

Watts Labor Community Action Committee

Benefits Enrollment Center Best Practices Report

2019

Introduction

The Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLCAC) is a community based non-profit corporation located in Los Angeles, California. Its founder Ted Watkins was a civil rights and union activist who established WLCAC as one of the first anti-poverty agencies in the greater Los Angeles area, serving more than 30,000 residents annually. WLCAC's mission is to improve the quality of life for the residents of South Los Angeles, Watts, and surrounding communities, providing services to the most disadvantaged and under-resourced populations of elderly and disabled African-American and Latino seniors, families, and youth.

WLCAC's scope of business is broad and diverse, comprising an array of human services, economic development training, and community preservation initiatives. In addition, WLCAC has built and continues to manage more than 1,000 units of residential, commercial, and industrial properties for low-income families, senior citizens, and disabled individuals as well operating five multipurpose senior centers. Our organization's pledge is to increase needed services, decrease poverty, and make resources available to everyone.

Proposed Benefits Enrollment Center Model

WLCAC was eager to adapt the Benefits Enrollment Center (BEC) toolkit as it has proved successful in serving low-income Medicare eligible seniors nationally. Likewise, WLCAC's BEC team successfully developed a coordinated delivery system to launch the BEC program services. Our approach includes the Internal Tracking System (ITS) shared by case managers and support staff. Our ITS is also being configured to track the distribution of fliers and informational materials to homebound seniors. The ITS is a matrix that contains client data of weekly enrollment, impact, product output, and delivery progress. This determines if further evaluation is needed and where gaps are most prevalent. The ITS critically assesses:

- BEC services and delivery, including client satisfaction
- Effectiveness of service delivery methods by zip code/neighborhood
- BEC client linkages to other internal/external programs

- BEC outreach methods: frequency and capacity

The WLCAC BEC has successfully integrated a culturally competent and progressive outreach team to provide bilingual enrollment services (English/Spanish). Our community involvement includes: interfacing and building partnerships with local churches and faith organizations and liaising with community-based agencies such as the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, the Veterans Community Employment Development, and more. Additionally, the BEC has increased benefits to disabled and aging veterans through scheduled program recruitment events at veterans' facilities.

The BEC provides core and support services through local community multipurpose senior centers which are a vital part of the BEC coordinated system. Multipurpose senior centers provide case management, transportation, hot meals, and evidence-based health promotion programs such as diabetes and healthier living workshops to all BEC participants. Furthermore, orientations have been facilitated and moderated by the BEC senior advisory council members. The purpose of these meetings is to gain support and assistance in the rollout of the BEC program, as well as to learn of other hidden disparities the population might be encountering. All the above achievements and undertakings are applied and monitored in the ITS.

Challenge #1

According to the Los Angeles Housing Service Authority (LASHA), homelessness in the county of Los Angeles increased to nearly 60,000 and 36,000 in the city, of which 7% are senior citizens. WLCAC encountered specific challenges related to homeless outreach and increasing access to BEC application sites for homeless seniors.

Best Practice #1

To address the issue of serving the homeless, WLCAC:

- Provides outreach materials to case managed homeless, formerly homeless, and disabled.
- WLCAC Multipurpose Centers (MPCs) Prop A transportation program provides pick-up for homeless and disabled seniors to come to BEC appointments.

Challenge #2

The number of SNAP/CalFresh recipients in Los Angeles' 9th District is 12.1 to 16%, the second highest in Los Angeles County (California Budget & Policy Center, 2019). WLCAC found the need for additional laptops to meet online application demand. We are seeking funding through the City of Los Angeles and council office to purchase at least 3 laptops.

Best Practice #2

WLCAC adopted the "Hero Model" to utilize an established champion for publicity of services: Our hero is Ninth District Councilmember Curren Price, Jr. Mr. Price educates councilmember and staff about benefits; communicates with the District Chief of Staff, District Director, and the Senior Field Deputy; and helps WLCAC collaborate with the Council District Communications Director about marketing, outreach, and branding. Price sustains an electronic flow of weekly correspondence of new information, milestones, and events to the Council District Communications Director, and utilizes the influence of his council office to facilitate BEC events throughout his district/keep them informed of outcomes.

Councilmember Curren D. Price, Jr. is the top champion of the WLCAC SNAP/CalFresh initiative in the Ninth District. We are successfully teaming up with district staff to disseminate a SNAP/CalFresh campaign.

Best Practice #3

The Internal Tracking System (ITS) has proven to be a valuable tool in tracking clients and follow-up:

- The ITS tracking sheet is shared with case managers and housing coordinators.
- Using the ITS, case managers document client demographics.
- The BEC case manager and housing coordinator use the ITS as a tracking and follow-up tool.
- The ITS matrix is electronically shared to ensure no duplication.
- The BEC coordinator receives the ITS by the fifth of the following month for reporting.

Best Practice #4

WLCAC nutrition drivers will distribute informational flyers to 450 homebound older adults about the SNAP/CalFresh program. The BEC Coordinator and

enrollment aides follow up with a phone call to set up appointments for home visits or arrange transportation for clients to complete SNAP/CalFresh applications at one of the five WLCAC senior centers.

Seniors who enroll receive a free hot lunch and information about BEC core and center social services. The BEC coordinator tracks weekly enrollments using a matrix to measure impact, output, and test program design. Case studies document and inform best practices, successes, challenges (changes made as needed).

Client Stories

Charlayne Browe is the WLCAC Resident Service Coordinator at the Alice Manor and Ramona Estates senior housing, providing case management and support services for 120 residents. She received cross-training for the National Council on Aging's (NCOA) SNAP/CalFresh and Benefits Enrollment Center (BEC) programs.

Dolores Caldwell is 83 and resides at Alice Manor. She just enrolled in SNAP/CalFresh benefits. Ms. Caldwell states:



Dolores Caldwell - Alice Manor resident: *"I am so excited that these services have finally come to our community. Because of this program, I will now be able to purchase healthier foods."*



Leaster Cheatham - Alice Manor senior housing resident:
“Thank you National Council on Aging for bringing these very important benefits to our community!”

National Council on Aging ■ 251 18th Street South, Suite 500 ■ Arlington, VA 22202
571-527-3900 ■ ncoa.org ■ [@NCOAging](https://www.instagram.com/NCOAging)