

City of Lawrence
Social Service Agency
Bi-annual Report
2016

Reports on activity should be submitted electronically to Casey Toomay, Assistant City Manager, at ctoomay@lawrenceks.org. Reports on activities from January to June are due on July 15th. Cumulative reports on activities from January through December are due on February 15th.

Agency Name: Lawrence Community Shelter

Reporting Period (please check one):

☒ **X January - June**
(Deadline July 15)

☐ **January – December**
(Deadline February 15)

1. Give a **brief** narrative of the activities that were funded with City funds over the reporting period checked above.

Both directly and through our many valuable referral partners, Lawrence Community Shelter (LCS) provided a variety of social services, as contemplated by LCS's agreement with the City, including, without limitation, emergency shelter, case management, food, family program administration, employment program administration and vocational rehabilitation, housing assistance, and disability benefits assistance.

- 2. Provide specific detail (and supportive documents, if needed) to demonstrate progress made toward your goals/objectives.**

Statistic		As of 7/15/2016
Adult guests		63
Children		19
Guests employed		32
Average wage of employed guests		\$10.50
Guests receiving SSI/SSDI		8
Average monthly SSI/SSDI income		\$809
Guests participating in savings program		22
	Employed	17
	Receiving SSI/SSDI	5
Guests not employed		23
	Deemed capable of working	8
	Deemed not capable of working ¹	15
Average length of stay		
	Employed adults	143 days
	Guests receiving SSI/SSDI	212 days
	Guests with no income	280 days
	All adults	202 days
Guests admitted to detox		14
Guests admitted to drug rehabilitation		4
Guests hospitalized or treated at ER		59
Guests referred to mental health treatment		30

¹ Due to mental illness, physical disability or substance abuse disorder

3. How have you impacted the citizens of Lawrence?

With our programs for housing, jobs and job training, benefits, and intervention, under the guidance of our case managers and in collaboration with other area agencies, LCS strives to be the lead agency working to reduce homelessness in Lawrence and to afford such persons the support to become self-sustaining. LCS is the conduit agency for homeless people in Douglas County and surrounding area. Many such persons present to LCS suffering mental and/or physical illness, drug and/or alcohol addiction, and chronic and systematic joblessness. Through our programs, and with the help of many valuable service partners, many LCS guests are able to find temporary or permanent employment, treatment for mental and physical illness and substance use disorders, and transitional and permanent housing. Ultimately, some of our guests are able to get back up on their feet and become valuable and contributing members of our community. We believe that this is a substantial and highly valuable impact to our fellow citizens, both those who are guests here at LCS and also citizens at large of Lawrence.

4. What barriers, if any, have you encountered?

The main barriers to accomplishing the goal of self-sustainability for our guests are as follows:

- a. Residential options for mentally ill guests. There are very few long-term housing options for guests suffering from severe and persistent mental illness, especially for those with no source of income. Although serving as a long-term care facility is outside the scope of our mission, LCS ultimately serves that role for many of these guests because they have no other option. We continually search for options for these guests related to mental health treatment, employment, education, and housing, but it is very difficult to place them in independent, sustainable living situations.
- b. Mental health treatment. Due to funding cuts at the state and federal level, we find it very difficult to find suitable mental health treatment for our guests who suffer from severe and persistent mental illness. We work closely with the Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center, but we still struggle to get guests connected with the resources they need to treat their mental health issues.
- c. Substance abuse treatment. For many guests, a major driver of their homelessness is severe addiction and alcoholism. In-patient treatment options are limited, especially for guests with no insurance or source of income. We work with DCCCA to get such guests into treatment of some sort, but it is a constant challenge to persuade many such guests to attend an evaluation and/or comply with the resulting treatment recommendations. We also do not have a medical detox center in Lawrence, so we use LMH or the Johnson County detox facility.
- d. Housing inventory. There are also very few housing options for guests attempting to transition out of homelessness, especially those guests that have extensive criminal histories or rental history/eviction issues. We work closely with the Lawrence-Douglas County Housing Authority to get as many qualifying guests as possible into the Housing Authority system. Due to the limited number of vouchers issued by HUD to the Lawrence area, the wait time is typically 18 to 24 months. For guests capable of living on their own, we attempt to get them prepared to leave LCS in approximately 90 days. It is often very difficult to find a suitable housing option for a guest between checking out of LCS and getting into a HUD unit.
- e. Financial literacy and decision making. Financial illiteracy and poor financial decision-making are epidemics among our guests, from a failure or refusal to save money to a lack of budgeting to a destructive willingness to take on consumer debt to impulse purchasing. We spend a great deal of time counseling and coaching guests to learn about money and budgeting, and we work with HCCI to offer financial literacy and educational opportunities, but this is a vexing problem.

- f. Hopelessness. This is such a pervasive phenomenon that I will include in every report to every constituency that supports LCS. At the end of the day, one of the most difficult things we do is to try to instill a little hope in people who have many, many reasons to not have any hope about anything. When the answer to every inquiry is "Why should I? It will never work.", it can be a challenge to get some folks in the right frame of mind to move forward. Accordingly, in one way or another, in small ways and big ways, everything we do is designed to give a person a reason, if only the slightest reason, to have a tiny bit of hope. That tiny bit of hope can be the foundation, however small, for moving forward.

5. Review the line-item budget you provided in your application. How much of your allocation has been spent?

We received 50% of our allocation on June 28, 2016. This allocation totaled \$92,000 and was comprised of \$50,000 from the general fund and \$42,000 from the alcohol fund. We have not yet used any of this allocation. Per our budget plan and agreement with the City, we plan to receive the second half of the allocation in October 2016.