

Developing Permanent Housing

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This illustrates the complexity and time requirements of combining an innovative program model with new construction or substantial renovation.

Introduction

Current approaches to funding and service delivery systems for end-of-life care have left huge gaps that force homeless, multiply diagnosed, terminally ill people with AIDS to seek out fragmented services that are inappropriate and not cost effective. Often they must access multiple services while living in housing (often temporary or unstable) that does little if anything to facilitate utilization of vital services. In contrast, Canaan House provides permanent supportive housing for the multiply diagnosed, HIV-positive client in an apartment-type setting that will serve up to 10 residents in the Jersey City area.

The goal of the Canaan House Project is to help clients live in the community as independently as possible for as long as possible, by making it easier for them to use community-based medical and social services, by adapting to their specific housing needs and developing a socially supportive environment within the building and surrounding community. During the past three years, the project has learned a number of instructive lessons on how to plan for the acquisition, rehabilitation and implementation of permanent housing for this population.

Location

Hudson County, centered in Jersey City, has the second-highest seroprevalence rate in the U.S., exceeded only by New York City, its immediate neighbor just across the Hudson River. Among the many unmet needs of people with AIDS in Hudson County, none is felt more urgently than the need for permanent housing. This is especially true for homeless people living with HIV/AIDS who are affected by severe, persistent mental illness and/or addictions, a need also identified by the Hudson County Ryan White Planning Group. The

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local situation is particularly difficult in light of the increased scarcity of affordable housing in the area, brought on by local redevelopment and economic growth.

Background

Catholic Community Services is the nondenominational social services agency sponsored by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Newark. It serves Hudson County and the three other counties that make up the Archdiocese with a wide variety of programs for individuals and families, carrying out the traditional role of the Catholic church in serving the poor.

The existing continuum of care for Hudson County's homeless population includes St. Lucy's (a short-term shelter) and Franciska House (transitional housing). Canaan House will fill the gap and provide permanent housing. St. Martin de Porres House, an end-of-life residential facility is now in development under CCS' sponsorship.

Canaan House Model

CCS developed the model for Canaan House in response to a need for permanent housing perceived and expressed by clients in current case management, emergency shelter and transitional housing programs. A local needs assessment, involving service providers/clients in other local programs and in relevant planning

bodies (i.e. Hudson County AIDS Task Force) confirmed that permanent housing was a client need. CCS also was motivated by the high rates of HIV in the metropolitan areas and by the need to provide HIV/AIDS clients with a continuum of HIV-related services including housing. The model conceived by CCS uses an urban apartment house setting to provide residents with:

- permanent, affordable housing with an individual lease and rent level based upon a percentage of documented income;
- related supportive services (such as client education, support groups, case management to facilitate links to other services);
- transportation to needed services and other activities;
- 24-hour, 7-day-a-week access to program staff/services.

Residents will live independently and have individual leases. Potential conflicts between residents' roles as social service clients and as building tenants will be minimized by the use of "blended management." A program manager (in cooperation with a case consultation team) will oversee the social service aspects of the program and facilitate service linkages for tenants. A parallel building manager will be charged with maintaining

the building in good working order, and a resident superintendent will have day-to-day responsibility for operations.

An existing apartment building was purchased and plans developed to renovate this building to provide eight one-bedroom units and one two-bedroom unit (with additional space being readied for future renovation of an additional three one-bedroom units).

Lessons Learned

The original development plan for this project anticipated that construction would be completed within one year of the grant award and full initiation of program services would commence within six months of completing the renovations. In reality, construction began some 30 months after the execution of the contract between HUD and CCS in January 1998 and program services will probably not start until the first quarter of 2001 at the earliest. While the overall program model did not change, adjustments had to be made to the building design and to the implementation schedule for the program due to:

1. Accommodate unforeseen delays and the funding and cash-flow issues that surround them;
2. Governmental administrative and fiscal requirements (such as accessibility, environmental review, zoning) familiar in the world of housing development, but largely outside the experience of social service providers such as CCS;
3. Local concerns about the project and convert initially adversarial relationships into constructive and supportive ones.

Lesson #1: Contingency planning is critical.

Under the best of circumstances, construction is time consuming and subject to delays and unforeseen circumstances. Departures from the planned schedule in the Canaan House Project have resulted from both these usual construction-related conditions such as unforeseen changes in regulations, and from the agency's unfamiliarity with codes and procedures. Canaan House has been able to ameliorate some of these problems by working with an existing housing developer, securing a construction bond in a timely manner, and seeking knowledge and assistance available within the agency and outside. A major lesson has been to be sure to build sufficient time into the project timetable if it involves new construction or renovations. Realistically, the project could take at least three years from conception to completion, especially if construction of permanent housing is planned.

These lengthy timetables can create additional problems if financial planning has not factored delays into the process. This is particularly critical for many social service agencies that do not possess funds to cover expenses until construction is completed and all reimbursement secured. Planning should reflect financial

Plan for resources to cover:

- delays
- inflation/cost of living
- increases
- increased labor
- increased/extra materials
- building deterioration

resources. Inflation or cost of living increases should be built into initial renovation/building estimates as fluctuations in the housing market, increased labor/materials costs and ongoing building deterioration (especially if renovations are delayed) will significantly increase costs. If possible, have a formal, long-term financing plan (that incorporates funding from several sources) in place to ensure renovation cost overruns are covered and that program services can be continued after the present funding expires.

Lesson #2: Know the administrative requirements.

As social service providers move into becoming providers of specialized housing, they confront an unfamiliar world of planning, regulation and financial constraints. Learning the requirements in advance and attempting to plan around them can make navigating the system easier. Four that require particular attention are:

- **Zoning.** Investigate the zoning of proposed site up front. By selecting a building or a lot already zoned for the type of program to be developed, delays from open hearings on rezoning can be prevented.
- **Environmental reviews required prior to renovations.** CCS had trouble coordinating review and approval of the site environmental review between the regional HUD office and the municipality, who usually oversees these functions for its local HUD formula grantees. This caused a number of delays in the project. In the future, CCS would clarify the relative responsibilities with the regional HUD office at the start of the renovation planning process.
- **HOPWA funding requirements.** Investigate what is required by the HOPWA legislation. The regulations outline grantee obligations and program requirements for HOPWA recipients. CCS was able to build a number of these provisions into the project by reviewing this legislation in the initial planning stages of the project.
- **Legal aspects.** Because housing rather than social service projects often fall under the purview of local fair housing and antidiscrimination legislation. It is important to review this as early as possible so as to incorporate it into tenant selection processes.

Lesson #3: Develop community relations early.

HIV-related housing is not always welcomed enthusiastically by the surrounding neighborhood. Canaan House faced a substantial measure of community opposition early in the project. This opposition has been largely overcome with a concerted program of government and community outreach. Developing relationships early in the process is very important if the community is not to feel excluded and threatened by the proposed development. CCS would have reached out to the surrounding community earlier in the development process in an effort to offset some of the delays that resulted from local opposition to the program. Developing relationships among not only the community, but also with local government officials/agencies, other providers and with surrounding clergy is vital in order to facilitate solutions to barriers that will be encountered in the development process.

Canaan House Chronology

November 1997

- CCS is formally awarded grant under the HOPWA competition program to begin development of Canaan House.

March 1998

- A program manager is appointed for the project.
- With the guidance of Catholic Community Services' housing development agency (Domus), a local architectural firm is retained to provide input and supervision to the renovation aspect of the project.
- As a preliminary to community outreach, staff meet with local council member representing the area where the project will be located to introduce her to the agency and enlist her assistance in establishing a community meeting.

April 1998

- A community meeting is held to familiarize the neighborhood with the Canaan House project. Although invitations were sent to local block associations, political/spiritual leaders in the city, notices were also sent to media and posted in local business establishments, attendance at the meeting is very low.

May 1998

- The project development team holds the first of many organizational meetings to discuss coordination of the various aspects of project development and planned building renovation.
- The project architect is contacted to schedule a review of the building, as preliminary to completing the environmental survey required by Jersey City building codes.

June 1998

- Architect completes walk through of the building, and the program manager outlines the program's service needs to aid the architect in the developing a work estimate and renovation plan.
- Staff from Evaluation and Technical Assistance Center (ETAC) at Columbia University have first meeting with Canaan House development staff. Reviewed draft of evaluation plan and begin work on linkages template, an instrument illustrating the service linkages in which Canaan House will participate.

July 1998

- Staff complete first version of linkages template.
- Development team and architect meet to discuss project and renovation schedule. Financial estimates cause consideration of alternative design options
- Delays occur in the separate environmental surveys required by Jersey City and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

September 1998

- Evaluation of Canaan House project is reviewed by Catholic Community Services' Institutional Review Board (IRB) meeting. IRB suggests items for consent forms.
- Second ETAC visit to address concerns about study structure and use of control groups.

October 1998

- Planning begins for admission to and management of Canaan House. This is a complicated issue, as each tenant will have an individual lease (as in most other housing) but the lease must allow for occasional absences for needed treatment. Contacts are made with other CCS housing programs to request copies of their leases for possible use at Canaan House. Staff also met with HIV/AIDS related housing projects of CCS to seek input on admission standards for Canaan House and explore ways to structure program to assure best chance of client success.
- Delays continue in environmental survey processes at both city and federal levels.
- Development team meets to discuss status of renovations and plan for next phase.

November 1998

- City of Jersey City completes the environmental survey of Canaan House under the direction of HUD and sends results to HUD regional office. This is some four months after process started, in July.
- Project development staff completes first draft of admission criteria as well as rough draft of the admission procedure. To ensure consistency with evaluation plans, ETAC staff review the documents during site visit. ETAC also further refines research plans and evaluation tools.

December 1998

- Program manager and CCS staff held meeting to review latest draft of research plan. Determine to use same core instruments as used by another CCS-sponsored HUD/HOPWA SPNS project, Operation Link. This coordination of instruments will contribute to comparability of client and outcome data across two different CCS-sponsored projects serving slightly different clientele.
- Staff drafts and revises outline of program services; planning for services continues and conducts assessment of media needs for the new project such as client-recruitment advertising, community outreach, agency publicity, are among the needs considered.
- Program management staff meets with project architects for building review and drawings. It is now six months after the architect began work on the project.

January 1999

- ETAC evaluator submits draft evaluation plan to CCS staff, for review and revision.
- Staff and architect review preliminary design drawings, staff recommends adjustments based on program needs.
- In the first hint of community opposition a local clergy member, claiming to represent block association, voices concerns regarding the project.

February 1999

- Second community meeting held to address community concerns (primarily centered around property values and neighborhood quality of life issues) raised at the previous meeting in January 1999. Participants agree to form a committee to study the matter further and continue dialogue.
- Project staff met with representative from a supportive housing agency to discuss how the organization could supply technical assistance to the project. The agency will assist in development of the lease, comment on development of program services portion of the project. It also agrees to provide additional materials for use in the development and implementation of the program model.

March 1999

- Site visit by ETAC leads to further refinement of evaluation plan and evaluation tools.
- Relations with community appear to be deteriorating. CCS learns of meeting scheduled by local clergy member and his block association to which CCS is not invited. Despite numerous attempts by CCS staff, CCS is unable to schedule follow-up committee meeting as agreed at the previous month's community meeting.

April 1999

- Community committee chair calls program manager and advises CCS that the committee is not needed since the Canaan House project is not wanted in the community at all. CCS begins to enlist support from other neighborhood organizations, contacts various city agencies to discuss project and possible sources of support.
- Supportive housing agency provides legal assistance to CCS staff, as requested. Aspects of leasing and tenancy are finally clarified.
- Staff completes and sends annual progress report to local and national HUD offices.
- Architects finish final drawings and send them to the project developer for review.
- Delays in bidding process for construction services begin to result from continued delays in HUD's confirmation of its review of environmental survey.

June 1999

- Program development team met to continue planning, met with ETAC evaluator to continue work on evaluation tools.
- Staff meets with city housing office regarding recent community opposition and strategies for addressing it.
- Project staff met with community leaders opposing program to continue the dialogue begun in February.
- Issues regarding the preliminary environmental review and HUD are finally resolved. CCS' housing developer accepts and begins to implement proposal for the required Phase II of the environmental review of the program site.

July 1999

- Program development team meets to discuss revised building schedule and its affects on

finances and programming, and meets with evaluator to redefine evaluation plan based on new projected timeline for renovation.

- Staff is alerted by the city housing office of a new plan to redevelop vacant city properties. This will require additional city review of Canaan House building plans.

August 1999

- CCS Finance Department and building developer start working with local and federal HUD offices to set up draw down procedure so grant funds can be accessed for renovation costs. Funds available for up-front costs from parent agency (CCS) are very limited.
- Architect files for construction permit and begins working on bid package to choose general contractor.
- Potential membership list for a Program Advisory Committee (PAC) is compiled in response to recommendation made by community leaders at June 1999 meeting. Staff hopes to tap into several segments of the community to create dialogue and generate local support for the project, itself located in a neighborhood affected by drug use and HIV.

September 1999

- Draw down procedure established with HUD, allowing the program to start expending funds in advance of actually opening.
- Staff updates the CCS advisory board on status of Canaan House program; two Advisory Board members with other local affiliations volunteer to serve on PAC.
- Construction can finally start. Phase II environmental review is completed by the environmental consultant. Jersey City approves building plans submitted for project. Based on these prerequisites, architect completes bid package to be sent to potential general contractors in early October.
- Canaan House program manager discusses the Canaan House program with a documentary film crew chronicling the Catholic response to the AIDS epidemic.
- Dissemination plan completed, focusing on small local media needs.

October 1999

- Development team meeting held to set up procedure and timeline for submission and selection of bids from general contractors.
- Staff mail compile list of 90 community members, mail letters inviting them to apply for membership on the PAC. To further community support, staff meet with local police precinct to introduce them to the program and to enlist their support/assistance.
- Staff attends ETAC meeting held in NY to work on concept paper addressing housing readiness issues among the target client population.
- Draft typology completed by ETAC evaluator in collaboration with CCS staff.

November 1999

- Staff begins first round of interviews for PAC membership.
- The bidding process continues. Bid submission period is extended by several weeks to

allow contractors additional time to respond. At end of November, bids are opened and reviewed by the program development team. More detailed proposals are requested from two local general contractors.

- Staff meets with new ETAC evaluator of program as original evaluator moves on to other projects.

December 1999

- Program manager meets with CCS Finance Department to discuss long term financing of program, which is still not clear. This information will be presented to development team during its January meeting.
- Staff receives revised bids from one of the two contractors contacted, and requested additional clarification of labor costs on this bid.

January 2000

- Received revised labor costs as requested. Rapidly rising local labor costs and delays in the bidding process require revisions of cost estimates.
- Canaan House program manager presented at a housing seminar during Ryan White Cross Title meeting in Washington, DC.
- Staff joins the research committee for Supportive Housing Association of NJ (local arm of CSH), as a further source of program and legal guidance.

February 2000

- The development team meets to formally select the general contractor and bid package. Long-term funding strategies are also discussed at this meeting.
- Architect and CCS Legal Department begin preparing construction contract for submission to the selected general contractor.
- Canaan House program manager and other CCS staff are invited to present seminar on “AIDS Housing” at First Annual NJ Catholic Charities Conference in May and to present on the program and the SPNS initiative to a committee of the CCS Board of Trustees in April.
- Staff continues work on community relationships, contacting and interviewing local consumers interested in PAC membership.

March 2000

- Staff finalizes PAC membership list, sets a first meeting for mid-April.
- Negotiated and executed final contract with general contractor with start date for renovations being set for mid-April, 2000; bid prices locked in.
- CCS applies for construction bond necessary for final construction completion.
- Project staff meets with CSH to discuss additional financing sources on state/local levels to replace the current federal start-up funding, and to start planning a statewide research initiative on supportive housing in New Jersey.

April 2000

- First meeting of the PAC is held. Staff is able to allay many community concerns, receives valuable input from community members present.
- CCS finalizes contract with the project's general contractor.
- Canaan House staff attend the 9th PSC meeting in San Francisco, CA, are able to share what is now their expertise with other PSC members at earlier stages of project development.

June 2000

- As required by local legislation, notice regarding the renovations and the environmental survey is published in the Jersey Journal, local newspaper of record.
- Second PAC meeting is held.
- More than two years after grant award, recruitment for potential tenants can finally begin. Staff begin outreach to local area HIV/AIDS case management agencies (Jersey City Medical Center; FAITH Services; Christ Hospital Home Healthcare; Horizon Healthcare & CCS MICA Outreach) to inform them about program and to get input into client/agency needs.
- Canaan House staff and the program evaluator continue to discuss local evaluation questions and objectives.
- Renovation of the program site, first planned in March 1998, finally starts.

July 2000

- Jersey City's Building Department temporarily halts renovations in order to review the renovation plan for compliance with accessibility regulations in the new State building code. In the interim, work progresses on excavation and environmental remediation at the program site.
- The Canaan House renovation plan is revised to accommodate recommendations by Jersey City Building Department for new dimensions for the entrance ramp,, reconfiguration of the new elevator, and layout of program units to promote greater unit accessibility for residents. Program director and program developer visit renovations at program site.
- Program director contacts the local HUD office in Newark for guidance on applying for the no-cost contract extension required by the numerous delays.

August 2000

- Redesign to accommodate accessibility issues is completed and renovations are resumed, with only a one-month delay for redesign.
- Third PAC meeting is held.
- CCS' Building Development team reviews building to assess and plan for in-house services (such as MIS, telephone, site safety, etc.).
- Revision of Canaan House multi-site and local evaluation plan continues, a qualitative component is added to compensate for the difficulty anticipated in completing the follow-

up standardized interviews originally planned.

- The program director and program developer visit renovations at program site; current estimates given by general contractor put completion of renovations at late December 2000/January 2001, almost three years after the initial grant award.

September 2000

- Canaan House participates in the “Facts from the Frontline” presentation to HUD in Washington, DC. The presentation includes photos of site and renovation to illustrate the difficulties of new construction or major renovation.
- Canaan staff, in conjunction with the program evaluator, completes work on the Canaan House multi-site and local evaluation tool/plan.
- Renovation work continues on program site.
- CCS submits a no-cost extension request (asking that its contract with HUD be extended through Sept. 2002) to the Newark-HUD Community Development office.

October 2000

- Fourth PAC meeting is held. Staff hope that this ongoing contact with community members will help create a supportive neighborhood environment.
- Application made for HOPWA formula (non-SPNS) funds to cover development of an additional three apartments at the Canaan House site. This will help compensate for the units lost earlier due to increases in construction costs.
- Canaan House multi-site and local evaluation materials are submitted to the CCS IRB.

Further Information and Technical Assistance

Should you wish to obtain additional information about the service delivery model developed by Canaan House, you are welcome to contact the project director and request technical assistance:

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