

City of Lawrence
Outside Agency
Bi-annual Report
2016

Reports on activity should be submitted electronically to Danielle Buschkoetter, at dbuschkoetter@lawrenceks.org. Reports on activities from January 2016 to June 2016 are due on July 15th 2016. Cumulative reports on activities from January 2016 through December 2016 are due on February 15th 2017.

Agency Name: The Shelter, Inc.

Reporting Period (please check one):

☒ 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.

The funds that we receive from the City are administered through our Juvenile Intake Program, which provides services to children as they are identified by law enforcement. Services designed to prevent system involvement are also connected to that program. Our City funds provide primary prevention for families meeting certain criteria for financial need. Since 1997, we have used City funds to pay for "Family Services" such as tutoring, drug/alcohol evaluations, monitoring, and treatment, as well as various other specific needs to help children remain out of the system, in school, and productive. We receive referrals for these funds from not only our Juvenile Intake and prevention staff, but also other agencies in the community, such as the Housing Authority, Bert Nash, DCF, infant/toddler programs, the schools, and the court. As we have been reporting for the last few years, the requests we have funded since 2008 have been shifting toward requests to pay for emergency needs to maintain basic housing and utilities for families. Lack of adequate housing is certainly a risk factor for system involvement, and therefore meets the criteria for these funds. Along with requests for housing and utilities, we have continued to serve a large number of at risk children by providing drug and alcohol monitoring for specifically identified children who are participating in our prevention/diversion programs. Use of drugs and alcohol contributes greatly to system involvement for the children we serve.

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

In the period from Jan 1, 2016, through June 30, 2016, we received 86 requests for these funds. We approved a total of 73 of those requests. The requests we approved were submitted on behalf of 86 different families, meaning that no family had more than one. Of the 73 that were approved, 33 were for drug and alcohol monitoring, 1 was to set up a method for a child who was not able to attend school to complete 8th grade core classes from home with a rented computer, 1 was for translation services to help a family participate in one of our programs, 1 was for a child in one of our programs to participate in Driver's Ed, and 37 were for issues related to housing and utilities.

Goal 1: We will serve 215 families in 2016. As of the end of June, we had served 73 families with these funds, meaning that as of that date we were not on target to meet this goal for 2016. Knowing that, we looked carefully at our usage for the first half of this year in an attempt to understand what had changed from prior years. We then made some adjustments that we believe will increase our ability to help children and families in the second half of the year and meet this goal. (See Question #4 re: barriers, below.)

Goal 2: We will provide budgeting help to 95% of families served in 2015. As has been the case in the past, we are excluding from this outcome the families who have received only UA (urine analysis) services for their children. We continue to provide UA services for children we believe need them, without assessing the family's financial situation. In doing so, we have avoided potential resistance from families and made sure those children who need UA's get them. Excluding the 33 families who received UA services only, we served 40 families in the first six months of 2016, all of whom received budgeting services.

Goal 3: At least 90% of families who have received Family Services funds will not have a child go through Juvenile Intake within 6 months after their case is closed. In order to monitor this goal, we looked first at families we served with Family Services funds from January through June, 2015. We served 93 families in that time period. Out of 93 families, 2 families had a child come through Juvenile Intake within six months after their case was closed, leaving 91 families whose children had no Juvenile Intake contact in the subsequent six month period ($91/93 = 97.85\%$). We then looked at families we served with Family Services funds from July, 2015, through December, 2015. We served 96 families in that time period. Out of 96 families served, 1 family had a child come through Juvenile Intake within six months after their case was closed, leaving 95 families whose children had no Juvenile Intake contact in the subsequent six month period ($95/96 = 98.96\%$). We met this goal for the last year.

3. How have you impacted the citizens of Lawrence?

As in the past, we believe that we have created social capital by reducing the risk of involvement with the court system for the children and families we have served with these funds.

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

As indicated in Question #2, we served an unusually low number of families in this six month period. In looking at our usage, we discovered that we had only written 14 checks for these funds in the first quarter, only 3 of which were written in March. That was highly unusual, and it did not seem possible that only 3 families in Lawrence needed our help in one month. On the contrary, in the second quarter, we had written 41 checks for these funds, which was a significant difference from the first quarter, but still somewhat below our usual usage.

In talking with our staff about this issue, they had a number of thoughts, one of which was that a person whom we have worked with regularly in a referring agency had been assigned to a different position, and was replaced by someone who apparently was not aware of these funds as a resource. While that particular situation has fixed itself, as the person who was familiar with us has recently returned to her previous job duties, it brought up a bigger question about how well we have kept in contact with other agencies in the community regarding the availability of our funds for this purpose. The other thought that our staff brought up was the difficulty some families have in meeting our criteria for accessing the funds. We have 3 criteria, as follows: (1.) The family must have children living in a Douglas County home. (2.) The family must have a referral source either from our agency or other agencies who can verify the situation that is putting the children at-risk for system involvement. (3.) The amount of money needed must either be in the \$200 range, or there must be a confirmed way to pay the amount needed that is above \$200. Staff reported that criterion #3 is the one that most often prevents us from helping some families who are very appropriate. Per our staff, the \$200 limit not only prevents us from approving applications, but it also prevents our staff and other referring agencies from making referrals because they know the need is above \$200.

While our usage had improved in the second quarter, we wanted to take steps to remedy the barriers that we identified, in order to make maximum use of these resources. The first step we took was to contact other agencies in the community who work with at-risk children to remind agency staff that these resources are available. The second step we took was to re-assess the \$200 limit that we have had in

place for many years. In doing some research, we found that rent at 1600 Haskell is generally between \$200 and \$300 per month, which is significant, as we deal with numerous appropriate families who live there. Staff also reported that we have had to turn away other appropriate families who could get their situation under control if they could just get help with one or two utility bills and the like, which would total more than \$200, but less than \$300. With that information, we decided that we would like to raise our limit to \$300. We then verified with Casey Toomay that we could make that decision, and then raised the limit starting in the third quarter.

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

As of June 30, 2016, we have spent \$9,891.33 out of our 2016 allocation of \$29,150. As indicated above, we have now taken steps that we hope will ensure that the rest of our allocation is distributed to appropriate families in the second half of the year.