

As part of its forthcoming request for proposals for Group Home, Shelter, and 1 on 1 Supervision services, the Arizona Department of Child Safety is in the process of studying the reimbursement structures and rates for these services. Burns & Associates, Inc. (B&A) is providing assistance in this initiative, including the administration of a survey to collect data regarding contractors' service delivery designs and costs. B&A conducted a webinar on March 22 to provide technical assistance related to the survey. This document summarizes responses to questions asked during the webinar and is intended to supplement the survey instructions.

As a reminder, completed surveys are due April 8, 2016 and should be submitted to bsmith@burnshealthpolicy.com. Although the survey is voluntary, all vendors are encouraged to participate as the information gathered will be a key consideration in DCS' review of group home and shelter rates.

GENERAL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

1. *DCS is in the process of rewriting service requirements. How will additional costs associated with these requirements be accounted?*

The survey, by its nature, collects data related to the historic cost of services. As the questioner notes, however, certain changes in service requirements may impact the cost of providing these services. Partly for this reason, the survey will be only one source of information considered in the rate review. Policy decisions are an example of other considerations that will inform the review.

More specifically, as rate models are developed B&A will work with DCS to identify changes to service requirements and account for the costs of these changes in the models. For example, if staffing requirements become more intensive (that is, lower ratios), the rate model would reflect this level of staffing rather than current staffing patterns.

2. *How should survey respondents provide other information that they believe should be considered as part of this rate review?*

As noted in the survey instructions, if there are any other factors that a provider believes should be considered as part of DCS' rate review, those issues and any supporting documentation should be included in the transmittal email when submitting the survey.

3. *How many providers received this survey?*

The survey was sent to all providers currently delivering shelter or group home services, using email contact information on record with DCS.

DIRECT CARE STAFF WAGES AND BENEFITS

4. *How should directors and other office staff who provide direct care be reported?*

If office staff regularly provide direct care (that is, working in the shelter or group home is part of their weekly schedule), they would be reported on both the Admin Staff and Direct Care Wages worksheets.

On the Admin Staff worksheet, report their full wage and benefit costs and then allocate their time across direct care, administration, and program support functions. On the Direct Care Wages worksheet, only report the hours and (associated wages) for their direct care work hours.

5. ***The survey instructions generally state that data should be reported for the respondent's most recently completed fiscal year, but the Direct Care Benefits worksheet requests 'current' eligibility and enrollment counts.***

As the questioner notes, questions related to employment counts and the number of staff eligible for or participating in each category of benefits asks for 'current' figures. These counts lend themselves to point-in-time numbers and we have found that providers can more easily report current figures than recreate these numbers for a specified date in the past. So, for these particular questions, we accept current figures. If current counts are significantly different from your agency's experience in the previous fiscal year, you can include an explanation when you transmit your completed survey.

FACILITY DETAIL PAGES

6. ***How should providers account for seasonal staffing factors (e.g., the need for more staffing when schools are on holiday or summer break)?***

The staffing section of the worksheets (Line 7 on the Shelter Detail worksheet and Line 8 of the Group Home Detail worksheet) should reflect typical or average staffing.

So, if home staffing varies based on school breaks, respondents should report the average daily staffing levels over the course of an entire year. For example, if Monday staffing is 20 hours for 75 percent of the year (39 weeks) and 26 hours for 25 percent of the year (13 weeks), the average would be 21.5 hours [(20 hours * 75 percent) + (26 hours * 25 percent)].

7. ***Where should costs related to treatment for bed bugs and repairing damage to homes be reported? Where should costs related to insurance for group homes be reported?***

Report these costs under the Facility Janitorial/Landscaping/Repairs/Etc. category (Line 9 on the Shelter Detail worksheet and Line 10 on the Group Home Detail worksheet). Insurance expenses should be reported on the Admin Other worksheet (Line 10).

More generally, if there is a cost that does not fit into the lists provided in the survey, there are opportunities to list these 'other' costs on Lines 19 through 21 of the Admin Other worksheet for agency-level expenses, and Lines 14 through 16 of the Shelter Detail worksheet and Lines 15 through 17 of the Group Home Detail worksheet for facility-specific expenses.

8. ***If a provider does not own or lease vehicles, but reimburses staff for the use of their personal vehicle, where should these costs be reported?***

Include any reimbursed mileage for the use of personal vehicles on the Annual Mileage line (Line 23 of the Shelter Detail worksheet and Line 24 of the Group Home Detail worksheet).