

APPROVED FEBRUARY 23, 2021

Montgomery County Community Action Board Meeting

January 26, 2020 from 6 to 8 pm

VIRTUAL MEETING

EC Members: Present: Meredith Bowers, Lisa Conlon, Erika Conner, Lisette Engel, Candice Groudine, Jefferey Johnson, Tiffany Jones, Danette Lawrence, Agnes Leshner, Pamela Luckett, Myriam Paul, Samuel Sharper, Valerie Chatfield- Smith, and Zelda Wafer- Alonge. Absent: Laura Irwin, Ron Jennings, Will Kenlaw, and Mike Subin.

CAA Staff: Sharon Strauss, Charlene Muhammad, and Aizat Oladapo

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

Consent Agenda- Samuel moved to approve the consent agenda. Myriam seconded the motion, and all voted in favor. The consent agenda included CAB update, Executive Director's written report, Head Start written report, Contracts Partners written report and announcement.

Tiffany provided CAB leadership updates:

Collaboration Council- Tiffany shared that she and Sharon met with Elijah Wheeler, the ED, to discuss mutual areas of work and priorities. They discussed participating in the child wellbeing workgroup, potentially involving CAB in advocacy and the CAI as participants:

- Back to school activities – Moco Side/Learning opportunity
- Reengagement for children ages 16-24
- Reach children going through homelessness.
- Advocacy for low-income participant
- Community needs assessment.
- Ways to engage participants
- Helps to collaborate with their findings Etc.

InterfaithWorks- There is a new ED, Courtney Hall, and Agnes, who also serves on the Board of IW, will be facilitating a similar meeting. It was noted that Ron Jennings already met with the Courtney to discuss financial education needs.

CAI- Members agreed that the Virtual format does not generate the same level of engagement among participants and with CAB and workshop leaders. There were suggestions about how to increase engagement with less vocal members. It was noted that currently 17 participants are active.

Key advocacy priority group- The room opened for 10 mins for team to discuss role (Writing, Research and opportunities that are readily available within the county with a Racial Equity & Digital Divide lens)

- **Early Childhood Education** (Lisa, Tiffany)
 - Tight budget.
 - Boys of color falling behind and dropping out
 - Going digital and poverty.
- **Housing and utility Expenses** (Valerie, Agnes, Candace, Zelda, Pam & Sam)-
Housing- How to develop solutions after the eviction moratorium. What to do with rental late fees. How to advocate for the people and the housing issues, working with different groups for advocacy. Ex. Interfaith works, personal experience with lack of funds for housing and the slow process of getting funds, lastly having the education or language to be able to navigate the sites to fill out applications.
- **Economy, employment, and workforce training** (Erika & Will will do the Writing), Myriam& Valerie (Researchers); (Candace & Aizat- will work on the opportunities) IEPP-sponsor a household for internet services from 6- to whatever (Comcast & Verizon's offered). MoCo College and universities loan-out laptops and Ipads. MoCo Public Libraries- be out of the library access the WIFI. High speed internet at home.
- **Accessibility and responsiveness of human services** (Danette and Sharon).
There was a discussion about the complexity of the service delivery system and the need for better human and "technology." The impact for racially and ethnically diverse residents was noted, as well as those newly experiencing poverty,

Upcoming legislation was reviewed briefly:

County Council:

- CC Bill 49-20, Human Rights and Civil Liberties – Discrimination in Rental Housing – Fair Criminal History and Credit Screenings
- CC Capital Budget Supplemental Appropriation: 8 million for Affordability Housing Opportunity Fund.
- MMF Recommendations for a Public-Private ECE Coordinating Entity

Maryland General Assembly: (Note: MCAP Advocacy Day – later in February, date TBD)

- SB52 - Public Health – Establishing Maryland Commission on Health Equity to employ a health equity framework. etc: Hearing: 1/26, 1:30pm
- SB172 - Creates Health Equity Resources Communities in Maryland to focus health resources in the neighborhoods where needed most: Hearing 1/29, 1:00pm
- SB130 - Prohibiting a landlord from assessing certain late fees for the failure of a tenant to pay rent under certain circumstances and following certain notice from the tenant. 1/28, 11:00am

Next opportunities for testimony were highlighted as February 11, public hearing for Bill 52-20 & 49-20. It was noted that MMF's proposal to form a public-private ECE coordinating entity will be presented on Thursday to the County Council.

Executive Director's Update –

- The County continues its work to identify a new facility facility to relocate TESS. Department of General Services is negotiating the lease which would include the build out costs, and to work with the landlord to secure an agreement. It is across the street from the current facility.
- Ron and Sharon are working with United Way, which designated CAFE Montgomery County as the lead nonprofit. There is a hope to build upon the "Hubs" to engage the different partners within the county.
- The multi-lingual VITA flyers are almost completed; the Get all Your Money multimedia EITC and VITA awareness campaign is progressing, with the RideOn ads in development and new funding from the United Way anticipated to support a text outreach effort targeting 33,000 residents who are likely eligible.

- Tax season is entirely virtually; the process is by appointments, with a Zoom intake and quality review (at the end), primarily completed with the CAA staff, with the IRS Certified volunteers working in the background with tax returns.
- The staff said goodbye to Diana, the office services coordinator- she is retiring. Navigator positions should be posted very soon.
- The staff is working with the consultant and MCAP to continue its 2G project at TESS, supported by CARES funding.

Head Start-

- To date, the program is 90% enrolled.
- The majority of parents are choosing to stay virtual. Lisa and Family Services team are working with MCPS to revise and streamline the application process.
- Jose Roberto Flores (the new Parent Engagement Specialist) is implementing the development of a MCPS-based wellness website for families.
- Verna is scheduled to attend the February CAB meeting to provide an update on child assessment data.
- Lisa noted that the annual family Coat drive was held by virtual donations this year and has been overwhelmingly successful.
- The annual Recruitment meeting is scheduled for Feb. 9, 2021
- Zelda noted that a representative from VITA will provide an information Session on the VITA program at the February Policy Council meeting.

Contracts-

- Contract Monitors are working on monitoring visits which are being done virtually, with 52 contracts to be completed by March 16, the date the County Executive's Budget is released.
- Working on Budget modification for contracts that need to shift their expenditures. They have until April 2
- Contractors have challenges working in the virtual mode due to the increase in numbers for most and the amount of increased emergency services request.

Food Council-

- The council will be having their Retreat (1/27) which will focus on the racial equity plans and logic model. It welcomed new members in the Community event (12/14).

- Continued Biweekly Covid update providing Food assistance providers with information for the community at large.

Announcements-

- Women's Legislation Briefing- Tiffany is presenting a panel on Economic and Social Justice
- The next CAI sessions were shared. Workshop #4, The Nuts & Bolts of Advocacy (Pam) will be on Feb. 6, 12 – 2 pm; the February Brown Bag (Zelda & Meredith) will be on Feb. 18, 12 – 1 pm

Sam raised concerns regarding the management of the Yorkshire apartments in East County which is now raising tenant's fees on a month to month basis. There was a question as to whether this was allowable, especially for HOC.

Adjourn: Agnes made a motion to adjourn, which Sam seconded. Members approved the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.