BCS Volunteer News

March 1, 2011

This issue provides best practices for interviewing applicants.

Applicant Interview

We interview all eligible applicants in person to learn more about their treatment and financial situation. During the interview, you will try to answer the following questions:

- What is preventing the applicant from working?
- When will the applicant will be able to return to work following treatment?
- Has the applicant's household income changed as a direct result of breast cancer treatment? If so, how? (e.g., the applicant has reduced hours by 50% so monthly income is reduced by half; applicant is unable to work at all and disability only provides 2/3 of her income)
- Have the applicant's expenses changed as a direct result of breast cancer treatment? If so, how? (e.g., paying for childcare during chemotherapy appointments, increased medical co-payments)
- What other sources of income are available to the client? (e.g., disability payments through their employer or the state, Medicare/MediCal, family support, help from friends, Social Security income, assistance from other non-profits, rental property income, etc.)
- How long treatment is expected to last? What is the client's treatment plan
- What expense is hardest for the client to meet right now? (e.g., rent, food bills, insurance premiums, etc.)

Interview Tips

- When scheduling the interview, **allow at least 1.5 hours for the interview**, not including travel time.
- **Arrive on time** (or early) and have your file folder prepared with a copy of the application filled out by the applicant provided to you by Nicolette or downloaded from WebEx, a blank copy of the Interview Form, BCS' resource guide, and information about BCS' mission and application process.
- **Introduce yourself** and the other interviewer to the applicant.
- Make every effort to **put the applicant at ease**. Use eye contact, and other friendly non-verbal and verbal gestures. Let the applicant know that you would like to take notes during your conversation, and ask her if she is comfortable with you doing that.
- **Explain BCS's mission and application process** to the applicant and ask if she/he has any questions about BCS. Answer all of the applicant's questions if possible. If you do not know the answer to a question, write it down and explain you will get back to the person within the next few days with more information.
- Follow the **Interview Form** beginning with going over page one and the eligibility criteria with the applicant. Then using the Interview Form as a guide, continue asking the questions and documenting her answers on the form. When completed, have the applicant review the form and then ask her to sign and date it to verify accuracy of information.
- Get the name(s) (with correct and complete spelling) and account numbers of **client's main payees** (e.g., landlord or mortgage company, health insurance company). Also, make sure that you write down the **exact** amount in dollars and cents, for each recommended payment. Explain that you are asking for this information in order to recommend assistance for the client, but that she may not receive assistance for any or all of the payments.
- **DO NOT tell the client what your recommendation will be**, because until a recommendation has been submitted and voted on, we do not know what level of support, if any, the client will receive.
- Inform the client that if assistance is approved, **BCS will make the check(s) out to the designated and approved payee** (her landlord, for example) and that the check(s) are mailed to the client at the end of the month.
- Let the client know that **you will make a recommendation to the Applicant Review Panel (ARP) within two days**, and that you will call her to let her know the results of her application within three days. Ask the client to call BCS at 866-960-9222 with any questions.