

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (SES)

The mission of Supported Employment Services is to be committed in providing uplifting, empowering, and advocacy intervention measures which assist people in reaching their individual goals of employment, financial independence and wellness and recovery. MHA has established Supported Employment Services to help persons with mental illness 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 community which MHA serves in Essex County. At times in FY2024, 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, 2023 and June 30, 2024, SES served 127 clients. There were 83 new clients referred and 47 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, Care Plus 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. Although serving all of Essex County, the majority of the 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 to be served was 130; SES served 127 and achieved 98% of our goal. Other target outcomes include: SES placed 55 clients into full-time employment (92%), placed 61 clients in part-time employment (610%), and 13 clients were replaced on a job (38%). At the end of this fiscal year, SES caseload was 80.

The unemployment rate in NJ is 4.6% as of June 2024. The unemployment rate in Essex County is 6.1% which is one of the four highest in the state. The overall unemployment rate for black workers is 6.3%. SES placed 2% 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, 20% of clients retained employment for three months or more. Employment Specialists 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 was three business days and admission to the program was 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 individuals meet their objectives. The staff/client ratio was 1:35, 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 the identified 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 within MHA 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 June 6, 2024 SES hosted a mobile Dress for Success in-house event where 16 women were identified and referred for the services. On the day of the event, 9 consumers were able to attend. They were able to obtain clothing attire to wear to work such as dress suits, pantsuits, dresses, blouses, slacks, etc. After that date, Employment Specialists were also able to provide the remaining clothing from the event to the women who were not able to attend on that day.
- One consumer was provided with aid to complete her fingerprinting requirement for a job she obtained

- 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 continued to collaborate with Gourmet Dining Services, which provides services to Seton Hall and has employed 3 consumers in the past.
- SES continues to collaborate with the HR Department at CareWell Health to take advantage of employment opportunities within their hospital network, when possible.

Advocacy:

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

Recommendations for FY2025:

- 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 reduce 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.