

# Reducing Legal Barriers to Increase Housing

October 31, 2023 Provider Conference

## Notes:

Facilitators: Sonja Good Stefani

Moderators: Erin Goldwater and Doc Ramblings

## Notes

- Partnership w/ JOHS to provide legal services to participants facing housing barriers
  - Prevent eviction and deal w/ eviction history
  - Began ~1.5 years ago
  - Serves Adult, Family, Youth, and DV system
- Background checks (housing, legal, credit) used to screen people out = BARRIER
- 3 teams:
  - Collateral Consequence Barrier Reduction (7 attorneys)
  - Immigration (4 attorneys)
  - Housing (6 attorneys)
  - 10 support staff
- Collateral Consequence Barrier Reduction
  - Wide variety of legal/criminal barriers can be addressed (eg. expungement, SO registry relief, employment denial appeals, Driver's License restoration, fine/restitution relief)
  - **(LIST OF SERVICES)**
- Immigration Legal Services
  - Translation services available (Spanish in-house)
- Housing Legal Services
  - Eviction defense
  - Eviction record expungement
  - Debt negotiation and settlement
  - Vacating and dismissing evictions
  - Housing Denial appeals
- Who can refer:
  - 90 Family, 90 DV, 45 youth systems, 90 Adult
  - **(LIST OF REFERRING PROVIDERS)**
- 388 client served last year (FY 22-23) *465 different services*
  - Reached capacity in January
  - Adult system has most referrals
- Still referral capacity for this year (FY 23-24)
  - 175 clients served so far

## Questions and Answers:

1. Are the adult system referrals back open?
  - a. YES! Open on July 1st each year. Trying to take ~15 per week.
2. If someone is living in Washington County can they get services?
  - a. As long as they are in Service Point/HMIS for Multnomah County they are likely eligible.
  - b. Urban League of Portland has contract w/ Washington County housing services
3. How would we help someone get involved with this program?

- a. **(REFERRAL LINK)**
4. How does a CBO become part of that referring partnership?
  - a. Email Sonja directly and she will connect w/ coordinator to see about getting them added to the list.
5. Are there services for individuals who have a federal charge that are not able to access expungement?
  - a. There is no federal expungement statute, and the only option right now is a federal pardon.
6. Does the immigration department help with someone getting there I94?
  - a. YES
7. Do you help with motions to set aside default judgments?
  - a. Yes, in eviction court.
8. Do you ever help with fair housing complaints that may come up in answering an eviction, or do you refer those fair housing complaints out?
  - a. Yes, but have not yet received any issues for this under the JOHS contract.
9. Are the reasonable accommodation request cases related to eviction/housing cases or are they more like reasonable accommodation advocacy cases?
  - a. Both situations are cases they have dealt with and can help with.
10. How many referrals will be the maximum this year?
  - a. 340-350 is likely the maximum this year.
11. Do you have a typical timeline for service?
  - a. Usually < 2 weeks. Case is assigned out within 48 hours once accepted and attorney reaches out to clients within 1 week of assignment
12. Alternative provider when capacity is reached?
  - a. PCC walk-in clinic is one option with limited support for expungement
  - b. Oregon Law Center provides some eviction defense
  - c. Oregon State Bar has pro-bono

[note: the Zoom chat for this session was mostly questions that were captured and answered above]