

HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD
CITY OF MESA
MESA ARTS CENTER
SOUTH CONFERENCE ROOM
OCTOBER 8, 2005
-RETREAT MINUTES-

MEMBERS

Ms. Mary Bolig
Mr. Jon Burroughs
Mr. Robert Brinton
Mr. William Egan
Mr. Robert Hisserich
Mr. Raymond Jones
Mr. Blake Simms

(Absent)

Ms. Linda Starr

STAFF

Ms. Nichole Ayoola
Ms. Lisa Wilson
Ms. Lisha García
Ms. Ernestine Tesarek

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Nichole Ayoola, Human Services Coordinator welcomed the Human Services Advisory Board (HSAB) members to the retreat. She thanked Lisa Wilson, Human Services Specialist and Ernestine Tesarek, the Neighborhood Services Management Assistant for their assistance in organizing the retreat. Ms. Ayoola reviewed the agenda for the day with Board members. She explained how new members were chosen to serve on the HSAB and about the Board structure as well as the Neighborhood Services Department's organizational chart. Ms. Ayoola informed the Board of the City's budget issues for the coming fiscal year. Lisha García, the Neighborhood Services Department Manager would be attending to give a budget presentation.

PURPOSE OF THE RETREAT

Ms. Ayoola stated that Board members were here to gain an understanding of their roles and responsibilities and what it means to be a Community Action Agency. The Board would establish guidelines, priorities and outcomes for the work that is done. The priorities, successes and outcomes would be defined during the retreat while members and staff will get to know each other by participating in icebreaker activities.

VISION MISSION/STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The HSAB vision/mission statement was reviewed. Ms. Ayoola explained the difference between a vision and mission. She suggested that the Board might prefer to have a statement of purpose instead. Last year's vision/mission statement read:

“The primary role of the Human Services Advisory Board is to evaluate the human services needs and available resources of the community in order to advise the City Council how to make a better community while being good stewards of taxpayers' money.”

The Board should decide whether this statement holds true for the new fiscal year given City Council's feedback from last year. Educating the Council about human services programs and what these programs provide to the community is a priority for the Board. If the City does not provide human services there could be economic and social effects. Specifically, the impact on emergency services such as police and fire could be increased.

After discussing the issue further, which involved strong consideration of the City Council's philosophy and use of human services funding, members of the HSAB agreed to the following statement of purpose:

"The primary role of the Human Services Advisory Board is to evaluate human services needs and advise City Council on how to wisely invest resources to promote a safe and self-reliant community."

The new statement was developed to accomplish the direction given by the Mesa City Council. The Board concluded that by purchasing human services the City of Mesa is investing in its community and the future of that community. The Board would review the statement again after a few weeks to ensure that this reflects their funding objectives.

BUDGET UPDATE

Neighborhood Services Department Manager, Lisha García gave the Board members an update on the City of Mesa's budget crisis. Board members were given a bar graph developed by the Financial Services Department that shows the City's debt charted from 1998 and projected through 2024. She pointed out several events that contributed to the City's budget shortfall. A comparison study of Mesa's revenue structure with other cities in the East Valley was also given to Board members. The study shows that Mesa's revenues are less than these cities. Mesa would have an average of \$40,116,342 if similar revenues were applied. In a publication called "The Price of Government", published by Basic Books, Mesa is listed as one of the cities with the lowest government costs. Another handout shows an estimate of the average charges incurred by homeowners of other cities, including property taxes, which Mesa does not collect (neither primary or secondary). Mesa's charges are less in this category as well.

There are two referendums that the City will ask to be placed on the 2006 ballot—approval of a property tax and an increase of the sales tax—that could assist the budget situation. If the voters do not approve these items a plan would be implemented to alleviate some of the debt. City of Mesa staff developed an alternative budget (pre-election budget), which includes many cuts in City services such as the closing of the two branch libraries, more than half of the City's parks, all after school programs, senior services, as well as eliminating 365 employee positions.

The budget affects the HSAB because, as the allocation process goes forward, it would not be known how much money would be allocated to human services programs. The only funding that is not subject to the cuts is the ABC: A Better Community donations, which come from utility bill donations. It does affect a position in the Office of Human Services as well as others in the Neighborhood Services Department and the subsidies used for utility payments for the senior center and the Downtown Mesa Association. The cuts would start July 1, 2006 and be phased in through to 2008.

Ms. García offered to invite Bryan Raines, Financial Services Manager to the October 27, 2005 meeting to answer any questions. She also stated that the role of the HSAB would be to decide as a community how to pull together and figure out a plan to assist the nonprofits. A plan for human services is vital to our community.

Ms. Ayoola asked that specific questions be addressed to the Office of Human Services staff so they could be routed to Mr. Raines prior to the meeting.

Ms. García spoke about the City's strategic plan and encouraged the Board to visit the City's website to view the plan. By December 31, 2005 the entire budget would be attached to the strategic plan of the city, departments and divisions.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Ms. Ayoola led the Board in a discussion that focused on items to be addressed in fiscal year 2005-2006. After lengthy discussion, members agreed to research the costs and benefit analysis of crisis, early intervention and prevention, transitional services, system support and long term support programs. Mr. Burroughs suggested using various “think tanks” such as the Brookings Institute to retrieve the data. The Board as a group would review the data.

Ms. Bolig stated that she would like to make changes to the evaluation tool used during the allocation process. Although some proposals were well written, she didn’t think the programs should be funded. Ms. Ayoola stated that the current tool is used to evaluate how well the proposal is written and whether or not the program should be funded. Since the allocation process would be starting soon, there is no time to make changes to the evaluation tool. The outcome measurement questions were changed slightly and Board members would have a chance to review the tool before the allocation process begins.

Ms. Ayoola stated that it would take all members of the Board to accomplish the research on the cost/benefit of human services requires a lot of time and effort. The information would be compiled and placed into a report that could be presented to the City Council. Mr. Burroughs volunteered to lead the group in gathering the information.

FUNDING PROCESS

Ms. Ayoola described the allocation process, which begins in November 2005. The information meeting is on November 10, 2005. Board members will receive more information as it becomes available. Community Revitalization does an open RFP (request for proposal). The people listed on the “interested parties” list would be sent the flyer announcing that the RFP is being issued (Mesa United Way requires agencies be invited to apply in their process). The application comes in two parts; the universal application is completed by all agencies applying and requests basic agency information and the addendum (CDBG/HOME & Human Services funding) is specific to the type of funding the agency has applied for. There must be an addendum completed for each program or project.

The proposals are due December 16, 2005 at 3:00 PM. All proposals are checked for the required information and a receipt is stamped and issued with the time and date received. The applications will be distributed to the HSAB members before Christmas. Site visits would begin as soon as January, which gives the Board a chance to have their questions answered. The visits are scheduled for early morning or evening and last about one to two hours. In March, the Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) recommendations will be made. The East Valley Men’s Center and two programs at PREHAB—Autumn House and La Mesita—receive these funds.

The Board will receive staff recommendations, make their recommendations and then forward their recommendations to the City Council for approval.

ABC FUNDING

One of the funding sources received by the Office of Human Services is called *ABC* A Better Community (ABC) donations, which are obtained through utility bill donations from Mesa residents. In 2005-2006 \$161,000 was allocated to the community. The ABC program began in July 1999 as an agreement between the Arizona Republic Charities and the City of Mesa. All funds donated to the program are allocated annually to nonprofit organizations serving Mesa residents. In 2003 the dollars that had been used to match the donations were no longer available

causing a decrease in the allocated amount. Since then, City general funds have been used to fill this gap.

FUNDING GUIDELINES

The Board discussed the new funding guidelines. The Community Safety model was developed through discussions with Vice Mayor Claudia Walters. City Council approved of the concept and the Office of Human Services adopted it.

Ms. Ayoola reviewed the philosophy of the model with the Board. After a detailed discussion changes were made to reflect the following guidelines:

Local social service agencies, civic organizations, businesses, educational institutions and faith-based communities are partners of City safety services.

1. Engage those HS Programs that would directly impact community safety services.
2. Support programs and services that encourage independence and self-sufficiency so that residents can fully realize economic and social opportunities.
3. Avoid duplicating efforts and obligations of other City departments to provide human services.
4. Fund programs that prove diverse support and sustainable success.
5. Prevent long-term dependence on public resources.
6. Fund programs that have specific outcomes for the public good.

Ms. Bolig asked if the Board could receive input from the Mesa Police and Fire Departments regarding the model. Ms. Ayoola stated that she would ask the police and fire chief to attend a meeting with the Board.

ADJOURN

Ms. Ayoola thanked those attending the retreat and the meeting was adjourned at 3:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nichole V. Ayoola, Human Services Coordinator