

APPROVED October 24, 2023

Montgomery County Community Action Board
Zoom Meeting
September 26, 2023

MINUTES

CAB Members in Attendance: Valerie Chatfield-Smith, Lisa Conlon, Erika Conner, Denise Fredericks, Jeffery Johnson, Danette Lawrence, Lisette Orellana Engel, Will Kenlaw, Pamela Lockett, Evelyn Okutu, Myriam Paul, and Claudia Simmons

CAB Members Absent: Elaine Carballo, Timothy Robinson, Mike Subin, and Zelda Wafer-Jones

CAA Staff: Charlene Muhammad, Aizat Oladapo, and Leah Goldfine

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm.

Consent Agenda

Lisette moved to approve the consent agenda. Danette seconded the motion and all present voted in favor. The consent agenda included the minutes and meeting evaluations summary from the June 27, 2023 CAB meeting; Head Start Report; Schedule for the HS federal monitoring visit; revised HS Transportation Waiver Request; HS Transportation Waiver Letter; Request for extension of HS deficiency corrective action plan; Contracts Report; Staff Liaison's Report; Budget reports; TESS and Navigation reports; VITA report; CAB meeting calendar for FY24; CAB quarterly report for meeting with DHHS Director for BCCs; Self-Sufficiency Standard PPT; CAB retreat discussions summary; and CSBG Budget for FY24.

CAB Updates

Board members received a detailed written report from the staff liaison with updates on the board's work since the previous CAB meeting. Staff shared that recruitment for the FY24 CAI was extremely successful, with over 70 people applying. Many board members and CAI Ambassadors participated in the interview process. The CAI Planning Committee ultimately selected 28 applicants to participate in the CAI this year. The orientation session would be held on October 7.

Staff noted that the 2023 Montgomery County Self-Sufficiency Standard Report was being finalized and would be available within the next week or two. The SSS Planning Committee would meet to discuss the rollout plan. All board members were invited to attend.

Staff met with Dr. Johnson and Claudia before the CAB meeting to discuss the key priorities to be highlighted in the CAB's testimony for the County Council HHS Committee annual meeting with Boards, Committees, and Commissions. The board's priorities would focus on the issues discussed at the CAB retreat, including staffing needs within the agency and full funding for the Working Families Income Supplement so that it will return to a 100% match of the state EITC.

Executive Director's Report

Charlene reported that VITA's post tax season free tax services would wrap up at the end of October. The team was on track to reach their goal of completing 300 returns.

TESS continued its extraordinary efforts to address residents' needs with a very small team. Charlene noted that the team was introducing a new management approach so that we would have better outcomes to measure.

Head Start

Board members received a detailed written report with updates on the HS program. Charlene reported that the first deficiency involving a child eloping early last year, has been corrected. For the second deficiency, a request was submitted for an extension to submit our corrective action plan. The request was for a nine-month extension, but we received a four-month extension. The Quality Improvement Plan was being finalized and would include extensive training for MCPS bus drivers.

Charlene reported that the Head Start federal monitoring visit would take place the second week of October. She was still waiting on most of the data that CAA requested from MCPS, all of which is required as part of the monitoring process.

A question was asked about adjusting eligibility for our services because of the higher minimum wage and new Self-Sufficiency Standard. Charlene reported that we are looking into this – especially for VITA services.

Charlene noted that with regard to the impending federal government shutdown, our agency has already received its funding and would therefore not be directly impacted.

Contracts

Board members received a detailed written report with updates on the agency's contract partner organizations. Aizat reported that they are finalizing bridge funds, which provide grants to nonprofits from January through December, rather than the fiscal year. This will be a topic for discussion at the November 8th contract partners meeting for the grantees who are impacted.

Aizat noted that the additional funding for Manna Food Center was added to the non-competitive list. The funding is needed to support local farms that provide food to Manna clients.

The CSBG application was submitted, Wednesday, September 20. The agency sent a draft letter to MCAP to review and sign, to enable CAA to draw on 2-Gen funding (\$50,000) through a restricted account, which will be set up by the Department's fiscal team and will streamline the process. A similar letter and account will also be used for the Diaper Grant funding, which is \$35,000 for two years.

Aizat and colleagues have been working with the DHHS Planning, Analytics, and Customer Service (PACS) team on new measures to determine outcomes for TESS, Navigation, and the CAI for FY25. Aizat

also reported that she had participated in the NCAP data convening earlier in the month, learning new techniques and tools to enhance our data collection.

Announcements

CAB members were reminded that the annual Head Start Providers Forum would take place on October 27th from 9:30 – 11:30 am on Zoom. All are welcome.

Adjournment: The meeting ended at 6:51 pm.