

APPROVED MARCH 24, 2020

Montgomery County Community Action Board Meeting
February 25, 2020
1401 Rockville Pike, Room 3603

MINUTES

CAB Members Present: Meredith Bowers, Lisa Conlon, Candace Groudine, Laura E. Irwin, Ron Jennings, Jeffery Johnson, Tiffany Jones, Will Kenlaw, Danette Lawrence, Agnes Leshner, Mike Subin, Samuel Sharper, Jr., and Zelda Wafer-Alonge

CAB Members Absent: Isaac Osei Asare, Valerie Chatfield-Smith, Lisette Engel, Pamela Luckett, and Myriam Paul

Staff: Sharon Strauss, Charlene Muhammad, Aizat Oladapo, and Leah Goldfine

Guests: Beverly Coleman

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:07 pm.

Consent Agenda

Will moved to approve the consent agenda. Sam seconded the motion and all voted in favor. The consent agenda included: the January 28, 2020 meeting minutes; January meeting evaluations summary (email only); Executive Director's report; Head Start report; P card statements and grant updates (email only); contracts report; staff liaison's report (email only); CAB testimony supporting SB17 – Auto Insurance/Credit History, SB217/HB123 – Wage History, SB234/HB280 – Driver's License Suspension, HB38 – Toll Fines, HB679 – EITC Eligibility, HB680 – EITC Calculation, SB531 – Discrimination Based on Hairstyle, HB912 – Child Tax Credit, and HB1231 – Marriage Age, HB839 – Family and Medical Leave.

CAB Updates

Board members received an update on the joint meeting that was held between the CAB Executive Committee and leadership from the Latino Health Steering Committee, Asian American Health Steering Committee, and the African American Health Program (staff only). The groups discussed their key priorities and opportunities for collaboration, which included joint advocacy and addressing residents' concerns regarding public charge.

Executive Director's Updates

In addition to her written report, Sharon shared some key updates from the agency. She and Leah participated in the Maryland Community Action Partnership Advocacy Day on February 19, meeting with members of the Montgomery County Delegation to advocate for MCAP priorities and 2-Generation/Whole Family support, including HB 1363, which the CAB has supported with a separate letter to the General Assembly.

An EITC kick-off event was scheduled for the following day. Sharon said that the event will include presentations by two researchers who have studied the impact of the EITC on lower-income households, specifically on birth weight. Through a United Way grant to CAFE Montgomery, baby-bibs have been imprinted in English and Spanish to promote the EITC for young parents and caregivers. The baby-bibs will be introduced at the event, and the consultant working with CAFE and CAA VITA will continue to work on their distribution, sharing related outreach resources.

Sharon reported that the agency received feedback on its monitoring visit. Some of the concerns raised by the state were addressed by a follow-up explanation of the structure of our agency as a public CAA.

The 2-Generation/Whole Family work funded through a Kresge grant is moving forward in the County. This is in addition to a 2-Generation/Whole Family pilot program at TESS, which is funded through a grant from the state to MCAP. Sharon reported that some of the funding the agency received may be used for a 2-Generation/Whole Family training in June.

Sharon reported that TESS has developed several new initiatives, including a parents' support group and a Standby Guardianship assistance program. Many clients are experiencing more difficult situations due to uncertainty surrounding Public Charge and other concerns in the community.

Contracts

Aizat led a training about the County Contracts process. She explained that County contracts are not grants – they are contracts between the County and nonprofit organizations. The contract is binding and requires close monitoring to ensure that contractors follow through on what is required of them. There are about 700 active contracts within DHHS with over 1,200 contract actions each year (renewals, budget modifications, scope changes, etc.). Within the CAA, there are currently 31 vendors and 52 contracts. Most CAA contracts are cost reimbursement contracts, meaning that the contractor does the work and requests reimbursement. The contract monitors receive invoices and process them on a regular basis. The CAA also oversees some letter contracts, which are for \$30,000 or less.

Aizat explained that the parties involved in the contract are the vendor, DHHS (contract monitor and Contracts Management Team), Department Director, Department of Finance, Office of the County Attorney, and Department of General Services Office of Procurement. There are certain common elements of contracts, including insurance certification, tax exempt status, W-9, and registration with vendor system. All invoices are due by the 15th of the month and payment is typically due within 30 days of receipt of the invoice.

A question was raised regarding overlap in services among contractors. While there is some overlap, each organization (not including base budget contracts which are noncompetitive) must apply through the County grants process each year, explaining what their organization does and the community needs met. Community members review the applications and make recommendations before the budget is developed. Aizat noted that the application process is changing. There will soon be a County Grants Office that will oversee the entire process.

Board members also received a written report with updates on agency contracts.

Head Start

In addition to a written report, Charlene noted that Head Start will receive additional funding for the upcoming academic year. The County applied for a quality improvement grant that will be added to the Head Start base budget. The grant funds may be used to support trauma-informed care. There is also health and safety funding available for which the County's Head Start program may apply.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 8 pm.