

APPROVED JANUARY 28, 2020

Montgomery County Community Action Board Meeting
November 26, 2019
1401 Rockville Pike, Room 3603

MINUTES

CAB Members Present: Meredith Bowers, Valerie Chatfield-Smith, Lisa Conlon, Lisette Engel, Candace Groudine, Laura E. Irwin (on telephone), Ron Jennings, Jeffery Johnson, Tiffany Jones, Agnes Leshner, and Zelda Wafer-Alonge

CAB Members Absent: Isaac Osei Asare, Will Kenlaw, Danette Lawrence, Pamela Lockett, Myriam Paul, and Mike Subin

Staff: Sharon Strauss, Aizat Oladapo, and Leah Goldfine

Guests: Beverly Coleman

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

Consent Agenda

Zelda moved to approve the consent agenda. Agnes seconded the motion and all voted in favor. The consent agenda included: the October 22, 2019 meeting minutes, October 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), CAI workshop #1 evaluations summary (email only), CAB testimony re: the new CSBG formula (email only), CAB testimony for the Joint Delegation hearing (email only), CSBG/Head Start Grant update (email only), and the VITA report (email only).

Head Start/PreK Presentation

Lisa shared a presentation about the Head Start/PreK recruitment process. The presentation included an overview of the breakdown of Head Start/PreK classes. There are 648 children served by Head Start, and another 2,265 children served by PreK. This includes eight classes for PreK+ (plus) which serves children from families with incomes up to 300% of the FPL. To register, parents must bring specific documentation, including proof of age of the child; proof of address; proof of income; parent's photo ID; and proof of participation in WIC, HOC, TCA, SNAP, rental assistance or other program. There is also categorical (automatic) eligibility for children whose families receive TCA, children in foster care, and children whose families receive SSI.

Lisa shared a detailed recruitment timeline and explained the targeted outreach that takes place each year. She noted that many Head Start eligible families do not receive a spot for their child. They may receive a spot in PreK, but they can also be referred to other programs such as WPA, private providers who receive state funding, or PEP.

The registration process for Head Start/PreK begins in March each year for the following school year and continues throughout the year. Year-round classes must be filled first because they start earlier. The Early Childhood Centers are also filled earlier because they serve children with IEPs. Lisa explained that spots open up throughout the year when children leave the program. A child who is absent for two weeks is considered to have left the program. Lisa noted that for late registration, staff can check on transportation to see about exceptions for families. They can also overenroll classes in special circumstances.

A question was raised about including fathers in the recruitment process and the Head Start/PreK program as a whole. Head Start/PreK does reach out to fathers and there are efforts to include fathers in programs throughout the year. It was recommended that the program could work with the African American Health Program's young parents' group and with Action in Montgomery, which collaborates with many faith institutions.

A question was raised about openings in the program. Head Start is at capacity by requirement, but there are students who leave during the year, resulting in openings in the program.

CAB Updates

The Board discussed the Housing Impact Fairness Act. Councilmember Glass, who introduced the bill, spoke with the Executive Committee earlier in the month. The bill would require homeowners who demolish their homes and build a larger home on their property to pay an impact tax. The funds raised through this tax would support affordable housing and school construction. The EC voted to recommend that the full Board support the bill. Following a discussion with updates from the meeting with Councilmember Glass, Lisette moved to have the full CAB support the Housing Impact Fairness Act. Agnes seconded the motion and all voted in favor. Laura offered to testify at the public hearing for the bill on December 3.

Board members received an update on the Community Needs Assessment. The full CNA is still being finalized. The CNA executive summary will be printed and posted online soon.

Tiffany shared an update on the Early Childhood Education forum. She noted that County Executive Elrich, Council President Navarro, and Montgomery College President Pollard were all in attendance. The forum focused on the County's priorities and included updates on short-term actionable items. It was reported that 19 new childcare providers opened in the County. The group is looking at key outcomes for the initiative.

Executive Director's Updates

Sharon thanked the Board for their testimony in support of the CSBG formula change. Sharon reported that there have been some delays with the approval of the agency's MOUs. These need to be approved immediately or the agency could lose its AmeriCorps Member.

The agency received some feedback on its CAA Plan. A response will be submitted to the Maryland DHCD.

Eddie Mendes started as the new VITA Program Specialist. The VITA program is looking to finalize sites for the tax season. Sharon reported that there was a meeting with the VITA partners to discuss the financial education survey, which was completed by 110 DHHS, DHCA, and nonprofit staff members. Sharon reported that the agency received a United Way grant that will support a VITA Fellow and EITC outreach. The agency will apply for another United Way grant that will support EITC outreach. This year's EITC outreach will include the Ride On "Get All Your Money!" sign in six languages.

Sharon reported that Montgomery Moving Forward held a meeting to discuss who the recommended coordinating entity should be. The group looked at various criteria to determine which organization/agency would be in the best position to be the coordinating entity.

Sharon reported that there is a new budgeting process called BOLT. This process allows every program to submit a budget proposal that aligns with the County Executive's priorities. Numerous questions must be answered to explain how the proposal would be beneficial and how it would be implemented. Teams will review the proposals/enhancements and provide feedback. The CAA's proposal would provide opportunity coaches at TESS.

Sharon noted that there is a proposal for a new Grants Office in the County. Nonprofit Montgomery is hosting some focus groups about this proposal to address concerns that have been raised.

Contracts

Aizat reported that most of the October invoices have been submitted. Two of the three weekend bag programs have been approved. Aizat, Taunya, and Maureen attended the MCAP retreat, which included a training on 2-Gen initiatives.

Board members reviewed the Pathways to Excellence feedback that the agency received. Aizat reported that overall, the agency did very well. The feedback included both strengths and opportunities for improvement. Aizat noted that many of the peer reviewers were not as familiar with public CAAs and how we operate. She also noted that we scored very high for the CAI and the CAB's extensive advocacy work.

Aizat reported that the Food Council would have a community event at the Casey Community Center on December 11. Two areas of focus are food education and the Food Literacy Assessment Report.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 pm.