

Case Management Systems

CLINIC: Center for Citizenship and Immigrant
Communities

June 3, 2009

2:00 – 3:30 pm EST

*PowerPoint slides will be posted at: <http://www.cliniclegal.org>

CLINIC Presenter

- Hope Driscoll, Field Support Coordinator, Capacity Building Section

CLINIC's Capacity Building Goals

- Expand the number of charitable legal immigration programs
- Increase services
- Improve services

CLINIC's Capacity Building Activities

- Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) agency recognition & staff accreditation
- Immigration Program Management training
- Management webinars
- Consultations with Field Support Coordinators
- On-site visits/assessments

Capacity Building Activities, cont'd.

- Project management
- Flow-through funding
- Link members & subscribers to CLINIC services
- Prepare programs for significant immigration changes

Webinar Goal

- To provide information about the elements of case management systems and show how strong case management systems are key to a healthy immigration program.

Developing a Case Management System

- Involve staff
- Write it down
 - Create a policy or procedures manual
 - Clear guidelines
 - Facilitate training for new staff
 - Succession planning
- Communicate policies and procedures to staff
- Ensure that staff adhere to policies and procedures

Why is a Good Case Management System Important?

- Consistency and uniformity lead to a higher quality of work
- Allows staff to work more professionally and effectively
- Increased efficiency = more clients served
- Helps protect against malpractice and liability

Considerations

- Program size
- New and long-standing programs
- Regional differences
- Urban vs. rural programs
- Different levels of agency support

Elements of a Case Management System

- Intake
 - Forms and Procedures
- Client Agreement
- Case File Procedures
- Tracking System
- Technical Review

Intake Form

- What Client Contact Info. Should You Always Request?
 - Home phone (DV issues)
 - Cell phone
 - Work phone
 - Family Member/Friend's phone
 - Home address
 - E-mail address
 - Family Member/Friend's address

Intake Form

- Type of Immigration Service Requested
- Contact Information
- Biographic Information
- Criminal History
- Entry into the United States

Intake Procedures

- Appointment Model vs. Walk-in Model
- Staffing
- Checklists
- Referral lists

Appointment Model

- Pros:
 - No need for a large waiting room and less space needed for confidential interviews
 - Less stressful for staff and they can maintain more control over their time
 - Convenient for clients
- Cons:
 - High no-show rate
 - Appointment calendar may fill up far in advance
 - Staff time needed to monitor and maintain appointment calendar
 - Fewer clients helped

Walk-In Model

- Pros:
 - No staff time spent scheduling appointments and maintaining calendar
 - More convenient to clients
 - Staff may gain wider experience due to higher volume of clients
 - Access to greater number of immigrants can mean more immigrants helped
 - Greater visibility for program in community
- Cons:
 - Need for larger waiting area and more confidential interview space
 - Clients have to wait to be seen
 - Safety and security issues because of larger number of people waiting
 - Hard to predict day-to-day volume of clients and demand
 - Usually more work for staff to juggle

Domestic Violence Cases – Special Concerns

- Confidentiality
- Subpoenas
- Safety
 - Client, caseworker, agency staff
- What does your agency need to do with these cases for the client, the caseworker, and the agency?

Intake Procedures

- Appointment Model vs. Walk-in Model
 - Paper intake, telephonic or electronic intake
- Staffing
 - Experienced vs. less experienced staff or volunteers
- Checklists
- Referral lists

Elements of a Case Management System

- Intake
 - Forms and Procedures
- **Client Agreement**
- Case File Procedures
- Tracking System
- Technical Review

Client Agreements

- Written agreement between the client and the agency, sometimes called a retainer agreement
 - All client agreements need to include a clear, comprehensive description of the services the agency agrees to provide for the client and the responsibilities of both the client and the agency with regard to the legal services.
 - Having and using a client agreement is essential

Client Agreements continued

- A good client agreement will contain information essential to forming and maintaining the legal relationship, including:
 - Contact information
 - Fee for legal services being provided
 - Terms of the termination of the agreement
 - Obligations and responsibilities of the agency and client
 - That the agency cannot guarantee a particular result in any case
 - The agency's commitment to confidentiality

Client Agreements continued

- Comprehensive
- Clear and simple (English/native language)
- Verbally explained
- Original in file, copy to the client
- Can limit agency liability
- Signed by client and agency representative

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- **Case File Procedures**
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Case File Procedures – File System

- Standardized Case Filing System
 - Opening a new case
 - Contents of case file
 - Applications, correspondence, client agreement, copies of client documents, legal/factual research and case notes
 - Case file order (hard copy)

Case File Procedures – File System

- Standardized Case Filing System (cont.)
 - Case notes
 - Complete record of everything related to case not reflected in the file
 - Meetings, phone calls, date applications/correspondence mailed
 - Case notes should allow someone to take over the case immediately
 - Closing a case
 - Letter to client

Case File Procedures - File Location

- File location
 - Separate, accessible to staff
- File security (electronic and hardcopy)
- Access to case files
 - Restricted to immigration program staff
- Removing case files from agency
 - Clear Policy
- Copies of case files
- File retention/destruction

Elements of a Case Management System

- Intake
 - Forms and Procedures
- Client Agreement
- Case File Procedures
- **Tracking System**
- **Technical Review**

Date Tracking or “Tickler” System

- Case management software
- Accessible and used by all immigration legal staff
- Must be used consistently
- What happens if you don't have one?
 - Important deadlines missed
 - Common form of malpractice

Technical Review

- Supervisory review
- Peer review
- Small program
 - Remote, via internet or telephone

Technical Review continued

- “Ten Day Policy”
 - Open case ONLY when client 100% ready and 100% payment
 - Technical Review 1 by Peer
 - Technical Review 2 by Supervisor
 - Case filed within 10 days
 - Performed with every case

Recap: Why Is A Good Case Management System Important?

- Consistency and Uniformity = Higher Quality
- Quality Control
- Decrease the Occurrence of Errors, Inaccuracies and Missed Deadlines
- Helps Protect Against Malpractice and Liability
- Professional, Efficient and Effective
- Greater Client and Staff Satisfaction

Additional Resources

- CLINIC's Immigration Program Management training and schedule
<http://www.cliniclegal.org/training-descriptions>
- CLINIC's management issues webinars
<http://www.cliniclegal.org/calendar>
- CLINIC's *Immigration Program Management Manual*
<http://www.cliniclegal.org/resources/immigration-management-manual-managing-immigration-program>)
- CLINIC's *Preparing for Legalization*
<http://www.cliniclegal.org/resources/preparing-legalization-0>
- Immigration Advocates Network (www.immigrationadvocates.org)

Other Information

- Certificates will be e-mailed
- Webinar is available at www.cliniclegal.org and www.immigrationadvocates.org
- The PowerPoint will be available at www.cliniclegal.org (Resource Page)

Additional Questions?

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