



Understanding Experiences of Black Clients Using Pierce County Coordinated Entry Services

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Racial Inequity - SPARC Report (Dones et al., 2018)

- “Although Black people comprise 13% of the general population in the United States and 26% of those living in poverty, they account for more than 40% of the homeless population, suggesting that poverty rates alone do not explain over-representation.”
- **Network Impoverishment** “. . . is not just that the respondents are experiencing poverty; the network itself functions in an impoverished state.”

Racial Equity Demonstration Project Workgroup

**HUD Racial Equity Demo Project
8 CoC's across the U.S.**

**Pierce County Demo Project
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CCA-TMA Cultural Hub Model of CE

a partnership between a traditional CE organization and a community-based organization at the level of the neighborhood or community that is considered a “trusted messenger” within the community it serves

- Modeled from CHiRP partnership between CCS and Tacoma Ministerial Alliance
- Goal of providing culturally competent community-based services
- CCS provides TMA with system orientation and support
- TMA serves clients and shares lessons learned

Client-Caseworker Relationship

- Trust is essential for gathering information, collaborative decision-making, and ongoing client engagement
- System navigation can be complex, and failure in one part can lead to distrust and disengagement
- Cultural competency can help in strengthening understanding, communication, and trust

Interview Study Methods

- Development of scripts and survey by workgroup
- Recruitment by AM and Brotherhood Rise Center
 - Black heads of households using CE in the last year
- Interviews by Rise Center Staff (December-January)
 - Audio-taped interview
 - Background survey
 - Satisfaction ratings (CE and caseworker)
- Transcription and Coding
- Drafting and refining report

Participants

- 16 Black heads of households
- 14 with children (12 women and 2 men) and 2 women without children
- 11 currently homeless; 9 homeless three or more times
- CE agencies
 - 10-12 AM, 4-7 TMA, and 1 or more with CCS
- CE services
 - 7 Diversion, 2 Priority Pool, 5 indicated both, 1 unsure, 1 neither
- CE contact ranged from 1-2 conversations to daily/weekly contact over months

Findings - Mixed Overall Satisfaction

Satisfaction with Coordinated Entry	
● <i>very or extremely satisfied</i>	5
● <i>somewhat satisfied</i>	6
● <i>not at all satisfied</i>	4
Satisfaction with Caseworker(s)	
● <i>very or extremely satisfied</i>	8
● <i>somewhat satisfied</i>	3
● <i>not at all satisfied</i>	4
Qualitative Caseworker Themes	
● Mostly or all positive	6
● Mostly or all negative	3
● Mixed and/or different staff	7

Life Challenges and Race-Related Themes

Life Challenges Alongside CE

- Housing (9+)
- Parenting, childcare while homeless (7)
- Financial challenges (5)
- Health, emotional, financial strain (4)
- Unfamiliar with Pierce County (2)

Race-Related Themes

- Housing discrimination (7)
- Systemic and everyday racism (5)
- Felt CE treatment was non-discriminatory (4)
- It would help if caseworker was Black (2)
- Caseworker connected me with Black people (1)
- Training would be helpful (1)

Positive/Helpful Aspects of CE

Housing resources (10 participants total)

- Housing that came through (4)
- Housing list (3)
- Moving costs (4)
- Place to stay while waiting (1)
- Case worker connected regularly with landlord (1)

Other helpful resources or referrals (6 participants total)

- Furniture (4)
- Food (3)
- Personal hygiene and diapers, employment, school, parenting support, counseling (1 each)

Problems/Negative Aspects of CE

Issues of timing (11)

- Waiting (9); Uncertainty about when/if things will happen (4); Rushed to do things (1)

Housing resources (10)

- Housing option affordability (5); Housing lists not helpful (4+); No temporary housing while waiting (2); Poor quality housing referral (1); Income too high for PP, had to quit job (1); Past eviction (1); Got nothing (1)

Complexity and poor understanding of CE (6)

- Unclear (4); Too complex (3); Too many hoops and tasks (4); Misunderstood (1)

Negative emotional toll (6)

- Frustration, disappointment (4); Invisibility (4); Stress, anxiety (2)

Other problems (4)

- Residency in two counties complicated eligibility for CE (1); 211 rudeness (1); Lack of initial responsiveness (1); Easy to fall through the cracks (1)

Caseworker Positive Themes (11 participants total)

- Regular, responsive, consistent communication (9)
- Trustworthy, honest (8)
- Encouraging, supportive (4)
- Transparent, clear, direct (3)
- Multiple communication methods (text, call, email, etc.) (3)
- Followed through (3)
- Shared my identity (3)
- Provided helpful pushing (2)
- Organized (2)
- Comfortable; Respectful; Flexible; A friend; Being able to change caseworkers (1 each)

Caseworker Negative Themes (10 participants total)

- Unresponsive (9)
- Ineffective (4)
- Not trustworthy (3)
- Not enough communication (3)
- Unreliable, inconsistent (2)
- Confusing, not clear (2)
- Didn't follow through when I did my part; Didn't remember me; Had an attitude with me; Said what I wanted to hear; Re-opened trauma (1 each)

Key Findings and Recommendations

- Caseworker responsiveness and communication matters
 - Support caseworker capacity and flexibility
- Trust in caseworker and CE system matters
 - Cultural competency, consistency, follow-through
 - Improve housing resources (lists of affordable/available housing)
- Clients experience CE as complex and uncertain
 - Reduce wait times, clarify timelines, provide online information
 - Minimize numbers of touch points
- Black clients experience racial discrimination and trauma
 - Expand cultural hub services
 - Assess outcomes using a Targeted Universalism approach
- More housing is needed - both permanent and temporary



Thank you!

Questions and Feedback Welcome!

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