

NAMI Utah

IDIQ Request for Technical Assistance

Mental Health/Criminal Justice Focus Group Meeting
A planning meeting hosted by NAMI Utah
October 9, 2003
Sheraton – Salt Lake City
10:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Background

Recent events involving criminal justice and persons living with mental illness in Utah have received national attention. The media attention has provided a unique opportunity for concerned stakeholders in Utah to focus efforts on the plight of persons who have a mental illness and are considered offenders by the criminal justice system.

The state has seen considerable activity in the area of diversion efforts in recent years. The state boasts the implementation of both Mental Health Courts and Crisis Intervention Teams within the past two years. NAMI Utah is uniquely positioned to gauge the effectiveness of these efforts as the organization is actively engaged in person-to-person outreach to persons who are incarcerated and living with a mental illness.

NAMI Utah has a significant interest in continuing a dialogue on the important topic of jail diversion and the quality and effectiveness of services received by individuals with mental illnesses diverted from incarceration into treatment. Consistent with this interest, the organization is concerned about the most effective use of scarce resources, the use of best practices, and coordination between the many agencies involved in working with this population.

Nature of Requested State Assistance

NAMI Utah, along with its mental health coalition partners and the state's mental health authority, endorse greater collaboration in this area and coordinated planning towards meeting the needs of persons living with a mental illness who have interaction with the criminal justice system. With the assistance of Utah partners, the organization proposes to host a summit of key criminal justice and mental stakeholders as a strategy to initiate analysis and discussion of future actions.

Stakeholder Involvement

Prior to initiating this request, NAMI representatives have met with multiple stakeholders within the state of Utah, including senior officials of the state mental health authority, law enforcement agencies, community service providers, and members of the judiciary. NAMI Utah currently provides consumer run programs focused on criminal justice outreach. Consumer leaders were consulted in developing the concept for this activity. The forum and desired outcomes were discussed and support solicited.

Type of Assistance Requested; Expected Attendance

NAMI Utah requests technical assistance from NAMI through a forum presentation and event facilitation by Ron Honberg, JD. Honberg's presentation should cover an overview of the experiences of other states in developing a coordinated planning model focused on criminal justice concerns. As an expert in the field of criminal justice and mental illness, Honberg is also expected to facilitate the input of other event contributors and subsequent discussions and planning.

Summit organizers anticipate at least 45 participants. Attendees will include members of NAMI and partnering organizations, state legislators and policy makers, mental health professionals, housing representatives, vocational rehabilitation representatives, a local representative of the Social Security Administration (SSA), criminal justice and judiciary officials, and concerned community stakeholders.

Immediacy of Need

Planners have scheduled the summit for early October. This date was selected to give the planning group adequate time to develop a strategy in advance of the Utah legislative session that will convene in early 2004.

Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes of this activity are:

- Development of a core group of collaborating stakeholders focused on expanding evaluation of the criminal justice system and its interaction with offenders that have a mental illness
- Establishment of a Governor's Council on criminal justice and mental health
- Once concerns are identified and prioritized, the creation of a legislative task force to plan the enactment of recommendations

Organization Making Request

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