



**Report to the Friends Foundation for the Aging
October 6, 2023**

What problem were you addressing? What solution did you propose to address it?

Center in the Park (CIP) successfully administered an In-Home Support Program (IHSP) for 26 years through a contract with the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA). IHSP case managers assisted thousands of homebound community members with home delivered meals, adaptive equipment, minor home repairs, and the referrals and community support they needed to remain independent. These services helped older adults in Northwest Philadelphia to age in place in their homes and communities. The program was particularly vital in assisting older adults who either did not meet the stringent guidelines of other PCA-funded programs or who needed only short-term interventions to regain independence.

In 2022, as a result of changes to the Pennsylvania Department of Aging's Intrastate Funding Formula, PCA faced a \$3.5 million cut to its annual funding and was forced to eliminate support to the IHSP citywide. CIP experienced a \$400,000 funding cut and had to quickly re-envision how to deliver the IHSP with much fewer resources. Through the support of the Friends Foundation for the Aging, we have been piloting a revised IHSP program focused on community referrals, assistance in applying to benefits and aging services programs, and supporting brief interventions including homecare services and the provision adaptive equipment.

What actions did you take? What worked and didn't work toward your objectives? Please share any unanticipated benefits or barriers encountered.

The IHSP pilot aimed to serve 100 older adults with information/referrals, support navigating aging services, and the delivery of short-term interventions. The pilot ended up far exceeding this output by providing supportive services to 349 older adults and caregivers in the past year!

The IHSP has helped community-dwelling older adults in Northwest Philadelphia with issues including:

- Providing utility assistance and preventing utility shut-offs
- Covering the costs of short-term homemaker services (cleaning, shopping, meal preparation)
- Helping older adults to apply for benefits, including the PA Rent Rebate Program
- Providing referrals for home-delivered meal programs, transportation assistance, and home health services
- Supporting individuals in navigating CCT for their transportation needs
- Replacing broken appliances including stoves and refrigerators
- Purchasing adaptive medical equipment

In approximately 60% of the cases, CIP has been able to use our own resources to directly address an older adult's needs. CIP has distributed \$29,750 from our Emergency Assistance Fund to help cover the costs of short-term housekeeping services, adaptive medical equipment, minor home repairs, updated appliances, and utility and rental assistance for older adults facing immediate needs. Additionally, the



IHSP Outreach Worker has been able to make referrals within CIP to the Housing Counseling Department, the Neighborhood Energy Center, and the Center Counselor. In these cases, the IHSP has been a point of entry for older adults into CIP for support with benefits enrollment, financial counseling, foreclosure prevention, and utility assistance.

In the other 40% of the cases, the IHSP Outreach Worker has made referrals to collaborating organizations who could better meet an individual's needs, including the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA) for care management, transportation assistance, caregiver support, and home-delivered meals.

Operating this program independently from PCA has allowed CIP to have greater flexibility in who we help and what services we can provide. While the intent of the program is still to provide support to homebound individuals, there have been cases where older adults who are not homebound have reached out for support and, so long as the resources were available, we have been able to address their needs. Most recipients of IHSP services are residents of Northwest Philadelphia but we have been able to support individuals from other parts of the city if they have sought out our services. Additionally, we have been able to coordinate some housekeeping services that may not have been eligible under the old program guidelines.

One of the big challenges of the pilot has been determining the ideal staffing structure for administering this program. When the IHSP was funded by PCA, CIP had four IHSP social workers under the supervision of a Director of Social Services & Housing. Funding from FFA and Impact 100 did help to cover the salary of the Director of Social Services & Housing after the PCA funding was eliminated. However, this staff person left CIP in late 2022 for another opportunity. Recruiting a replacement was a challenge, especially as many non-profits faced staffing shortages in the wake of the pandemic. A new Director was hired in early 2023 but their tenure was short as it was not a good fit.

Fortunately, the part-time IHSP Outreach Worker was effectively managing the workload. Additionally, CIP's Executive Director had supervised this program earlier in her CIP tenure and remained well versed in the administration of the IHSP. CIP's Leadership Team made the decision in the spring of 2023 to eliminate the Director of Social Services & Housing position and to move forward with the IHSP Outreach Worker reporting directly to the Executive Director, who would spend a slightly larger percentage of her time devoted to this program. One of CIP's Housing Counselors was promoted to Housing Supervisor to oversee the Housing Department.

This staffing structure has worked effectively since the spring. As we transition out of the pilot phase, we will continue to evaluate if this is the ideal staffing structure or if alternative options need to be explored.

How did you measure success – both quantitative and qualitative? What did you learn? Please include numbers and demographics of people touched by your work.

The IHSP Outreach Worker maintains a spreadsheet that tracks all engagements with older adults seeking support from the IHSP. This spreadsheet keeps records of individuals who have contacted the IHSP, their needs, and the intervention or support offered by CIP. The IHSP Outreach Worker also records any



referrals made to external organizations. The Executive Director maintains the records of all spending from the Emergency Assistance Fund.

When funded by PCA, the IHSP had a more formal intake process with IHSP social workers carrying caseloads and following clients over a longer time period. In the new IHSP, where we are able to serve anyone who calls but where engagements are often shorter, we haven't been able to collect as rich of data. The current measures are primarily the quantitative numbers of people served, referrals made, and the funds spent from the Emergency Assistance Fund. As we move beyond the pilot phase, solidifying our intake/assessment process and our tracking of client outcomes will be areas of focus for the IHSP.

How did partnerships/collaborations enhance or challenge the project?

The collaborators on this project have primarily been the organizations to whom CIP sends referrals. The IHSP Outreach Worker frequently refers individuals to PCA if they would be eligible for services such as home-delivered meals, transportation assistance, or the Senior Housing Assistance Repair Program. We work with the Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation (PHDC) and Habitat for Humanity when major home repairs are needed. We have relationships with Marx Medical for adaptive equipment and with Always Best Care for housekeeping services.

Include a budget and actual for the project during the reporting period.

A financial statement is attached. At this time, we are slightly underspent on this grant due to the elimination of the Director of Social Services & Housing staff position and the reduced salary expenses for administering this program.

What conversations have you had on how to sustain the project after the grant, and do you have plans to share your results with other organizations?

CIP is fully committed to continuing this project. The IHSP was a mainstay at CIP since the 1990s and we are proud that we have been able to carry on the program after last year's devastating budget cuts. The priorities moving forward will be to solidify the staffing structure for administering the program and strengthening the intake, assessment, and evaluation processes. Also, the 349 people served this year were reached with minimal marketing from CIP. With more intentional promotions and outreach efforts, we could surely extend the reach of the program and upgrade our current part-time IHSP staff to a full-time position.

At present, we anticipate that the IHSP program will be primarily funded through grant support. We are also making focused efforts this year to expand our corporate sponsorship model and hope to leverage corporate support to fund part of the IHSP.

Feedback on your interaction with FFA would be helpful. How have we helped? Made it harder? What else can we do to facilitate your work?

We are extremely grateful for the support of FFA, especially for coming in at such a critical time when we were trying to revive the program following the loss of funding. We do intend to reapply to FFA in your spring cycle and will plan to meet with you prior to preparing that application.