



Community-Based Services Service Coordination

The Developmental Disabilities Services Act requires that service coordination services be provided, directly or by contracted services coordination, to all Nebraska residents found to be eligible for developmental disability services. Service coordination not only involves the coordination of developmental disability services, but it also includes assisting individuals and their families in accessing other state and federal benefits and community resources in order to help the individuals we support live the most independent life possible.

The Division provides service coordination services through approximately 200 service coordinators and 18 community coordinator specialists that are employed by the Division. Based upon caseload demands, some of these positions are part-time. To ensure adequate access to people in services, these positions are spread geographically throughout the state. Significant efforts have been made within the past year to evaluate caseloads and expand community accessibility, which resulted in opening offices in both Cass and Sarpy counties. *A map identifying where service coordination staff are located is included in this section.*

Oversight, Leadership and Support

Previously, the service coordination leadership team consisted of a supervising administrator and five administrators with geographic-specific assignments and fewer service coordination supervisors to provide direct support to the service coordinators. The Division identified operational disparities in the various geographic areas, and realized that the existing structure did not provide adequate support for service coordinators in relation to training and technical matters. Over the past year, the geographical boundaries have been eliminated and administrator positions have been reduced and transitioned into additional service coordinator supervisor positions.

Now, service coordinators are provided oversight and leadership by an Administrator of Services and 22 service coordinator supervisors. This team coordinates the hiring, on-the-job training, and local oversight and direction for the service coordinators throughout the state. By reducing the service coordination supervisor caseloads, the supervisors are able to provide better support to their teams. The remaining three administrators have each been assigned specific subject matter areas where they are responsible for developing and ensuring state-wide quality and consistency.

Targeted areas of leadership and support include the following:

- In addition to the New Employee Orientation that was developed in 2010-11, a standardized, competency-based training curriculum is being developed for the service coordinator supervisors to implement with new staff. This will ensure that all service coordinators receive quality training and support in their crucial first year.
- In order to ensure consistency and quality state-wide, all service coordinators will attend a training event in April 2013 that will focus on the core duties and expectations on service coordinators. With the many changes that have been made over the past few years, it is important that training be provided to experienced service coordinators and not just new staff. *A copy of the curriculum for the April training event is included herein.*
- Operational Guidelines are being developed to provide staff with clear expectation and direction with regard to all core job functions. In our highly regulated environment, it is important that we provide front-line staff with adequate guidance to ensure that we meet all the necessary state and federal requirements. With clear guidance, more decisions can be made at the local level to enhance the provision of services.
- Efforts are in process to transition to an electronic case record (using an e-records system, similar to what has been developed at BSDC). Additionally, the Division continues the implementation of the Therap state-wide case and incident management system. These efforts will result in streamlining some of the administrative work that is required in service coordination, so that our team has more time to focus on the individuals that we support.
- A streamlined process is being developed to ensure that service coordinators can address service needs involving funding and resource issues in a timely and consistent manner. Service coordinators often struggle in these areas due to complicated financial rules and regulations, and previous layers of approval resulted in unnecessary delays. Thus, it is important that we provide better supports in these areas so that service coordinators have adequate time and resources to provide quality services to the individuals they support.
- Additional support is being provided to the local office to coordinate operational and technology matters (office equipment and supplies, telephone and equipment issues, etc.), so that the service coordination teams can focus on their primary goal of providing support to individuals in services.

The leadership team will continue to evaluate the needs of the service coordination team. Efforts will continue to provide better supports to the service coordination team, which will ultimately improve services to the individuals we support.

Targeted Caseloads

In addition to the Division's general service coordination services, a few teams have been developed to support people with specialized needs. The Transition Team is led by a transition manager and includes 18 community coordinator specialists. This team specializes in supporting people who live at BSDC and those from BSDC or other institutions who have transitioned into

the community. The Early Intervention Team is led by a service coordination supervisor and includes four full-time service coordinators. This team specializes in supporting youth with challenging needs to ensure that they get adequate supports during their developmental years to best prepare them to enter into adulthood. This team also is available to assist other service coordinators who may have an individual with similar needs on their caseload.

The Division has found targeted caseloads helpful, because it allows the service coordinators to develop particular knowledge related to the special needs of the individuals on their caseloads – and that can positively impact the quality of supports provided. The Division is currently assessing whether there are other areas where a number of individuals with similar significant needs (such as medical or behavioral challenges) exist that may benefit from having service coordinators with targeted caseloads.

Person-Centered Focus

Our service coordination team interacts with people receiving our services on a daily basis, and is comprised of quality employees who sincerely care about the quality of developmental disability services in Nebraska. They are excited to learn new skills and techniques, and constantly strive to ensure they are utilizing recognized best practices that focus on each person as an individual. The developmental disability industry nation-wide is touting the importance of “person-centered practices,” but our service coordination team in Nebraska has made this philosophy a reality. Our focus on individuals is simply part of what we do every day.

Attachments:

Attachment A: County Assignments Map

Attachment B: Service Coordination Training Info