

“FIRST CONTACT FAITH TRAINING”

Understanding the Washington County social safety net is important in order to be a useful part of it. Faith based groups providing emergency food boxes, clothing closets, severe winter shelter, free hot meals, and other services are a part of that network. Faith based groups bring unique assets and challenges to the work of providing and maintaining the local social safety net. Keep in mind that low income families and individuals rely on this system, regardless of who is providing services. Most service providers understand the inevitable gap between “need” and “available resources” and increasing capacity is an ongoing organizational process. Creating a base of knowledge among all community partners who are part of the safety net is part of understanding it and was a major motivation for the First Contact Faith Trainings.

The intention of the First Contact Faith Trainings were to offer church staff or ministry volunteers that “base of knowledge,” and some basic information on fundamental services-such as Food Stamps, for example. Eligibility and application process information could allow them to problem solve more effectively and make referrals more fitting to individual situations. Another motivation of the trainings was for Community Action to gain further understanding of faith based groups who are an active part of the social safety net, thus increasing opportunities to form lasting partnerships. Overall, the First Contact Faith Trainings were an opportunity to increase understanding, as well as consider possibilities to form partnerships.

After proposing the training ideas to the Hillsboro Times are Tough forum group, Lindsay did an online survey of the Faith based groups who participated in the Faith Forum and/or the regional groups that followed. The survey asked logistical questions about location, training duration and content. (see Appendix 1.1). These elements influenced the planning and implementation of the trainings. The top two requested topics became the focus of each training: 1- Navigating the social services system and basic I&R, and 2- creating procedures and policy for your faith based group to safely and consistently carry out its mission, (i.e. minister to those in need). Both trainings were held at local Hillsboro churches, in donated space.

Lindsay took on the role of event coordinator, utilizing her organizational and leadership strengths. Drawing on our professional contacts, we made contact with local agencies to see if they would be willing to come and present information about their programs. We worked with the Department of Human Services, Self Sufficiency office (contact Angela Day), The Department of Housing-section 8 voucher program/HUD, (contact Melanie Fletcher) and 211info, (contact Melissa Crocker). Detailed contact information is enclosed, (see Appendix 1.2)

At the first training, we showed the video, *When Working Is Not Enough, 2010*, as an introduction. Lindsay told the mouse story about how we are all affected by each others needs. Asia shared some of her personal experience of growing up locally in a shack without running water in order to put a human face on the issue of poverty.

Asia spoke about client rights and dealing with difficult behaviors . This material came from an Information and Referral training manual provided by Jimi Smith, I&R Specialist at Community Action serving Washington County. We introduced two approaches used successfully in social services: the Empowerment Model and the Strength/Needs Approach. The Empowerment Model says that clients, not service providers, are the experts on their situations; and the Strengths/Needs Approach says that every individual and family has strengths; when providers recognize those strengths and build on them, assistance is more likely to lead to sustainable change for them. We explained how those approaches are at the foundation of the strategies suggested in the I&R manual for dealing with difficult behavior and treating clients with dignity and respect. As providers, our interaction can be a part of building people up or tearing them down. We can rarely know where a person is on their journey to self reliance; we can however, treat everyone with courtesy and professionalism.

Presentations from 211 info, Washington County Department of Housing and DHS Self Sufficiency office followed. Each agency representative explained their agencies' purpose, programs and how to access services. Agency representatives also took questions from the audience.

According to the evaluations, the lunch hour was a convenient time to gather with the faith community. The duration was appropriate, although there were a few comments that it

was “too short.” (See Appendix 1.3). If we were to offer similar trainings again, the following insights might improve the overall effectiveness.

- Offer more context as to the motivation and purpose of the training.
- Vet the presenters/presentations
- Explain the difference of knowledge levels, explain how the information can be put to use.
- Allow more time for “next steps” planning, and networking

For training #2 we collaborated heavily with Annie Heart, Executive Director of Family Bridge, as she had experience in working with faith based groups around issues of homelessness and creating procedures for faith based groups. The second of the two trainings focused on creating procedures for when somebody comes into the church asking for help. Heart facilitated the important internal conversations that every faith based group must have: What is our mission? How much do we want to do? To advocate? To engage on issues of poverty? And how much can we do?” Every table had the opportunity to discuss and problem solve about real life situations. The remainder of the presentation dealt with answering those fundamental questions on some level and creating a procedure or policy based on each faith based groups’ own answers. Heart reminded everyone that the need is too great for any one church or agency to solve the problem of poverty. “We can offer a kind word, a good listening ear and hope; sometimes we can offer a band-aid solution.”

A Crime Prevention Specialist from the Hillsboro Police Department also presented (contact Earleen Reimann). She framed the safety concerns of providing assistance, especially working alone in the church building, and offered on site safety audits for faith communities.

Evaluations for training #2 showed that faith based groups valued the content of the training. They appreciated hearing what other churches were doing in their ministries, as well as the opportunity to practice problem solving, and incorporate new information during the round table discussions. (See appendix 1.4).

Overall, the turnout for both trainings was far greater than we expected with an attendance of almost seventy at training #1 and over fifty at training #2. Mathew Eagan,

Pastor of Calvary Lutheran said that we had our “finger on the pulse of the community” to coordinate these trainings.

Enc. Appendices 1.1-1.4

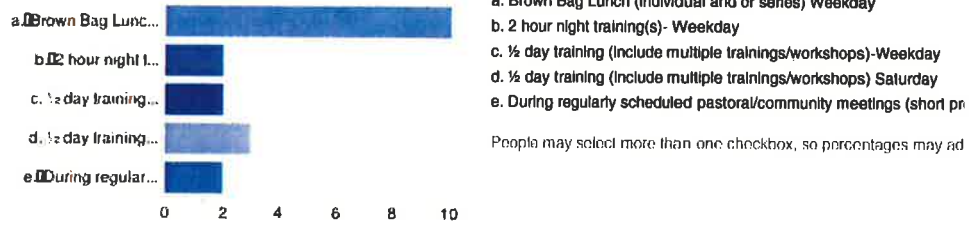
- 1.1 Online Survey results
- 1.2 Detailed Contact Information
- 1.3 Visual Representations of Evaluations-Training #1
- 1.4 Visual Representations of Evaluations-Training #2

Asia Gray and Lindsay Badillo-Nelson
Engagement Project Coordinators-Americorps Members
Community Action serving Washington County
May 2010

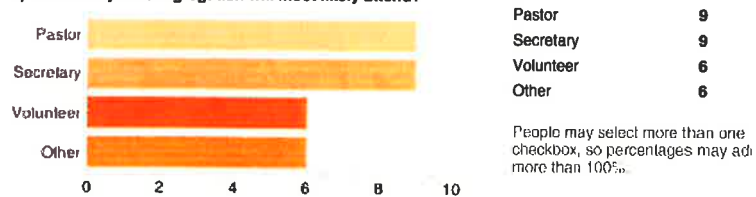
17 responses

Summary [See complete responses](#)

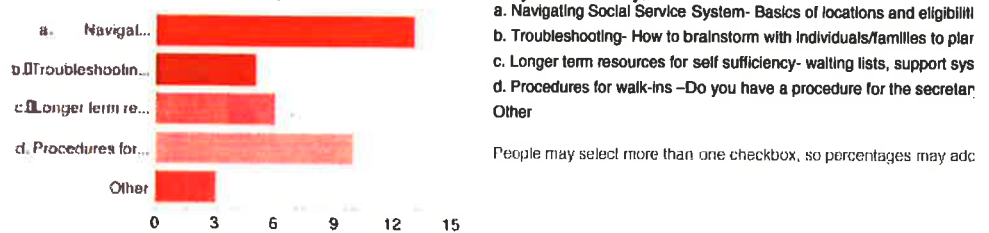
1) What format(s) of training would be easiest for you to attend/be engaged?



2) Who from your congregation will most likely attend?



3) Choose the two topics for trainings that would be most useful for your community:



May we contact you more about these trainings?

The Salvation Army Harbor Light Rick Stoller. Director rick.stoller@usw.salvationarmy.org 503-731-3947 (office)

Sandy Madsen Trinity Lutheran Church sandy.madsen@luality.org work 503.681.1364 work 503.640.1693 church

First Congregational United Church of Christ 494 E. Main St. Hillsboro OR 97123 503-640-4341

Evergreen Christian Center Lori Scholz. Ministry Administrative Assistant lscholz@eccloussquare.org 503-648-7168

Evergreen's office ext. 224 for Lori Thank you for offering this. I would love to take part in the training opportunity.

When might you be looking to plan

Number of daily responses



Presenters:

DHS Self Sufficiency Office-

Angela Day (503) 598-3104
10777 SW Cascade Avenue Tigard, OR 97223.
Email: Angela.Day@state.or.us

**The Department of Housing - Section 8 voucher
program/HUD**

Melanie Fletcher (503) 846-4773
111 NE Lincoln, Suite 200-L Hillsboro, Oregon 97124.
Email: Melanie_Fletcher@co.washington.or.us

211info

Melissa Crocker
621 SW Alder, Suite 810 Portland, OR 97205
Email: Melissa@211info.org

Hillsboro Police Department

Earleen Reimann- Police Crime Prevention Specialist
(503) 681-5207
250 SE 10th Ave
Hillsboro, OR 97123-4238
Email: earleen@ci.hillsboro.or.us

Facilities:

Calvary Lutheran

Pastor Mathew Eagan (503) 648-5686
937 NW Jackson School Road
Hillsboro, Oregon 97123
Email: matthewdeag@msn.com

Hillsboro United Methodist

168 Northeast 8th Avenue
Hillsboro, OR 97124-3299
(503) 640-1775

Network & Resource Sharing:

Tuality Health

Sandy Madsen- Parish Nurse Network
334 Southeast 8th Avenue
Hillsboro, OR 97123-4201
(503) 681-1364
Email: Sandy.Madsen@tuality.org

Disability, Aging and Veterans Services (DAVS)

Jackie Eggers
180 E. Main Street, Suite 208,
Hillsboro, OR 97123
(503) 615-4645
Email: jackie.eggers@state.or.us

Department of Human Services

Nicole Thompson- Foster Parent Recruiter
5300 NE Elam Young Parkway
Hillsboro, OR 97124
Email: nicole.thompson@state.or.us

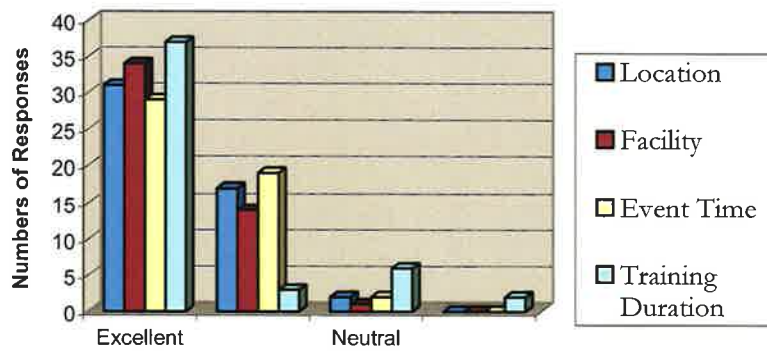
Community Action Homeless and Housing Services

Pat Rogers (503) 726-0814
Family Shelter
Email: progers@caowash.org

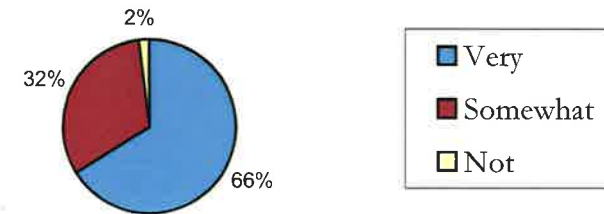
Oregon Food Bank-WCS

Laura Slocomb- Metro Services Coordinator
21485 NW Mauzey Road
Hillsboro, OR 97124
(503) 439-6510
Email: lslocomb@oregonfoodbank.org

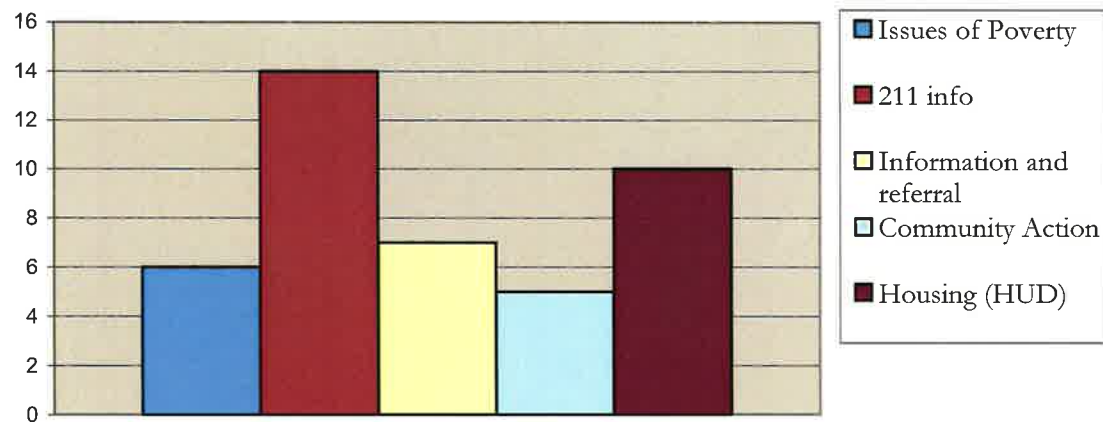
**TRAINING #1
Logistics**



**TRAINING #1
Program Content was useful and relevant to your work.**



**TRAINING #1
Participants would like more information on...**



Appendix 1.4

