An Innovative Public-Private Partnership to Expand the Social Safety Net

Laurence S. Rosen, Ph.D.
National Association of Welfare Statistics & Research
Chicago, Illinois

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Effective Collaboration among
- Community Organizations
- State Governmental Agencies
- Philanthropic Foundations

Innovative attention to the public safety net for distressed families and children
- Supplement state government services
- Faster, easier, local access to benefits
- No wrong door policy
$934 Million in benefits "left on the table"
MBA Goals

Technology:
- On-line benefit applications, etc.
- Simple, easy to use, widely available
- Reduce DHS staffing obligations

Outreach:
- Community-based, “client-centric”
- Community- and faith-based organizations
- Provide direct assistance to clients
MI Bridges Technology Platform

- On-line application for all DHS benefit programs
- On-line application for Medicaid
- On-line “Check my Benefits”
- On-line updates to client information
MBA Outreach

- Community Pilot Sites
- Prisoner Project
- Community College Pilot
- Demonstration Projects
Technology Issues

- On-time, on-budget software completion
- Development staff isolation
- No data reporting portal
- Limited data production of warehouse data
- No linkages to other data sets; could not test key research questions
- Proved data tabulations, not access to data
Impact

Monthly Average MBA Activity, MBA Pilot Sites in Southeastern Michigan, 2011 - 2013

Percentage of Benefit Applications Made Using MI Bridges, 2012-2013
Expansion

**Department of Human Services**

- Decentralize DHS staff, services
- Reestablish DHS Community Partner Program
- Align new Community Partners with MBA Community Outreach Pilot Sites

**AmeriCorps, UWSEM, and MAUW**

- Place AmeriCorps members at United Way Sites
- Access benefits through 2-1-1
- AmeriCorps members recruit new community partners
Sustainability

- MBA integrated into routine community partner services

- Community partner service levels:
  - Navigator Partners—provide support and assistance to clients
  - Access Partners—provide on-line access only

- DHS Community Resource Coordinators collaborate locally with community partners

- Community Colleges continuing as part of BACC program

- Prisoner Project’s future is questionable
Program Lessons Learned

- Expect a steep learning curve
- Spread seed money liberally
- Strong commitment and leadership from the public sector is essential
- Use data to manage and assess the program
- Get data commitments up front
- Train community partners to manage their own data
Technology Lessons Learned

- Require strong commitment to data production and use from public sector leadership
- Promote communications between software developers and program developers
- Create linkages between private sector and public sector data resources
- Promote timely data reporting
- Focus on analytics