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Monthly I&R/A Liaison Teleconference
Thursday, July 7, 2011
11:30 am ET

Meeting Notes

Attendees

Kelsey Walter introduced herself, NASUAD's Rex O'Rourke and the guest speakers:

- Sherri Clark of AoA, who would provide an overview of AoA's "Toolkit for Serving Diverse Communities."
- Gretta Jones, Florida Department of Elder Affairs, and Beverly Burton, Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas, Inc., who would discuss Florida's efforts with regard to serving diverse communities.

SUAs and AAAs represented on the call included 15 states.

21st National Aging and Disability I&R/A Symposium

Ms. Walter provided highlights from the 21st National Aging and Disability I&R/A Symposium held in Dearborn, MI on June 5-8, including:

- Presentations from NASUAD, AoA, n4a, and the Lewin Group
- Focus on federal policy updates, innovative models of I&R/A programs and ADRCs, options counseling, veterans' directed HCBS, the Eldercare Locator and transportation
- Presentation materials are available on the NASUAD website at www.nasuad.org

NASUAD 2011 Information & Referral /Assistance Survey

Mr. O'Rourke discussed the work done on the survey that would be released today. He stated that:

- Results would help us identify and deliver specific services to I & R/A.
- The report produced would allow states and agencies to gauge their services in comparison to others.
- It would help to enhance and promote the services provided by I&R/A.

Question: In previous surveys, there were questions about AAAs bringing I&R/A services in-house. Will you still be tracking that information?

Mr. O'Rourke replied that this survey will not capture that information, however, we are working on another survey that looks at I & R/A from a state perspective, and will circle back with you about ensuring that this survey captures the structure of I & R/A services within each state.

Enhancing the Capacity of the I&R System to Serve America’s Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Aging Population

Mr. O’Rourke provided a concise description of the cultural and demographic shift that is occurring in America, and the impact this will have on I&R/A services throughout the country.

- Since 2005, the number of seniors above the age of 65 with limited English proficiency has increased by nearly 20 percent to 2.1 million people. Similarly, during the same time period, the number of seniors who are foreign born has increased by 900,000 to nearly 4.8 million people. In addition, the number of older lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals continues to increase as America’s population ages.
- Organizations can enhance their I&R/A services and advance cultural competence by, amongst other things:
 - 1) Hiring ethnically diverse staff;
 - 2) Providing superior interpreter services;
 - 3) Training staff on history and culture of client populations;
 - 4) Diversifying board and administrators; and
 - 5) Using peer educators to reach hard-to-reach populations.

Presentation by Sherri Clark

Ms. Clark said that it was a pleasure to meet some of the callers at the National Aging I&R Conference. She discussed the targeted language included in the Older Americans Act (OAA) to address people with low incomes, social and economic needs, limited English, and cultural and linguistic needs, and introduced the AoA’s AoA’s “Toolkit for Serving Diverse Communities.”

She stated that AoA believes in serving everyone with respect, inclusion and sensitivity, and that we recognize that service is not “one size fits all”. She discussed the “golden rule”, which is to treat others the way you would want to be treated, but that the toolkit offers the “platinum rule”, which is to treat others the way they want to be treated. She continued that the toolkit stresses the meaning of diversity going beyond race and ethnicity, to include individuals with disabilities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) older adults; homeless seniors; older adult immigrants; and many other populations.

She discussed the different programs out there, including one flexible meal program in northern Virginia’s Fairfax County which provides culturally appropriate meals for the Korean and Vietnamese populations that live there.

Ms. Clark described the four step process outlined in the toolkit as a flexible step-by-step program to address the changing needs of a diverse aging population:

Step 1: Assessments

- Organizational assessment: policies, procedures, bylaws, and community perceptions
- Staff assessment: knowledge, skills, and practices
- Self-assessment: personal attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors

Step 2: Identifying Resources About the Community

- Agency knowledge of the service community
- Partnerships and coalitions with representatives from diverse groups
- Client and community data, and client input

Step 3: Designing Services

- Delivery of services through marketing/outreach to clients, caregivers, and community groups
- Types of services to be delivered, as well as time and location of service delivery
- Barriers to service delivery and access

Step 4: Program Evaluation

- Organization and client evaluation of services
- Lessons learned
 - Is the program operating in the most effective way?
 - Is the program meeting objectives?

Some of the tools included in the kit:

- Companion presentations that you can use and tailor to your population
- Exercises that can be done with groups
- Extensive list of online resources around diverse populations
- Training techniques

Ms. Clark stated that AoA has gotten feedback on the toolkit, and will be adjusting it in the future to reflect the feedback received.

Presentation by Gretta Jones and Beverly Burton

Ms. Jones discussed the work that has been done by the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, including:

- Targeted language has been included in contracts, requiring that agencies make special efforts to do outreach to those with special needs, limited English, and other cultural and linguistic needs.
- The I& R/A training guide contains a module that makes all staff aware of cultural and linguistic diversity, and staff's issues in dealing with it.
- We have a translation service to assist elders who are not proficient in English, and might need assistance.
- We surveyed our own staff to see what languages they speak- to assist those consumers who might not be able to understand staff well enough in English.

She discussed Florida's 67 counties and 11 planning/service areas and some of the work done in them, including:

- In Broward County, we have an annual aging conference that is geared towards all of the cultural and linguistically diverse groups in southern Florida.
- One county solicited churches in the communities, as they often provide help to their homebound elders, to work as connectors to the people in their communities.

Ms. Jones discussed northwest Florida's work with 70 churches, initially, and that the partnership program with the churches was now statewide. We found that members of congregations were best aware of what was going on in their own communities, and able to help their seniors.

Ms. Clark mentioned a visit to Memphis, TN recently, where a Methodist hospital there had a representative in every church, so the church is made aware when a member is hospitalized, and can connect that person to services, and help with transition.

Ms. Jones emphasized the constant need to grow and learn, and that in our efforts to help individuals, enough is never enough sometimes. She cited a case where a hard of hearing client had given specific examples of how their office was not as sensitive to his hearing impairment as they could have been.

Ms. Jones introduced Katherine Goosney of the West Central Florida Area Agency on Aging, who spoke about her agency being very connected in their community, but that it never seems to be enough. Their agency partners with the Florida Council on Mental Health, among others, to expand their reach into the community and the services they provide. She described providing culturally specific wellness trainings, such as discussing chronic cell disease with the large Latino population, as it is a concern for them.

Ms. Burton stated that depending on the service area, 25% and 30%+ of the 60+ population is culturally and linguistically diverse in Florida. She discussed the statewide calls that are held monthly, and polling attendees for information about who they serve, and what services they provide to address these issues.

She presented the following information:

- Agencies discuss policies and procedures/methods that are clear and measurable in addressing diversity, such as having Spanish and Haitian Kreyol speakers on staff.
- Boards of directors must be culturally diverse, and representative of the communities in which they live.
- One county has monthly in-service calls covering diversity, with focus each month on a different topic: culturally competent elder abuse trainings, dealing with mental illness, elders with developmental disabilities.
- Some counties offer specific trainings on diversity etiquette
- Written outreach is done in Spanish and English, but Haitian Kreyol has been a challenge, as it is spoken and has not been a written language for very long. Outreach to the local Haitian community increased after the earthquake in that country.
- Miami's Dade County is unique, in that the minority is the majority there.
 - The staff there represents many Caribbean and Central American countries, and is trained with I&R/A staff, not separately.

Ms. Burton thought it was interesting to hear about flexible programming in meals, because in Florida, they couldn't get their culturally appropriate meals to meet nutritional requirements.

Closing

Ms. Walter thanked Sherri Clark, Gretta Jones and Beverly Burton for participating on the call.

She also provided information about the next meeting, which would be **Thursday, August 4, 2011 at 11:30 am ET**, and that N4a will be discussing their Eldercare Locator on that call.

- The call in information is as follows: 888-346-3659; Participant Pass code: 39660.