Zero: 2016
from Community Solutions

By-Name List Special Ops Learning and Recommendations for Practice

Version 1.0

(In the spirit of Quality Improvement, this document is subject to change based on learning)

Background

During the month of August, Zero: 2016 worked with 19 communities, and our federal partners at HUD and the Veterans Administration in the By-Name List Special Ops Challenge. Our objectives were to better understand how a By-Name List is defined and to identify best practices that can be used to create and sustain a list that accurately reflects the number of people experiencing homelessness at any given time in a community. The following guidance reflects our mutual learning and recommendations to be used to create or enhance your By-Name List and inform your ongoing targets toward reaching functional zero for Veterans and individuals experiencing Chronic homelessness.

Overview

Why are By-Name Lists important?

By-Name Lists are key to developing actionable, real-time datasets that can help communities reach the goals of ending Veteran and Chronic homelessness. A By-Name List serves as the centerpiece of a coordinated entry system and is supported by strong outreach and case conferencing processes. By-Name Lists give communities a robust set of data points that can be used in addition to PIT counts to define who is experiencing homelessness at any given time. A strong By-Name List can be used to plan estimations of future rates of homelessness, including inflow and refining performance management targets used to attain functional zero.

What is the definition of a By-Name List?

A By-Name List is a real-time, up-to-date list of ***all*** people experiencing homelessness that includes categories such as Veteran status, chronic status, active/inactive status, homeless/housed status, and more. By-Name Lists allow communities to know every person experiencing homelessness **by name** and facilitate efficient decisions around how best to refer individuals experiencing homelessness to housing resources. To foster collaboration and reduce miscommunication, ideally all agencies/teams involved in the process of housing people on a By-Name List are actively contributing to regular discussions, often referred to as case-conferencing, about the list.

Getting Started: Critical By-Name List Tools

- A common assessment tool that offers a standardized, community-wide set of questions and collects information about everybody experiencing homelessness by name.
  - Communities should also consider an alternative process for adding individuals who refuse or are unable to undergo the assessment. This process should be articulated in the community's Policies and Procedures.
- A release of information (ROI) that covers as many agencies as possible to allow for effective data sharing and case conferencing.
- A data platform and process that allows every agency to access real-time information in one single By-Name List.
  - Communities should decide locally what database will provide the right levels of access and data accuracy to inform the total number of people experiencing homelessness

Best Practice: Getting Started

- Conduct an outreach/assessment 'blitz' or Registry Week where all homeless individuals in your community are screened and identified by name using a common assessment tool.
  - Coordinate outreach to ensure every section of your CoC is thoroughly covered.
- Compile existing data from multiple databases into one list. Be sure to de-duplicate records and clean up any data accuracy or data entry errors.
  - By-Name List Data Guidance
- Confirm that every portal into the coordinated entry system uses a common assessment tool to screen new individuals and enters them into the community-wide By-Name List.
  - Portals might include outreach teams, 2-1-1, emergency departments and HOT teams, soup kitchens, drop-in centers, shelters, medical clinics, etc.
  - Include your local VA in every aspect of the By-Name List - entering veterans experiencing homelessness, viewing community lists, and actively case conferencing to avoid duplication, confirm Veteran status, and efficiently connect to VA housing and service resources.
- Ensure that the By-Name List does not become a static waitlist. Your list should be a dynamic case conferencing tool designed to continuously guide and assist every individual towards the most appropriate housing intervention with the ultimate goal of a Permanent Housing placement. Develop local prioritization protocols around:
  - How people will be prioritized locally (by VI-SPDAT score, chronic status, Veteran status, length of time homeless, tie-breaker scores, etc.)
  - A formal diversion process for those who will not be prioritized

    - A standard length of time for a housing provider to approve a client for a referral (What happens if the client cannot be located? How long do you wait?)
    - Processes for matching people at the top of the priority list with housing based on eligibility criteria

Best Practice: Maintaining an Accurate List

Case Conferencing

Depending on the size of your community, case conferencing is a weekly (or bi-weekly) meeting wherein people experiencing homelessness are referred to available housing resources, staff problem-solve barriers and remove roadblocks for individual housing placements, and housing navigators (or case managers or outreach workers) are assigned to prioritized clients and a housing plan is coordinated.

- Case Conferencing Meeting Practices
    - Hold weekly or bi-weekly Case Conferencing meetings with all relevant stakeholders.
    - Problem-solve barriers and remove roadblocks to housing placement during case conferencing meetings.
    - Develop written protocols around recommending individuals for housing.
    - Determine what to do when individuals can't connect to housing right away.
- Establish and track metrics for successful Case Conferencing practices, such as:
    - Length of time from assessment to service connection for priority populations
    - Length of time between identified housing option and client "match" or referral
        - Tracking refusals of PH as an intervention, in an effort to double back or rethink engagement strategies for that individual. Not as a option for measuring system effectiveness.
    - Percent of priority populations that are currently connected to housing navigation or a program with housing plan
    - Consistency and attendance level of case conferencing meetings
- Develop clear Housing Navigator roles and responsibilities:
    - Assign lead outreach workers / navigators to the highest prioritized individuals on the list as defined by the community
    - Change Housing Navigator assignments as needed
    - Celebrate and appreciate stand-out Housing Navigator achievements
- Plan for the long-term sustainability of effective Case Conferencing practices:
    - Who will lead the Case Conferencing meetings? Who is the back up person?
    - Will new staff/positions be needed to complete Case Conferencing / Housing Navigation, or will existing staff time be dedicated to this in the long-term?
    - Will Case Conferencing meetings be structured based on client subpopulation or otherwise?

- Special Cases: “Top 15” Most Vulnerable Clients or Alternate Processes
    - Ensure the case conferencing process does not result in a subjective process of referring people to housing by relying on data and protocols and not the loudest client advocate
    - Develop policies on how to connect clients to housing who are believed to be more vulnerable than their initial assessment indicates
    - Develop a standardized appeals process, including referrals for assessment and opportunities outside of the normal process to ensure case conferencing of all clients.
    - Develop protocols for clients who are very vulnerable but are not accepting services. In Hollywood, they hold a separate meeting wherein they coordinate housing and outreach plans for clients who have been identified as highly vulnerable but have been unwilling or unable to participate in an assessment.
        - Identify who is tasked with coordinating housing plans for these clients.

Outreach Coverage & Coordination

Fully coordinating outreach activities enables a community to identify everyone experiencing homelessness at any given time by ensuring your entire CoC geographic area is covered and prevents duplication of efforts.

- Engage outreach providers in an Outreach “Wall Mapping” Exercise.
    - Identify all providers, churches, individuals and other groups conducting outreach. Prevent duplication of Outreach services by engaging and coordinating with every single group or individual conducting homeless outreach in your community, even if they do not receive CoC funding
    - Engage providers in coordinating coverage of the entire geographic area, and identify hotspots where enhanced outreach may be necessary. Use a large printed and laminated map of your CoC to designate coverage and responsibilities.
    - Focus meeting with all outreach providers to identify challenges and desires around outreach
    - Develop an outreach engagement schedule that determines when and how often teams go out.
    - Ensure continued outreach coverage everywhere in your community, even to areas that no longer appear to have homeless individuals living in them
    - Some communities have found it beneficial to track locations where homeless individuals have been identified to inform future outreach efforts.
- Document policies and procedures to legitimize your Coordinated Outreach / Housing Navigation system to the world.
- Use your By-Name List as the centerpiece of Outreach and Housing Navigation efforts in your community (this is how you work your list).

- Determine a clear process map and transparent roles and responsibilities for Outreach Workers and Housing Navigators.
    - Empower Outreach Workers to function as Housing Navigators who can facilitate the housing process.
- Begin Case Conferencing as soon as any new individual is identified
- Use the Registry Week or Outreach/Survey Blitz model to jumpstart a new By-Name List or refresh an old one.

Managing the List

- Enact local policies and procedures for maintaining your By-Name List which include methods for keeping it updated and accurate.
    - Consider how new individuals will be added to the list and whether this can happen in real-time (ie, through enrollment in a program within HMIS)
- Determine who "owns" the list. Is there a lead organization for convening stakeholders for case conferencing?
    - The list should be managed by a responsible entity that has the ability to produce transparent data reports & analysis.
    - Need community-level trust and willingness to carve out time for staff to dedicate to managing a list.
    - The list is shared - all relevant agencies should be able to access and/or view the list.
- Document By-Name List Policies and Procedures
    - Develop a procedure for adding people to the by-name list
        - How often are individuals added? Who adds them?
    - Develop a procedure for recategorizing clients who have been housed or self-resolved without removing them from the list.
        - What are their names and what housing intervention did they receive? Tracking the number and identity of who got housed can streamline further outreach efforts and inform housing retention practices.
        - For clients who haven't been encountered for 3-6 months (or some otherwise justified length of time), place them on an inactive list or change their list status to "inactive".

Best Practice: Data Management

Strong data management practices allow communities to get an accurate picture of who is experiencing homelessness at any given time, helping achieve and maintain functional zero. A By-Name List should be housed in a database, and not thought of as just a simple, two-dimensional list of names.

- Segment your By-Name List database according to priority populations (i.e. Veterans, Chronic, Chronic Veterans, High Acuity)
    - Set up your By-Name List database to sort, filter, or report out by client acuity level or other appropriate characteristics.

- Use a Common Assessment Tool to collect a standardized minimum level of data on every client.
- Ensure that all agencies working with the By-Name List database have appropriate access/permissions. Set up procedures around database protections, permissions and back ups; give careful thought to who sees what type of data in what way.
    - Make sure to bring GPD and other transitional housing providers to the table to update the By-Name List with their clients.
    - Data sharing between the VA and the data platform containing the list is critical to managing the list.
- Use your By-Name List database to match homeless individuals to appropriate resources based on their acuity or VI-SPDAT scores.
    - Build housing eligibility requirements or functionality into your By-Name List database.
- Track the date that all common assessments and status changes are made in your By-Name List database so that historical data is always available to make inflow projections based on real-time data.
    - Once a client on the By-Name List database is housed, change their status to "housed," mark the date they were housed, and note the resource they used to get housed.
- Determine a universal length of time (or other standard measure) that determines when a client's status on your By-Name List database changes from "active" to "inactive" -- 3-6 months is a common threshold.
    - Never completely remove any living individual from your By-Name List database. For example, those households who self-resolve would be categorized as "housed" instead of completely removed from the list.
- Create database dashboard summaries to communicate performance towards functional zero to a wide audience.
- Consider crafting a role for a database manager; they are crucial to maintaining data quality, protecting client data, and promoting data integrity.
- Strive to keep your database nimble, lightweight and efficient: don't let it become weighed down with too many details that delay permanent housing placements. For instance, case management history or meeting notes are likely unnecessary to include.
    - Never lose sight of the fact that the primary function of your By-Name List database is to place homeless individuals into permanent housing.

Best Practice: Estimating Inflow and Establishing Functional Zero Targets

Well-managed data helps to track progress and plan for the future by informing real-time targets for reaching functional zero. By-Name List data can provide accurate Targets if it meets standards for:

- Breadth/Coverage
    - Know <u>all</u> people experiencing homelessness at any given time <u>everywhere</u> in

    your community
    - Use the Outreach Wall Map exercise to get a sense of Outreach coverage in your community's geographical area, and honor this in your By-Name List
    - Survey and regularly outreach to all hot spots/target areas, even after the area empties out
- Depth / Detail
    - Use a Common Assessment Tool, such as the VI-SPDAT, to ensure the the right level of information about each client is on your By-Name List
    - Track the percentage of clients on your By-Name List that have incomplete assessment data and continuously work to improve any holes in data quality
- Refresh Rate
    - Track how often and to what degree your By-Name List is kept up-to-date by formalizing procedures that affect the flow of names on and off the list, such as:
        - Adding new individuals to the By-Name List
        - Appropriately marking housed individuals
        - Appropriately marking inactive clients or individuals refusing services
        - Doing outreach blitzes or registry events
        - How long it takes for a change in a client's status to be reflected on the By-Name List

Additional Resources Available through Your Coach

Sample Release of Information forms

Sample Policies and Procedures

Sample Case Conferencing Agendas

Sample Job Descriptions for backbone positions for managing By-Name List