

APPROVED FEBRUARY 25, 2020

Montgomery County Community Action Board Meeting
January 28, 2020
1401 Rockville Pike, Room 3603

MINUTES

CAB Members Present: Meredith Bowers, Valerie Chatfield-Smith, Lisa Conlon, Lisette Engel, Candace Groudine, Laura E. Irwin, Ron Jennings, Jeffery Johnson, Tiffany Jones, Will Kenlaw, Danette Lawrence, Agnes Leshner, Pamela Lockett, Myriam Paul, and Mike Subin

CAB Members Absent: Isaac Osei Asare and Zelda Wafer-Alonge

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

Guests: Beverly Coleman, Samuel Sharper, Jr., and LaDrea Taylor

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

Consent Agenda

Agnes moved to approve the consent agenda. Pam seconded the motion and all voted in favor. The consent agenda included: the November 26, 2019 meeting minutes, November meeting evaluations summary (email only), Executive Director's report, Head Start report, P card statements (email only), contracts report, staff liaison's report (email only), CAB testimony supporting the Housing Impact Fairness Act (email only), CAB testimony supporting the Special Appropriation for School Health Nurses (email only), CAB testimony for the BOE budget hearing (email only), CAI workshop evaluations summary (email only), and the Office of Consumer Protection Complaints for December (email only).

CAB Updates

The Board established a 2020 Awards Committee, which will help plan the event on May 19 and will select the winner of the Henry L. Dixon Award for an innovative program at a CAA partner organization. Lisette, Mike, Meredith, Myriam, and Lisa will serve on the committee.

CAB members received information on SB0017, which would prevent insurance companies from using credit history to determine insurance eligibility and rates. This bill is in line with previous legislation supported by the Board that would address policies that adversely affect low-income residents. The CAB will submit testimony in support.

Board members received an update on the Community Needs Assessment. The executive summary has been finalized and printed. The full CNA will be finalized soon when introductory letters are approved.

Head Start Presentation

Charlene shared a presentation about the Head Start Community Assessment and proposed service delivery model for the five-year plan. The presentation provided an overview of the national Head Start program, the budget, and the County's program. Charlene explained how the most common Head Start grantees are private organizations/nonprofits, CAAs, and school systems. In Montgomery County, the CAA has always been the grantee and the agency has always partnered with MCPS to serve as the delegate with DHHS School Health providing supportive services. Charlene explained how the County receives Head Start federal funds, along with MSDE supplemental funds, which are used for expanded summer programs. In Maryland, although Montgomery County represents 20% of the population, the County only has 10% of the Head Start slots.

Charlene provided an overview of the demographics of Head Start. The program is only serving about 40% of Head Start eligible children, most of whom are Hispanic or Latino or African American or Black. The predominant languages spoken by children and their families are Spanish, English, and Amharic. 20% of Head Start children have a disability (speech, autism, developmental delay, etc.) A few important trends included the increase in two-parent households, increase in single parents being employed, and an increase in homeless families. The statistics reveal that 648 families received referrals from FSWs for numerous services, although the actual number is higher (the application only allows for a maximum of 648). Many children receive mental health referrals due to trauma they have experienced, but not all children are receiving continuous services. All families are offered a service agreement called a Family Partnership, but not all families accept it. According to a staff survey, there was a large increase in families' fear for their safety. This is mostly related to immigration concerns. With regard to health, there has been an uptick in the number of obese children in Head Start.

Since Head Start is now in year five of its five-year plan, the program is developing its five-year plan for the next grant cycle. Key priorities/challenges include the need for more three-year old slots; data collection; improving the EXCELS process; the need for more comprehensive services for potential community-based facilities; and aligning early education support with Early Childhood Services, Resource and Referral, School Health, and DHHS. Staffing needs include a data manager; ECE Coordinator, Family Service Worker, and School Health Nurse to support Family Childcare Provider (FCCP) Hubs; and an assistant supervisor for PreK/HS, social worker, instructional specialist, FSW, and behavioral specialist for MCPS.

Charlene explained the Head Start funding and how/why the model is set-up this way. She explained that the Board and the Policy Council must approve the five-year plan, determining how the \$5 million in funding will be spent. The CAB can decide to use a different model from what has been used previously. The proposed service delivery model shared with the Board at the meeting would include 548 HS slots for four-year-old children and 100 slots for three-year-old children in a community-based model. The community-based model would include five classes served by Early HS agencies, three slots at each of five FCCPs, and a childcare in public space hub to support providers with chronic vacancies. The Board members discussed this proposal and the need for more analysis. Mike moved to establish a committee to use strategic analysis to look at where the funding is going now and how it can be used more efficiently to better align with the proposed service model. Jeffery seconded the motion and all voted in favor. Mike, Tiffany, and Lisette will

all serve on the committee, helping to analyze the current model and propose changes during the next grant cycle.

Executive Director's Updates

Sharon shared some updates on the VITA program, which is now underway at six sites throughout the County during tax season. The agency is working with CAFE Montgomery MD, which received a United Way grant to support EITC outreach as well as to fund a VITA contractor from April 15 to June 30. The goal is to promote the EITC to parents of young children. These families can greatly benefit from the EITC and there is research linking the EITC to improved health and overall outcomes for children. CAFE has hired a consultant and is already working with CAA to order imprinted EITC outreach baby bibs. An EITC kick-off event featuring a panel discussion will take place in late February to promote the research and engage providers and policymakers in this new project.

Contracts

Aizat reported that budget modifications are being processed and monitoring visits have started. The CE's budget for FY2021 will be announced on March 16.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 pm.