) of the 221 clients were male. The 221 clients ranged in age from 15 to 60, with more than two-thirds (68%) between the ages of 31 – 50 years of age. Nearly half (42%) of the 221 clients had a psychiatric diagnosis of schizoaffective disorder, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or major depressive disorder. Half (49%) of the 221 clients had a diagnosis of substance abuse. The remaining clients were diagnosed with psychotic disorder, intermittent explosive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, conduct disorder, mood disorder, personality disorder, panic disorder or adjustment disorder. The majority (72%) of the 221 clients moved from the hospital into the community. Thirty-one (14%) of the total clients were already living in the

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community and moved to less restrictive settings. Twenty-nine (13%) of the total clients were homeless and moved into appropriate housing. The average cost of the 221 vouchers was just over \$300.00 per recipient.

Case Studies

There is a tremendous need to transition individuals with special needs from structured service settings to housing choices in mainstream settings that offer the potential for self-sufficiency and independence. Below are case studies from actual individuals who benefited from the program and the partnership between the Authority and the Department of Mental Health. Names have been changed to protect their identities.

Jackie

Jackie is a 49 year old female with a diagnosis of schizoaffective disorder. She is also deaf and communicates fluently with American Sign Language. Jackie has received services from the Department of Mental Health since 1977 and has had 19 hospitalizations, 17 of which were prior to 2000.

Jackie was discharged from the hospital in November 2007 to a CRCF that serves people who are deaf. Prior to this placement she lived with her seven family members in a very small two bedroom house. She did not work and was not involved in any activities. At the CRCF she flourished and in late winter she was ready to live independently in her own apartment. She requested assistance for her first month's rent and the security deposit (\$435.00). She did not have the funds saved because in a CRCF clients receive \$55.00 per month allowance which must pay for their medication co-pays, clothing, toiletries, snacks and recreational activities.

Jackie has been living in her apartment since April 1, 2008 and is doing very well. She continues to learn how to grocery shop, and budget money for bills, groceries and recreational activities. She is also learning to manage her diabetes independently with healthy food and exercise and she is enjoying the freedom of living independently. At the age of 49 she is learning for the first time how to live independently.

Jennifer

Jennifer is a 58 year old female with a diagnosis of anxiety disorder. Jennifer has received services from the Department of Mental Health for eighteen months.

Jennifer was living in a CRCF and was ready to live independently. In March, Jennifer had the opportunity to move into a brand new apartment. She did not have the funds needed for her security deposit or her first month's rent (\$646.00).

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Thanks to Olmstead funds and funding through the Authority, Jennifer has been living in her own apartment since April 2008 and is doing extremely well, enjoying her independence once again.

Ann

Ann is a 47 year old female with a diagnosis of major depressive disorder. Ann has received services from the Department of Mental Health intermittently for 13 years.

Ann was living with her daughter until the daughter was eligible for Section 8 housing. At that point she was no longer able to live with her daughter and needed assistance in obtaining her own apartment. She also needed hernia surgery but her doctor would not schedule the surgery until she had a permanent residence where home health could provide aftercare.

Ann needed assistance with her first month's rent, security deposit and utilities deposit (\$980.00).

On April 1, 2008 Ann moved into her own apartment. She was able to have the much needed surgery and home healthcare is providing aftercare services. Her case manager reports that she is very happy - much happier than she has ever seen her. Ann reports that she loves her apartment and invited the case manager to visit!