

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (SES)

The mission of Supported Employment Services is to be committed in providing uplifting, empowering, and advocacy intervention measures which assist clients in reaching their individual goals of employment, financial independence and wellness and recovery. MHA has established Supported Employment Services to help clients find employment.

Personnel

SES is staffed by three full-time employees, which includes the Master's Level Program Coordinator and two Employment Specialists who have a minimum educational requirement of a BA or BS in a related social service field. SES staff is culturally diverse and represents the local population, which MHA serves in Essex County. For FY2023, SES operated with two full-time Employment Specialists.

Supported Employment Services

SES provides consumers diagnosed with a severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI) the opportunity to identify career interests via staff facilitated groups and individual job development sessions. Staff members identify consumer strengths and collaborate with the consumer to build skills to become a more competitive candidate for employment. Staff members collaborate with all service providers to encourage an individualized approach for each consumer. When a consumer is placed in a job, Employment Specialists provide on and offsite job coaching to provide additional support when possible and continuously monitor the consumer's progress.

Caseload

Between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023, SES served 105 clients. There were 77 new clients referred and 27 admitted from various sources such as: self-referrals, Jail Diversion, MHA PATH, Collaborative Justice Services (CJS), Criminal Justice Reform (CJR), Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT), Prospect House (PH), Integrated Case Management Services (ICMS), Northwest Essex Community Healthcare (NWECH), Community Support Services (CSS), Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital, Ancora Psychiatric Hospital, Trenton Psychiatric Hospital, Community Psychiatric Institute, Family Connections, Rutgers Behavioral Health, CarePlus Behavioral Health, Center for Behavioral Health, and Roots at Crossroad Counseling Center.

Demographics

The majority of the clients served are African-American with a smaller population of Caucasian, Asian, and Hispanic. A majority of the overall clients served are from the East Orange and Newark areas. Other demographic locations include Belleville, Bloomfield, Cedar Grove, Irvington, Orange, Maplewood, Montclair, Nutley, West Orange, South Orange, Livingston, Verona, Caldwell, West Caldwell and Roseland.

Performance Outcomes

The target number of clients served was 130. SES served 95 and achieved 75% of our goal. SES placed 26 clients into full-time employment (43%), placed 47 clients in part-time employment (470%), and 14 clients were replaced on a job (41%). At the end of this fiscal year, SES caseload was 72.

The unemployment rate in NJ is 3.7% as of June 2023. The unemployment rate in Essex County is 5.7% which is one of the two highest in Northern NJ and three highest in the state. The overall unemployment rate for black workers is 6.0%. SES placed 1% of our clients into employment within 120 days of their entry into the program. One hundred percent (100%) of the clients were placed in an occupation of their choice. At the end of the year, 14% of clients retained employment for three months or more. The Employment Specialist worked diligently to motivate clients and made multiple outreaches to ensure a smooth transition. Staff engaged clients to participate in Job Readiness activities, which focused on multiple areas including interviewing skills, work ethics, problem solving and positive communication. The target wait for intake is three business days and admission to the program is within one day. Individual service plans were established with the clients input and were reviewed monthly and quarterly. Progress was also reviewed as necessary to help the clients to meet their objectives. The staff/client ratio is 1:30, respectively. In the upcoming fiscal year, staff will continue to secure every opportunity, coordinate team efforts and resources to increase the service delivery to clients, and focus on documenting all areas of job development and client contact to meet our goals.

Consumer Satisfaction Survey

MHA is continuously refining services based on consumer input. This is received through various methods, including the annual Consumer Satisfaction Survey to ensure that each individual has an opportunity to provide feedback and a chance to have his/her voice heard. The Consumer Satisfaction Survey was made available to all consumers by SurveyMonkey, sent by email, and in-person. Of the surveys distributed, there were 17 returned responses. There was an overall 94% satisfaction with SES services.

Training

Specialized training workshops for staff continued throughout the year:

- WRAP
- Psychopharmacology
- Effective Job Coaching
- Motivational Interviewing
- Safety in the Community
- Illness Management and Recovery Model
- Cultural Competence
- Overview of Supported Employment
- Crisis Management

Highlights

- Individuals were employed in competitive jobs as, Dietary Aides, Dishwashers, Retail Workers, Home Health Aide, Certified Nurse Aide, Janitorial, Housekeeping, Package Handlers, Direct Support Professional, Substitute Teacher, Case Manager, Transportation/Bus Aide, Office Assistants, and Security Officers.
- SES continued to oversee the in-house Transitional Employment program and provide training and ongoing support to consumers who work as receptionists and building maintenance to strengthen their resumes and work skills.
- Employment Specialists continue to provide ongoing support for the Peer-to-Peer Warm Line Peer Support Specialists.
 - On August 17, 2022, SES hosted a mobile Dress for Success in office event where 14 women were identified and referred for the services. On the day of the event, nine consumers were able to attend. They were able to obtain the following: a pair of shoes, a pocket book, jewelry, scarfs and business attire of their choice based on sizing (pantsuit, dresses, blouses, slacks, etc.). After that date, Employment Specialists were also able to take nine other women to the Dress for Success Madison location for private one-on-one fittings for interview/work clothing and accessories. Consumers were able to leave with items which would provide 7-10 outfits for work.
- Consumers were provided with funds for transportation to get to and from work, purchase clothing for work and pay for TB testing for work until they were able to appropriately budget on their own.
- MHA has staff who are Certified Application Counselors to assist those without health insurance to apply for coverage.
- SES continued to be an internship site for Rutgers School of Health Professional's Psychiatric Rehabilitation Program.
- SES was able to collaborate with Gourmet Dining Services, which provides services to Seton Hall, where three consumers have been employed for over a year.
- SES began a collaboration with the HR Department at CareWell Health to take advantage of employment opportunities within their hospital network, when possible.
- SES assisted six consumers pursue higher education by referring them to Supported Education Services. At least three consumers were enrolled in school in the fall of 2022 and spring of 2023.

Advocacy

- Monthly Outreach Community meetings to increase collaboration and in-house referrals.
- Participation at Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings.

Recommendations for FY2023

- SES will continue to collaborate with community providers to secure work opportunities through word-of-mouth or resources within their organizations/agencies.
- SES will continue to work on improved employment outcomes and reduced gaps in the service system with increased linkages and smooth transitioning of services for consumers.
- SES will continue to re-engage consumers for in-person services over FY2024, as deemed able.