

I'm hesitant to respond after seeing the fabulous information from Gulf Coast, but here's how we address repeat customers. All customers receive information about services available from the Workforce Center. If a customer expresses a need for a service that isn't provided by the Workforce Center or if the customer has been unsuccessful in meeting their needs after using our services, we refer them to 2-1-1 (the 24/7 information and referral system for human and social services). In Abilene, the 2-1-1 office is housed in the Workforce Center; however, individuals may also find out information by calling 2-1-1 or by visiting their website. We do have repeat customers at the Workforce Center, but we don't have a policy limiting services or adding requirements, etc.

The 2-1-1 agency is, however, planning to implement a program to address repeat customers of their system. 2-1-1 basically serves as a clearinghouse for non-profits, public agencies and CBo/FBOs that provide basic needs--food, shelter, clothing, medical, transportation, crisis management, etc. Individuals who receive services from any participating agency (which is a majority in the region) are tracked in a database that identifies the service, date, etc. I don't know what the final policy will be, but the initial thought has been that if a person requests assistance more than 3 times in 2 months, they will be referred to the LINK Coordinator. (I think it stands for Living Independently through Networked Knowledge or something similar.) The Link Coordinator will basically do an assessment, develop a plan and link the individual to an agency to do case management. While participation is voluntary, if an individual chooses not to participate, the agencies won't continue to provide resources. I'm sure there will be individuals with certain disabilities or limitations that may not ever be able to become independent, but the hope is that this will move folks to independence--whether that's getting a job, getting a better job, moving to a cheaper place, etc. So, we'll continue to refer our customers to 2-1-1 who aren't becoming employed and are hopeful that this soon to be implemented program will assist them. If you don't have a good partnership with 2-1-1, I'd highly recommend developing one.

Hope this helps.

Mary Ross, Executive Director
West Central Texas WDB
400 Oak Street
Abilene, Texas 79602
(325) 795-4301 - direct line
(325) 795-4200 - main line
(325) 795-4300 - fax
mary.ross@workforcesystem.org - e-mail
www.workforcesystem.org - website