

Vermont Department of Mental Health

PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT

COVER SHEET

1. Grant Number: 03150-7061
2. Grantee Name and Address: **Youth Services, Inc.**
32 Walnut Street; PO BOX 6008 Brattleboro, VT 05302-6008
3. Telephone Number: 802-257-0361
4. Project Title: Youth in Transition Plan Implementation for the South Windham Region
5. Period of Performance: 7-1-2010 thru 12-31-2010
6. Approved Project Period: 7-1-2010 thru 6-30-2011
7. Period Covered by Report: 7-1-2010 to 12-31-2010
8. Author's Name and Telephone number: Michelle Bos-Lun 802-257-0361 EXT 160
9. Date of report: 1-27-2011
10. Comments (if any):

Please see report and attachments.

DMH only:

Date received: _____ Approved by: _____ Date approved: _____

Youth Services: Youth in Transition Implementation Plan for the South Windham Region

Grant Number: 03150-7061

PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT NARRATIVE

1. Major Activities and Accomplishments during this Period

1. The Youth in Transition Housing Coordinator has provided case management services to fifteen youth clients between July and December of 2010.
2. Five of the YIT Housing Coordinator's new clients were housed either in the SRO (2) or in independent apartments (3) during the second half of 2010. One of her clients completed his high school diploma in October, one moved back home with her family, and three of the clients began therapy with counselors to help them cope with life trauma.
3. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Brattleboro Housing Authority and Youth Services to allow Youth Services clients who are homeless and disabled and receiving case management services to apply for and receive "Shelter Plus Care Vouchers" which will provide affordable housing for them as long as they continue in case management and the case managers attend monthly housing meetings and enter data about client progress in the HMIS system.
4. The pilot project with youth being housed in an existent SRO (Single Room Occupancy building) with the Windham Housing Trust aka "The Cobblestone Building" has been extended. Between July and December 2010 six youth lived in rented rooms in the House. Length of stay for each youth ranged from three to eight months. All of the youth received some housing subsidies or assistance with grant applications to help with housing expenses.
5. A weekly "house meeting" at the Cobblestone was instituted to give youth residents a chance to get to know each other better and to voice concerns about the house to the YIT Housing Coordinator who would address them in weekly meetings (which were begun this Fall) with the Windham Housing Trust. At the weekly Windham Housing Meeting the YIT Housing Coordinator is able to update the Housing Trust regarding all youth applicants to WHT housing, which includes the Life Skills House for young mothers, SROs, and one and two bedroom apartments.
6. The Youth in Transition Housing Coordinator has remained an active member of the HELP Fund committee (which is a multi-agency board which determines emergency funds for housing for Windham County). Four of the YIT Housing Coordinator's clients received grants from the HELP fund which helped fund their security deposits so they could move into stable housing.

7. The YIT Housing Coordinator attended the National Training Institutes week of meetings and workshops sponsored in Washington DC along with 14 other representatives from the System of Care in Vermont.

2. Problems

- One challenge that continues is due to our having a mixed age house during the pilot phase In the Cobblestone SRO we need to have youth living there under the guidelines of the Housing Trust (we want to have youth-specific guidelines but cannot do that until the lease is in Youth Services name and all rooms are filled with young people from our program).
- One youth lost his job while in the SRO and has had a hard time finding a new source of income. How to keep youth housed when they are not able to meet their financial obligations is a challenge we are still working on, encouraging the youth to apply for new jobs and to engage in volunteer work are two areas we count towards “productive time” to get a rent subsidy but we are still working on how to best serve some youth who are not able to meet expectations for rent or work commitments.

3. Significant Findings and Events

- On December 4, 2010 the YIT Housing Coordinator participated in a community awareness event called “No Lasting Home” which was a fundraiser to help community groups that serve those who face homelessness. The event was nearly sold-out and generated a lot of publicity about local housing challenges.
- Youth Services has hosted monthly multi-agency YIT team meetings focused on housing (and bi-monthly meetings on employment as well) throughout the grant period .
- During the second half of 2010 Youth Services explored two local non-profit agencies as partners to support youth housing in our community. The one option did not work out, but the second option will provide short-term housing in a two bedroom apartment owned by our local shelter as a transitional option (youth will be housed in the “Morningside” apartment by February 2011).
- The YIT Housing Coordinator took four local youth to a state-wide youth conference in northern Vermont in December and also took three local youth to join a state-wide meeting to plan a state-wide Youth Conference to be held in Burlington in late spring 2011.

4. Dissemination activities

Youth Services housing work was mentioned in an article about the “No Lasting Home” event on December 4, 2010. It appeared in the Brattleboro Reformer Ovation (December 2-8, 2010).

The Youth in Transition Housing Coordinator also had a letter to the editor published in the Brattleboro Reformer (December 25-26,2010), regarding a grant from United Way that helped secure financing for the HMIS database system that enabled us to work with youth in getting Shelter Plus Care vouchers.

Please see attached articles.

5. Other Activities

- Inter-agency YIT ACT teams have been meeting at least every two months to address youth issues related to housing and employment.

6. Activities Planned for Next Reporting Period

- After the pilot phase of the current housing program is completed with 3-5 youth living in the group house with an equal number of adults, we hope to be able to expand the local program to have a house with all-youth residing in one building, with a youth-affiliated resident manager on-site as well. At that time we will be able to adapt the rules to better serve our youth population. (I.e., we hope to amend the minimum age for residents to be 16 instead of 18).
- We plan to invite at least two youth to join us in an advisory committee to help develop and revise the vision and reality of a youth-residence in Brattleboro.