

APPROVED March 19, 2024

Montgomery County Community Action Board
Zoom Meeting
February 27, 2024

MINUTES

CAB Members in Attendance: Elaine Carballo, Valerie Chatfield-Smith, Lisa Conlon, Erika Conner, Denise Fredericks, Evelyn Okutu, Lisette Orellana Engel, Pamela Luckett, Myriam Paul, Timothy Robinson, and Claudia Simmons

CAB Members Absent: Jeffery Johnson, Will Kenlaw, Mike Subin, and Zelda Wafer-Jones

CAA Staff: Shantá Johnson, Charlene Muhammad, Aizat Oladapo, and Leah Goldfine

Guests: Jessica Blasic, Rachel Bonas, and Nichelle Owens

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:04 pm.

Consent Agenda

Lisette moved to approve the consent agenda and Myriam seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The consent agenda included the minutes from the January 23, 2024 CAB meeting; meeting evaluations summary from the January 23, 2024 CAB meeting; Acting Executive Director and Head Start Report; Head Start Quality Improvement Plan for deficiency cited; Head Start funding guidance letter; Contracts Report; Staff Liaison's Report; Budget report and P Card update; TESS and Navigation reports; VITA report; FY23 CSBG Organizational Standards Report; Draft County Council Bill Re: Child Investment Fund of Montgomery County; and CAB testimony: HB608 - Earned Income Tax Credit - Individuals Without Qualifying Children – Eligibility, HB451 - Tax Assistance for Low-Income Marylanders – Funding, SB213 - Summer SNAP for Children Act, HB696/SB579 - Primary and Secondary Education - Breakfast and Lunch Programs - Universal Expansion, HB 0823 - Melanie Nicholle Diaz Fire Safety Act, SB705 - Access to Care Act, HB860 - Housing and Community Development - Community Action Boards, and HB694/SB482 - ENOUGH Act of 2024.

Head Start School Readiness Update

Jessica Blasic, Head Start Coordinator, Early Childhood Programs and Services, joined the board to share a presentation about the Head Start Early Learning Assessment. This tool measures child development, focusing on skills, knowledge, and behaviors. The areas of focus in the Assessment correlate with a child's likelihood to do well in kindergarten. Jessica noted that the Head Start program is able to disaggregate the data by age, reflecting the progress of three and four years olds separately. The data included in the presentation was from the fall. There will be additional assessment for the winter and spring.

Jessica reported that HS students are doing well in most areas. Physical and motor development were both particularly high. The data are broken down by race/ethnicity and by gender, with special attention to African American and Hispanic males. African American males were doing as well or outperforming their peers in many areas. Some disparities exist for Hispanic males but it was noted that language barriers may be a factor. Board members emphasized that the high achievement of African American males in Head Start should be highlighted and celebrated.

A question was asked about multilingual students. Jessica reported that training on teaching English for English language learners is required for all HS staff. Disparities still exist though, and this is something that may be reflected in the data.

The board discussed and the need for longitudinal data. Jessica reported that we can now look at the data for kindergarteners who were in the HS/PreK program. This is very important to show the long-term impact of the program.

CAB Updates

Board members received a detailed written report from the staff liaison ahead of the meeting, which included updates on CAB activities, along with the board's recent testimony on numerous bills. Staff shared an update on the CAI. Volunteers were needed for the testimony practice sessions on March 2nd and 23rd. Staff thanked the members of the Recruitment Committee, who interviewed prospective board members.

Pam shared an update on a new County Council bill that would establish a Child Investment Fund. The program established by the bill is similar to baby bonds. There would be a non-lapsing fund for children to access when they turn 18. The County would allocate enough money in the annual budget to cover the cost of \$3,200 per child born in the County. There would also be an advisory committee to help develop and oversee the program. Pam noted that baby bonds exist elsewhere in the country. Similar to the Guaranteed Income Pilot Program, the purpose is to reduce the wealth gap. Money would be set aside now so that it could grow with interest before a child turns 18. CAB has been invited to participate in a press conference about the bill. The board members had several questions about the program and determined that they would like to obtain additional information before taking the next steps.

Executive Director's Report

Board members received a detailed written report with updates on the agency's programs, along with program specific reports. Staff deferred to the written reports.

Head Start

Board members received a detailed written report with updates on the Head Start program, along with the Head Start Quality Improvement Plan for deficiency cited and Head Start funding guidance letter. Charlene reported that the grant application was being completed and would be reviewed and approved by the board the following month.

Contracts

CAB members received a detailed written report with updates on the agency's contract partners. Aizat reported that we received word that Manna Food Center will receive funding for the Farm to Food program. Aizat also shared that the FY23 CSBG annual report is being compiled, which includes outcomes for our services.

Adjournment: The meeting ended at 7:09 pm.