

CASE STUDY

Agency Profile

Who:

Unique People Services

Services:

Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities, Supportive Housing, Mental Health, HIV/AIDS

Year Founded: 1991**Location:** NYC and

Westchester

Clients Served:

Over 500 Annually

Annual Operating Budget:

\$22 million

Using AWARDS Since: 2009

A Foothold Technology Perspective

Electronic Record Keeping Instills Confidence and Leads to More Funding

The Situation: A need to streamline operations and improve efficiency

Unique People Services (UPS) operates over 20 programs and provides mental health services, support to those living with HIV/AIDS, individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities (I/DD), and operates several supportive housing initiatives. Before transitioning to AWARDS, this multi-service agency was using paper to track all its services. For its I/DD programs, Medicaid Service Coordinators (MSCs) would fan out in the field, come back to the office to write their Individual Service Plans (ISPs) and then review notes with individuals and providers. Leadership knew the agency needed a more efficient way to operate and an easier way to bill for services, and supervisors needed better ways to support MSCs while maintaining quality assurance.

The Solution: Switch from a paper-based system to an electronic one

In 2009, the agency began using AWARDS and started seeing greater success with its documentation process. "By using the same methods across our programs for data collection, we can easily see if ISPs are done, notes are complete, and if caseloads are manageable. Because we use the same forms, all MSCs have clarity," said Sonji Phillips, Director of DD Services. "We can also identify any deficiencies within an ISP. Program directors can see what's missing and use the quality, or lack thereof, as a teaching tool with staff," added Cheryelle Cruickshank, Associate Executive Director. By using BillingBuilder, AWARDS' integrated billing feature, the agency also drastically cut down the time and effort spent looking for billing errors. At a glance the agency can now identify any missing information and manage all aspects of billing more efficiently.

The Result: The use of AWARDS leads to increased funding and better data

According to Unique People Services, AWARDS is helping MSCs and program staff provide more coordinated support, and by using AWARDS for billing, the agency has instilled confidence in funders and streamlined operations. "In fact," says Cheryelle, "because of our partnership with Foothold, we recently received a grant which we are using to purchase iPads for our staff. With this upgrade, we're continuing to move one step closer to a paperless system -- which will save us time, money, not to mention space currently being used for filing -- and our staff can work directly with those we serve from anywhere. No more trips back to the office to enter progress notes!"

"Because of our success using AWARDS for billing, we were able to instill confidence in our funders."

- Cheryelle Cruickshank
Associate Executive Director
Unique People Services

