

Application Letter

A. Title of Project

Homeless Needs Assessment Project

B. Description of your project, the student and faculty team members and why they are on the team

The Homeless Needs Assessment Project (HNAP) is designed to assess the current greatest needs for people experiencing homelessness in Portland, Maine. In order to accomplish this large-scale task, students from various healthcare professions at UNE are partnering to provide a holistic approach with this community-based needs assessment to inform the development and implementation of future intervention strategies as part of the ongoing interprofessional community outreach service learning activities with this population. HNAP's current goal is to conduct the needs assessment via a survey of at least 100 individuals who are homeless in Portland. Data will be collected in the form of a survey that will de-identify all participants, and information regarding needs will also be collected from various stakeholders such as shelters, food pantries, and health care centers (Appendix A).

This project began as part of an assignment for the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) curriculum. More specifically, third-year DPT students are currently taking the course: PTH 704 - Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, a class that is designed to help students learn how to develop and implement a community-based health promotion program. To date, we have formed an interprofessional team that includes 12 students from the departments of physical therapy (PT), occupational therapy (OT), and public health (PH).

The faculty mentor for this project is Mike Sheldon, Associate Professor and Program Director, Department of Physical Therapy. The PT students will be involved in all aspects of the needs assessment and focus on physical therapy needs and propose plausible interventions. The OT students will largely assist with conducting interviews with the homeless population using the survey questions and administering interviews to other stakeholders (See Appendix A) as needed. Additionally, these students will provide valuable service ideas regarding plausible interventions from an OT perspective. Finally, students from public health will help advise the team on adequately carrying out the needs assessment, assisting in the interview and survey process, and to provide plausible interventions from the public health framework. Together, this team will use the findings from the needs assessment to educate the faculty and students at UNE involved in the service learning outreach to this population.

The findings and recommendations from this needs assessment will be completed by the end of the Fall Semester 2014 and will be presented to relevant stakeholders at UNE.

C. Background/Significance and Specific Aims of your Project

The homeless population is one of the most vulnerable and underserved group of individuals in Portland. Some of the major issues that a person experiencing homelessness must face are: hunger, lack of clothing, poor hygiene and health care, unemployment, and much more. Portland conducted its' annual Point In Time (PIT) Survey on January 29, 2014, which "provides a snapshot of people experiencing homelessness on a particular night of the year" (City of Portland). On that night, they

found a total of 1200 people who were homeless (1102 people sleeping in an emergency homeless shelter and 98 unsheltered). Those deemed unsheltered included people who were living in cars, tents, abandoned buildings, outside, or in other places not suitable for human habitation. The PIT surveys have revealed a steady increase of the number of people who are homeless in Portland since 2009 by a drastic 70%, and with an influx of individuals who are homeless comes a greater demand for help.

UNE Service Learning has completed numerous service projects with the homeless population at several shelters in Portland, including the Oxford Shelter and Milestone Foundation Emergency Shelter. Additionally, the Physical Therapy Department has also partnered with Milestone in order to provide PT services led by faculty and students in the program. The services offered to date at Milestone have included proper fitting and supply of assistive devices, education on walking mechanics, and an exercise program for those participating in Milestone's Detoxification Program. However, as the PT Department faculty and students recently re-assessed the need for ongoing services at Milestone, concerns surfaced as to the efficacy of these services.

In an effort to maximize the benefits individuals who are homeless will receive from volunteers in all healthcare professions at UNE, we have decided to conduct a formal needs assessment to help guide future outreach services to this population. The goals of our Homeless Needs Assessment Project are to 1) interview stakeholders in order to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the needs of the homeless, and 2) provide UNE, Portland's homeless service providers and policy makers with useful and relevant information on the current PT, OT and Public Health needs of the most vulnerable segments of the city's population.

We aim to propose realistic and affordable approaches to meet the needs of the homeless, as well as promote community awareness of this underserved population. The necessity and role of health care professionals will be evaluated and determined at the conclusion of the needs assessment. Ultimately, we hope to develop a program that is sustainable for interprofessional students and individuals to participate in for years to come.

Timeline

Date	Event	Location	Participant(s)
September 2, 2014	Homeless Needs Assessment Project (HNAP) created	UNE Portland Campus	PT students
Wednesdays 12-2 pm	General Body Meetings	UNE Library	All members
Semi-monthly: 10/7, 10/21, 11/4, 11/18, 12/1	Report to CEIPE	CEIPE office	Sarah Kou
September 3, 2014	Completion of research on population demographics and stakeholders	UNE Portland Campus	PT students
September 10, 2014	Completion of articles and news report surrounding homelessness in Portland	UNE Portland Campus	PT students
September 17, 2014	Completion of literature review 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk factors 	UNE Portland Campus	Annarae Andresen Stephanie Sheehan
September 16, 2014	First interprofessional meeting	Proctor 202	PT, OT, and MPH students
September 19, 2014	File IRB Exemption	UNE Portland Campus	Sarah Kou
September 22, 2014	Completion of survey and interviews	UNE Portland Campus	All members
September 25, 2014	Homelessness and Poverty Service Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Networking and outreach opportunity 	Ludcke Auditorium	All members
September - October, 2014	Data collection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey homeless population and interview stakeholders 	Downtown Portland	All members
October 8, 2014	Homelessness and Poverty Service Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Networking and outreach opportunity 	Ludcke Auditorium	All members
October, 2014	Completion of literature review 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence and interventions 	UNE Portland Campus	Jayne Keith, Sarah Kou, Dana McCoy

October - November, 2014	Data analysis and proposed interventions	UNE Portland Campus	All members
November, 2014	Completion of literature review 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavioral changes 	UNE Portland Campus	Oana Butnarasu, Jessica Takatsuki
November - December, 2014	Design of PowerPoint presentation	UNE Portland Campus	PT students
December 3, 2014	Homelessness and Poverty Service Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection 	Ludcke Auditorium	All members
December 8, 2014	In-class presentation of project	UNE Portland Campus	All members

Proposed Budget

Need	Cost
Transcriptionist	\$300
Color Printouts	\$20
Snacks	\$300
Recorders	\$100
Storage Clipboards	\$120
Total	\$840

Cost breakdown

1. Transcriptionists are estimated to cost \$20/hour. Due to the large number of interviews we will be conducting, there is potential for much transcription work to be completed.
2. Color printouts include educational materials that we may provide in the event that individuals would like to seek more information about health care related topics and services provided at UNE.
3. Snacks are for IP meetings held throughout the months. We have meetings each week on Wednesday during lunch, as well as occasional nighttime meetings. It would be an added benefit to be able to provide light refreshments and snacks at the meetings.
4. Recorders will be used when interviewing stakeholders, such as employers at the various shelters and food banks in Portland, about their role in servicing the homeless community and what they perceive to be the greatest need in this population. Recorders will help with transcription, should they be necessary in our project write-up and presentation.
5. Storage clipboards are a way to keep completed surveys and interviews locked so that only the interviewers are privy to the information. We estimate needing at least 12 clipboards.

References

1. City of Portland, Maine Health and Human Services Department Social Services Division. 2014. *Homeless Data and Reports Point In Time Report State of Maine*. <http://me-portland.civicplus.com/1229/Homeless-and-Shelter-Data>.
2. Caton, C. L. M., Dominguez, B., Schanzer, B., Hasin, D. S., & al, e. (2005). Risk factors for long-term homelessness: Findings from a longitudinal study of first-time homeless single adults. *American Journal of Public Health*, 95(10), 1753-9.
3. O'Toole, T., P., Gibbon, J. L., Hanusa, B. H., Freyder, P. J., & al, e. (2004). Self-reported changes in drug and alcohol use after becoming homeless. *American Journal of Public Health*, 94(5), 830-5.
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September 24, 2014

Review Committee
Interprofessional Student-led Mini-Grant Program
Center For Excellence In Interprofessional Education

Dear Members of the Review Committee:

I am writing this letter in support of the grant proposal submission for the Homeless Needs Assessment Project. It is my understanding this needs assessment will help inform the ongoing interprofessional service learning outreach initiatives with the homeless community in Portland. I believe there have been some questions about the focus of the student activities at sites like the Milestones shelter, and I believe the information gathered from this needs assessment and recommendations for future services and programming will only strengthen the work already underway at these sites. I enthusiastically support their grant proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Michael R. Sheldon'.

Michael R. Sheldon, PT, PhD
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Stakeholder Interview Questions

Shelters

1. What is the mission/goals/objectives of your organization?
2. Would you be willing to allow a group of students interview your patrons for our project?
3. How do “your” patrons contact the shelter for services? (walk-in, phone call, referral, drop off, etc?)
4. What type of “triage” process do you have for your patrons when they arrive for services?
5. We would like to learn more about a typical day at the shelter. Could you please walk us through this?
6. How many people utilize your services in any given day?
7. Of the services you provide, which do you feel are in the highest demand? Do you feel like you are able to meet those needs? If not, what would help you to better address them?
8. What in your opinion are the greatest unmet needs of the homeless population?
9. What, if any, resources is your organization lacking?
10. In what areas does your organization succeed and what areas need work?
11. What services by UNE students might your patrons find most helpful/beneficial?
12. Describe your experience in working with UNE, how can the partnership be improved/strengthened?
13. What are some of the barriers to services people experiencing homelessness face?
14. What do you feel like needs to be changed in order to reduce or eliminate homelessness?
15. What changes have you seen in the homeless population in Portland in the past 10 years?

Food bank/pantry/soup kitchen

1. What is the mission/goals/objectives of your organization?
2. Who are the patrons that you provide services for?
3. How do “your” patrons contact the food pantry/food bank for services?
4. How does your organization advertises the services available?
(ads/pamphlets/internet/word of mouth)
5. How many employees do you have? (Explanation: this information is valuable in order to also assess the stakeholder needs in relation to the amount of employees to support the services provided, and possible UNE community support such as volunteering)
6. What services provided by UNE students your organization might benefit from?
7. What are your largest sources of funding? (private, federal, state, donations)
8. How frequent do your organization provides services to the community?
9. Do you feel like you are able to meet the needs of the community that you serve? If not, what would help you to better address them?
10. What resources/assistance/etc would help you to better achieve your mission/serve your clients?
11. What types of food you provide?(canned, fresh, frozen) Are there any types of food that is challenging to obtain?
12. What are some possible barriers to access your services? (such as internet access, transportation).
13. What changes have you seen in the population segment that your organization is serving in the past 10 years?

Housing

1. What is the process to receive housing?

2. Of the services you provide, what do you feel like is the highest demand? Do you feel like you are able to meet those needs?
3. How many people do you place in permanent housing on an average day?
4. Of the people who obtain permanent / temporary housing, how many of them are able to maintain it vs. return to homelessness?
5. What in your opinion are the greatest unmet needs of the homeless population?
6. What, if any, resources is your organization lacking?
7. In what areas does your organization succeed and what areas need work?

Healthcare institutes

1. What percentage of your patient population are those who are homeless?
2. Of the services you provide, what do you feel like is the highest demand? Do you feel like you are able to meet those needs?
3. What are the most common issues/diagnosis at the center? Are there differing issues/diagnoses amongst individuals who are homeless? What are these?
4. How are those who are homeless pay for healthcare? Do you have any policies or procedures for people who cannot afford health care?
5. What in your opinion are the greatest unmet needs of the homeless population?
6. What areas does your organization succeed? What needs work?
7. What, if any, resources is your organization lacking?
8. In what areas does your organization succeed and what areas need work?
9. Which services are most utilized by the homeless population? How often are emergency services requested by the homeless population? (question for the Opportunity Alliance)

Policy makers

1. What happens when a “new” person who is homeless enters Portland?
2. How do they obtain health insurance, and ID, and SS/SSID?
3. Is there a case manager who follows these individuals?
4. What do you think is the biggest need of people who are homeless?
5. What areas does your organization succeed? What needs work?
6. What, if any, resources is your organization lacking?
7. In what areas does your organization succeed and what areas need work?
8. What changes do you see in the homeless population in Portland in 10 years?

Homeless Employment Program

1. How often do you have pre-employment workshops?
2. How often do you conduct outreach at the various shelters in Portland?
3. Can you describe your partnership with the Maine Career Center?
4. On average, how many people seek assistance from the employment program per month?
5. What is the greatest barrier for those seeking employment?
6. How long does it typically take for a person experiencing homelessness to become employed?
7. Of the services you provide, which do you feel are in the highest demand? Do you feel like you are able to meet those needs? If not, what would help you to better address them?
8. What do you feel like needs to be changed in order to reduce or eliminate homelessness?
9. In what areas does your organization succeed and what areas need work?

Law enforcement

1. How often do you deal with cases that involve individuals who are homeless?
2. What are the most common complaints that you receive regarding this population?

3. What type of process do you have for your patrons when they arrive?
4. We would like to learn more about a typical day as a law enforcer for this population. Could you please walk us through this?
5. Of the services you provide, which do you feel are in the highest demand? Do you feel like you are able to meet those needs? If not, what would help you to better address them?
6. What in your opinion are the greatest unmet needs of the homeless population?
7. What, if any, resources is your organization lacking?
8. What services by UNE students might your patrons find most helpful/beneficial?

Library

1. How often do individuals who are homeless come into the library?
2. At what time(s) of the day are the busiest?
3. Do you see a certain age range of homeless individuals that come in more than others? If so, what is it?
4. What do the individuals do when they are here?
5. What type of process or policy do you have for when these patrons arrive?
6. Could you please walk us through a typical day at the library?
7. Of the services you provide, which do you feel are in the highest demand? Do you feel like you are able to meet those needs? If not, what would help you to better address them?
8. What in your opinion are the greatest unmet needs of the homeless population?
9. What, if any, resources is your organization lacking?
10. What services by UNE students might your patrons find most helpful/beneficial?