



SIF CLASSIC GRANTEE PERSPECTIVE

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Our Program

When we started on the SIF journey, CSH was looking to develop housing solutions for the cohort of homeless individuals with chronic health conditions who are super utilizers of crisis health services. Our solution to this complex problem which we are testing through the SIF sub grantees in 4 distinct communities, brings together the best of what we know works in ending homelessness with some of the most innovative solutions for improving health and lowering health care costs. We are bringing together supportive housing, using a housing first approach that helps people move directly into affordable housing and then offers voluntary services to support housing stability, coupled with data driven targeting to identify and engage super-utilizers. Additionally, the model is underscored with the added component of care coordination, patient navigation, and direct linkages to primary and behavioral health care.

Through SIF, CSH saw a rare opportunity to broaden the conversation around the integration of health and housing and build the business case to scale our efforts through new financing mechanisms available via Medicaid. The CSH SIF initiative is a five year demonstration program where we will house 549 individuals in this integrated model. But our true goal in implementing SIF is to develop a model that we can replicate across the country - to create a blueprint for linking mainstream housing and health resources and scale the model.

The Value of Evaluation

Scaling is what makes the evaluation component of SIF so crucial. Through analysis of administrative data, along with qualitative analysis, the evaluation will hopefully not only demonstrate positive impacts on individual lives but will also engage new systems, document the service delivery model and provide the lessons learned and policy recommendations needed to bring SIF to scale.

Given CSH's desire to have one single evaluation that captured the impact of the model as well as its distinctions across all four sites, we decided to design what is called a Unified Subgrantee Evaluation Plan. While utilizing one evaluation model allowed us to support the sub-grantees in a more proactive way and take some of the evaluation responsibilities off of them, it brought to light some key considerations that CSH needed to address around:

- The selection of Sub grantees,
- The internal management of the SIF evaluation and
- Technical support needed by the SIF grantees.

When thinking about your capacity in each of these areas there are some questions that you might want to ask of your organization and your potential sub-grantees

- Who on your staff has extensive knowledge of evaluation research designs and implementation?

- To what extent can you support the development of evaluation plans for other organizations or potential subgrantees
- Have you conducted an RFP process before?

Based on your responses, you may need to think about centralizing some of the evaluation responsibilities with-in your organization and building the capacity of your organization in the areas you have identified gaps.

Understanding Organizational Capacity

At CSH we dedicated a person to over-see the evaluation. Additionally each site has a technical assistance liaison who works with them on-the ground to provide technical assistance around implementation, evaluation and sustainability efforts. Also as part of your selection process, CSH recommends assessing the ability of each site to access the administrative and other data you are prioritizing in your evaluation design as well as the evaluation readiness of potential subgrantees. This will allow you to gain an understanding of the organization's evaluation capacity.

While CSH has always prioritized evaluation in its own initiatives, the SIF allowed CSH to heavily invest in evaluation for the first time and to local supportive housing providers to build their capacity to collect data and imbed evaluation in their work. For many of our sub grantees, this was the first time they participated in a random control trial design evaluation and it was an opportunity to support and build their capacity in this area.

CSH took two important steps that have been crucial to its journey as a SIF intermediary: we contracted with an interdisciplinary team at New York University and we created an evaluation team to support the technical assistance with each of the sub grantees. Through SIF, each sub grantee received direct support in implementing the evaluation, in accessing and collecting administrative and client level data, and in using early findings to support both implementation and scaling efforts.

Our Program Structure

Internally, CSH meets monthly with all staff working on the SIF to share updates, problem solve and coordinate across all aspects of the effort and we meet bi-weekly with the New York University team to ensure successful roll out of the evaluation. In this call we provide status updates from both CSH and NYU perspective, talk about data collection and quality assurance related to data and talk through the analysis and timeline. We also field site specific requests, coordinate on presentations and ensure that we have real time interim findings that we can communicate out.

Each subgrantee had support from both the CSH technical assistance team as well as direct support from the New York University evaluation team through regular webinars, one on one calls and even an annual site visit. Our evaluation partner is also a key participant in our annual Sub grantee convening. This direct connection between the evaluator and the sub-grantees has been extremely valuable in building sub grantee investment in the evaluation.