



WORKING RECOVERY PROGRAM

Program Type: Substance Use Treatment and Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Agency and Location: Bridge/Grace House in New Orleans, Louisiana

Population Served: Bridge/Grace House provides gender-specific services to about 800 clients each year – regardless of their ability to pay – with a substance use disorder as the primary diagnosis and a wide range of other psychosocial complications. Many work to overcome trauma, homelessness, indigence, criminality, habitual relapses, and comorbid mental illnesses. Approximately 30 percent are under age 30, with many below age 25. Half of all admitted clients use opioids, with heroin as the main drug of choice for 80 percent of this group. On average, each client has had about 4.8 treatment episodes and roughly 8.8 arrests prior to entering. Over half have a prior felony conviction, and more than 25 percent are admitted directly from a correctional facility.

Working Recovery Program Description: The work therapy program was developed to address the employment challenges many clients confront post treatment. Bridge/Grace House provides vocational services, including vocationally directed individual counseling and therapeutic work groups by licensed vocational rehabilitation counselors.

The agency has both a thrift store and a used car lot that provide both therapeutic vocational value and income for clients, who can work within the thrift store as cashiers, salesclerks and other positions or may also be placed in the fund development office, the used car lot, the kitchen, maintenance, or other sites. As they progress, clients also prepare to search and obtain employment. As appropriate, most clients' treatment plans include improvements in employment and employability as an objective. In addition, clients are able to discuss their actual job assignment including their personal goals, barriers, and strengths with their vocational counselors. The agency is certified by the independent Commission on Accreditation of Rehab Facilities (CARF).

Results: About 96 percent of clients completing their prescribed treatment plan leave the program with gainful employment. Many are employed by companies that have a history with Bridge/Grace House, and these clients are often noted for their work ethic and above average job performance.

Sustained employment aids clients in maintaining other tasks important in self-sufficiency, like staying connected with established medical and psychiatric care, meeting legal responsibilities, and managing family and social responsibilities. In addition to employment, 92 percent of clients completing their treatment plans acquire stable housing with some moving into sober living houses, like the Oxford Houses of America, or other supported housing options such as single residency occupancy programs.

Federal Funding: Bridge/Grace House is a provider through the Louisiana Department of Health for SAMHSA's Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant funds

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