

Job Readiness Services at The Bread of Life

Matt Estey and Beth Christopherson

University of Houston, Graduate College of Social Work



Introduction

At any given point in time there are over 10,000 homeless men, women, and children in Houston. Shelters, such as The Bread of Life, work to provide these individuals with a safe place to sleep, a shower, a hot dinner, and the opportunity to wash their clothes. To supplement these crucial services, we chose to provide the clients at The Bread of Life after Dark program with job readiness services. Overall, we served approximately 100 clients by providing them with professional resumes, email addresses, job search skills, and winning interviewing techniques.



Clients being served dinner at Bread of Life. Picture courtesy of breadoflifeinc.org

Project Format

Our project consisted of providing job readiness services to clients one to two times per week. In our first meeting with clients we conducted an intake as well as a psychosocial assessment. After each meeting we input the services we provided into the city-wide homeless tracking system. During our subsequent meetings with clients we assisted them with obtaining email addresses, writing customized resumes and cover letters, and preparing for interviews. Some clients we met with only once because they only requested brief services, such as creating an email address. Others, we had the opportunity to work with over a period of weeks or even months.

According to the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston...

- 9,692 homeless individuals are on the streets of Houston on any given night.
- More than 3,000 are considered chronically homeless
- 25% of these homeless individuals are youth
- More than 50% of these individuals have been diagnosed with mental illness
- More than 50% have complicated legal issues that prevent them from accessing services and employment
- 50% report having a substance abuse problem

Source: <http://www.homelesshouston.org>

Outcome

We provided employment services to approximately 100 clients. It was difficult to determine how many clients obtained employment as a result of our assistance since many work with multiple agencies. In addition, the homeless population tends to be transient, and we frequently were only able to see clients once or twice and were unable to track their employment outcomes. 100% of the clients we worked with received a service that would be helpful for their job search. Based on consistent client feedback, it was clear that the majority of our clients felt more empowered and hopeful after having received our services.

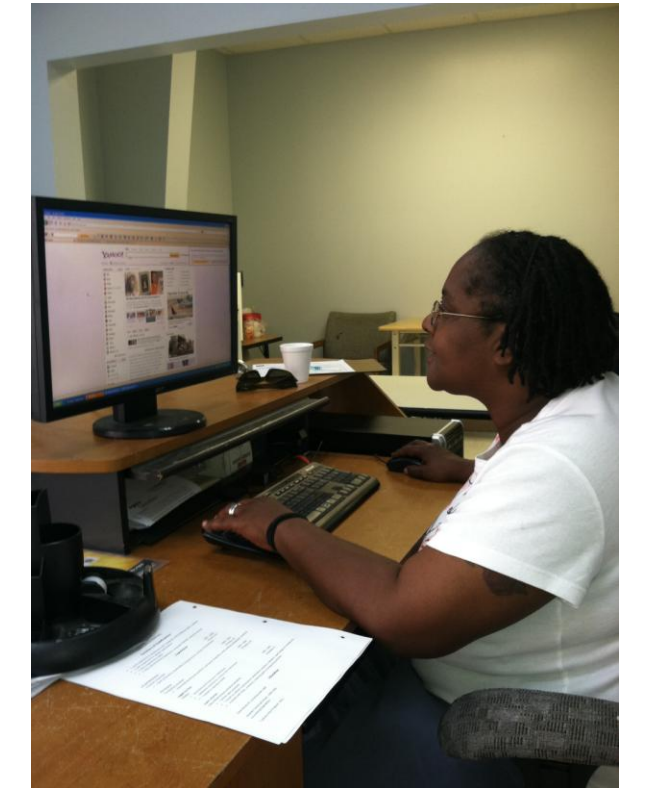
Reflections

With the long-term clients, we were able to join them on their journey which often brought many challenges, such as not having a reliable phone, consistent transportation, or professional attire. Seeing their struggles and successes gave us insight into how resilient many of these individuals are and the motivation to continue doing our best to serve them.

Participants and Activities



Client checking his email for job listings



Client performing an online job search



Clients eating and visiting at Bread of Life. Picture courtesy of breadoflifeinc.org

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