

HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD
RETREAT
-MINUTES-
CITY OF MESA
UTILITY BUILDING
640 N. MESA DR.
September 11, 2004

MEMBERS

Ms. Mary Bolig
Mr. Raymond Jones
Ms. Judy Kent (Excused)
Ms. Kim Reynolds (Unexcused)
Mr. Ken Salas
Mr. Robert Hisserich
Ms. Linda Starr

STAFF

Ms. Nichole Ayoola
Ms. Ruth Anne Norris
Ms. Lisa Wilson
Ms. Lisha García

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Ayoola welcomed those attending the retreat and reviewed the agenda for the day.

ELECTIONS

Since all Board members were not present, elections were postponed for a future H&HSAB meeting.

ROLE AS A COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY ADVISORY BOARD

Sandra Mendez of the Department of Economic Security's Community Services Administration manages the contracts of the Community Action Programs in Arizona. She was able to attend the retreat and make a presentation to the H&SAB on the responsibilities of a Community Action Agency (CAA).

The Community Services Administration (CSA) uses Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds to subcontract with CAA's. Community Action Programs (CAP) assists low-income individuals and families with a wide array of services. There are ten CAA's located in Arizona. Mesa and Phoenix are the only cities that have CAA designation. There is a migrant seasonal farm worker organization that provides similar services but specifically targets the needs of farm workers statewide. CAA's are federally mandated and funded through a federal block grant. CAA's provide a wide array of supportive services. They also function as advocates for low-income issues in the communities. They advocate establishing partnerships with other community organizations and respond to the unmet needs. All of the CAA's maintain an advisory board with representation from the public, private and low-income sectors.

Ms. Mendez explained that the CAA programs started as a result of the 1964 Equal Opportunity Act (the War on Poverty). It was developed to address poverty issues and the social impact that poverty has on the community. The primary roles and responsibilities of a CAA are to approach poverty issues with a specific legal structure. The CAA must be governed by tri-partite board

(low-income, non-profit, and elected officials) with diverse representation, have a performance measurement system in place and have a strategic planning system that provide actual outcomes. There is \$20 million available statewide for CAA programs. These programs provide the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the Utility Repair, Replacement and Deposit Program (URRD). The services include utility, rental and mortgage assistance and payments; weatherization of homes and certain appliances can be repaired or replaced. There is also an array of utility discount programs, which are coordinated with these services.

The role of the Arizona Department of Economic Security is to allocate the \$20 million and to administer the contracts. The role of the H&HSAB is to become involved in Board governance. This includes overall planning activities for the agency, developing a vision and mission, make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council, set goals and objectives, use outcomes to help manage the organizations and make policy decisions. Ms. Mendez also stressed that members need to be advocates and become involved in resource acquisition and the effective use of funding.

The group was able to engage in discussion, which resulted in many questions being answered by Ms. Mendez. Many of the questions involved the role of MesaCAN (Mesa Community Action Network), the contractor of the City of Mesa's CAA Program and its organizational structure. There are many subparts of MesaCAN: East Valley Men's Center, Client Services, and possibly a future Day Labor Center. NEDCO (Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation) provides the Neighborhood Services and Technical Assistance portion of MesaCAN. The Board members will be provided with MesaCAN's organizational chart to better visualize the structure. Ms. Mendez's time was greatly appreciated. The Board members were able to better understand their roles.

WHERE HAVE WE BEEN THIS LAST YEAR

Ruth Anne Norris provided a presentation on Mesa Housing Services programs. Housing Services maintains many programs for families and individuals with qualifying income ranging from extremely low income (at or below 30% average median income), very low income (at or below 50% AMI) and low income (at or below 80% AMI).

The Rental Assistance Program involves Section 8 vouchers. These vouchers can be used wherever the landlord will accept them. There are about 625 landlords that participate in the Section 8 Program. People whose incomes qualify would pay no more than 40% of their monthly income for rent and utilities. The vouchers are portable to other cities, which mean that they can be used in other cities after one year. Mesa Housing Services can issue up to 1522, if the funding remains available. In FY03-04 there was \$10,047,127 available.

The Family Self Sufficiency Program has 93 participants. The Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS) is a voluntary program designed to assist families in achieving economic independence and self-sufficiency through education and job training. There are 93 participants involved in the program. As their income rises the rent stays level. The difference goes into an escrow account for the client to access after graduating from the program.

The H.O.U.S.E. Program (home ownership through Section Eight) is available to FSS and disabled households. FSS participants can use the escrow towards down payment. The voucher can be used as part of the house payment.

The Housing Rehab Program provides low interest loans, deferred payment loans, emergency grants, and regular rehabilitation and handicap accessibility modifications to those who qualify.

The Rental Rehab Program's purpose is to improve living conditions for low-income tenants and keep existing housing stock available. The Escobedo Apartments (103 units) were built in 1943 as defense housing. Today it is used as affordable rental units for those with extremely low income. The units are deteriorating and in need of repair or replacement. The Star Dust Foundation paid an architectural firm to do a feasibility study to see if remodeling would be beneficial. The City would have to consider the cost of relocating the residents who would be displaced. The other option is to replace or sell the property.

Ms. Norris engaged Board members in a brief discussion surrounding housing issues. She answered questions that the Board had and encouraged them to contact her office for assistance. She would also provide the Mesa Housing Services Division's organizational chart at the next meeting.

DEVELOPMENT OF VISION/WORK PLAN

Ms. Ayoola led the group in development of H&HSAB vision and mission statement. The group began by going through each PowerPoint slide from the 2002 vision and mission. The group brainstormed using the existing statement as a template.

The group discussed the needs of the community and how the cities General Funds and ABC (A Better Community) donations could help meet those needs. Neighborhood based economic development is one area suggested to be reviewed. The group had further discussion regarding the roles and responsibilities of the Board and also the Community Action Agency. They were able to develop a tentative vision and mission statement that would be discussed at the next meeting.

FUNDING PRIORITIES/MULTI-YEAR CONTRACT CYCLE

Ms. Ayoola briefly explained the process of a multi-year funding cycle that is similar to that of the Mesa United Way. The Office of Human Services is in the process of developing a common RFP process in collaboration with the Mesa United Way. The other cities (Scottsdale, Tempe, Chandler/Valley of the Sun United Way) involved have started their process so will be unable to participate this year. The new process would create less work and confusion for those applying for funding and the agencies providing the funding. Also mentioned was the possibility of having an online form with the details yet to be worked out.

OPEN MEETING LAWS/PUBLIC INFORMATION POLICY

Due to the lack of time, this item was moved to the regular September meeting agenda.

ADJOURN

The retreat adjourned at 3:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nichole V. Ayoola, Human Services Coordinator

lw/NA