



City of Madison Meeting Minutes - Final

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT COMMISSION

Thursday, June 29, 2006

5:00 PM

215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Room 260 (Madison Municipal Building)

ROLL CALL

Present: Ald. Cindy Thomas, Kristina L. Dux, Arthur V. Robinson, Sophia Angelina Estante, Justin O. Markofski and Charlie R. Sanders

Absent: Ald. Santiago Rosas

Excused: Steven C. Bartlett and Carl G. Silverman

Staff present: Mary Charnitz, Barb Constans, Nancy Dungan, Natalie Moretz, Audrey Short, Sue Wallinger

WELCOME

Estante called the meeting to order at 5:07 PM.

SPECIAL ITEM: PRESENTATION BY APPLICANT AGENCIES OF PROPOSALS TO ADDRESS THE OBJECTIVE OF ACCESS TO COMMUNITY RESOURCES (GENERAL POPULATION AND HOMELESS)

As a point of order, Dux announced she might have a potential conflict of interest (COI) with all agencies requesting funds in this category because most or many of them provide financial assistance to properties she manages with Gorman and Company. Dux said she also volunteers her time teaching at YWCA, which might present a COI with respect to the YWCA - Second Chance program. Dux removed herself from the table to avoid the COI, and Charnitz said Hurie would check with HUD about the potential conflict.

Present: Ald. Cindy Thomas, Arthur V. Robinson, Sophia Angelina Estante, Justin O. Markofski and Charlie R. Sanders

Absent: Ald. Santiago Rosas

Excused: Steven C. Bartlett and Carl G. Silverman

Recused: Kristina L. Dux

Community Action Coalition (CAC) for South Central WI, Financial Services (A-1), Michele Elrod, Coordinator of Financial Services

Elrod stated that In 2005 CAC started its financial education program, which has been very successful. They had a pilot grant for the first two years of the program, in addition to some other money. CAC is requesting funds from CDBG to continue the program.

Elrod described how the program works. She said that students in CAC's classes set five goals for themselves. Elrod checks back with students four months after they have completed the course. She said that 90% of former students will have maintained the goals they set for themselves in class. When she checks back with them after eight months, 78% will still have maintained their goals.

CAC targets very low- to moderate-income individuals for the financial services class. CAC provides childcare, bus tokens, and dinner to students attending their financial services class and gives each person a gift card after completing the course.

Estante asked for questions from Commissioners.

Discussion highlights:

- *CAC connects with other organizations that the CD Office funds. Caseworkers from Interfaith Hospitality Network, Porchlight, and YWCA have worked with Elrod in developing curriculum.*
- *Elrod is also part of a financial educators' network, which includes other agencies that provide financial education. The agencies try not to duplicate each others' programs.*

Community Action Coalition for South Central WI, Housing Counseling (A-2), Michele Elrod, Coordinator of Financial Services

Elrod said the financial division of CAC also contains the housing counseling section. They received 15,000 phone calls last year for assistance and were able to assist 450 to 500 of those seeking help.

If clients call with a housing related matter, they go to intake to determine whether or not they qualify for CAC's program. Those who qualify then go into a drawing for assistance, whether it be help with eviction prevention or entry costs. CAC also provides budget counseling to those who are not selected in the drawings. Once they have selected clients through the drawing, CAC negotiates settlements with landlords and cuts checks directly to landlords. On average, 130 households are eligible for the eviction prevention drawing each month, and 110 are eligible for help with entry costs each month. Because there is such a high demand for rental assistance, CAC collects names and then holds a drawing for eligible households, instead of expending all of its funding in the first month of the year. CAC estimates that 79% of assisted households are still in stable housing six months after receiving assistance.

Estante asked for questions from Commissioners.

Discussion highlights:

- *CAC does not assist people with paying their utility bills.*
- *CAC's intake process first involves triage to determine whether clients qualify for assistance. Those clients who qualify are then entered in a drawing to receive money for assistance with either eviction prevention or entry costs. One in 12 is selected to receive money in the drawings, and those who are not selected receive counseling and referrals to other agencies that might help.*
- *People who are not selected may stay eligible for a maximum of three drawings, but after three months, they have to go through intake again to reassess their situations.*
- *Fifteen percent of households that receive assistance also go to financial counseling classes.*
- *CAC does not require those they assist to attend the classes because some who are required to attend the class are the worst students.*
- *CAC does not test students at the end of the course, but students do fill out surveys indicating the things that they have learned through the class. Also, CAC conducts reviews with each student as to whether or not they are using the skills they learned after four months and then again at eight months.*

Present: Ald. Cindy Thomas, Ald. Santiago Rosas, Kristina L. Dux, Arthur V. Robinson, Sophia Angelina Estante, Justin O. Markofski and Charlie R. Sanders

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Financial Education Center (FEC), Financial Education & Outreach (A-3), Pat Ludeman from UW Extension - Dane County and Deb Neubauer, Administrator for the Financial Education Center

Ludeman gave the commission information about the FEC's background. The center started in October and has been open less than year, but they have worked with UW-Extension and other community partners to provide the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program to low income, elderly, and disabled persons for five years now.

Neubauer said that FEC has reached over 500 people in the last six months with financial and planning classes. FEC partners with many agencies in the area, such as Urban League, Habitat for Humanity, and CAC, in efforts to share programming and not duplicate services. They have developed an inventory of what types of services and programs different agencies are providing to avoid duplication and to fill gaps. They currently partner with WWBIC on WWBIC's Make Your Money Talk program.

The FEC is requesting funding to provide their existing services to the growing Latino population. Their goal is to provide their information in Spanish next to English in brochures, and they need a staff person for that task.

Estante asked for questions from Commissioners.

Discussion highlights:

- FEC is part of an extended community partnership located in the Villager on South Park Street where clients have plenty of opportunities to check out other agencies and services as well, such as programs on job counseling offered by MATC and Dane County Extension.*
- FEC is not in the business of creating jobs, but their locale is near education resources for jobs.*
- Approximately 10% of the people who used the VITA site for assistance in prior years were Latinos.*
- Bilingual staff would be translating existing curriculum into Spanish, as well as teaching the classes and assisting with referrals to other services.*
- Before VITA began offering their free tax preparation services, people would miss tax breaks or go to others who would do their taxes incorrectly.*

Independent Living, Inc. (ILI), Home Share (A-4), Rita Giovannoni, CEO, Teen Munn, Manager of the Home Share Program, and Joyce Behrend, Chief Financial Office

Giovannoni said that Home Share is a creative program that matches older adults living in their own homes with home seekers (e.g., students, single moms) who are looking for low cost housing. They match individuals based on their needs and give them a trial period to see whether or not the match will work. ILI also does criminal background checks on all applicants for this program.

In exchange for low-cost housing, the seeker will help the elderly person with chores, for example, mowing the lawn, taking out the garbage, cooking, and cleaning. The program keeps older adults in their homes longer and creates friendships.

Munn described how she matches people to one another and shared a story of a recent seeker with dog who was matched to an older adult whose dog had just died two weeks before and who was feeling lonely. She said they matched perfectly.

ILI's request for 2007 funds is \$9,650.

Estante asked for questions from Commissioners.

Discussion highlights:

- *Home seekers usually live in the older person's home rent free, unless the older person only needs minimal help, in which case they might ask the seeker for rent. In such cases, rents rarely exceed \$100 per month.*
- *To find potential home seekers, Munn said she puts posters advertising the program in grocery stores and libraries and also does mailings to employers.*
- *The funding ILI requests for the program pays Munn's part-time salary.*

Independent Living, Inc. (ILI), OT/Home Modification (H-1), Rita Giovannoni, CEO and Joyce Behrend, Chief Financial Office

Home Modification is another long-standing program with CDBG. ILI sends an occupational therapy professional to do in-house assessments of the functional needs of its clients; and based on that assessment, ILI will make accessibility modifications to homes so that elders can stay in their homes. Modifications are done particularly in bathrooms. ILI also recycles equipment that can be re-used. If an individual is on Medicaid, ILI will bill Medicaid for equipment. The program's main goal is to meet the safety and accessibility of needs of clients.

Estante asked for questions from Commissioners.

Discussion highlights:

- *ILI does not do a lot of advertising about the Home Modification program, but the program is well known in the health care community, which is where most of their referrals come from. Referrals usually come as part of discharge plans from hospitals or nursing homes.*
- *Clients are primarily elderly, and usually the older elderly. Behrend said that 65% of their elderly clients were over age 75.*
- *ILI receives some homeless prevention money from Dane County to provide rent subsidies.*
- *Baby boomers will be an exceptional challenge for the program in about 10 years, especially for single women renters who also do Home Share.*

Break: The CDBG Commission recessed for dinner at 6:15 PM.

Estante called the meeting back to order at 6:45 PM.

United Asian Services of Wisconsin, Inc. (UASW), Housing (A-5), Debbie Stenjum

Stenjum said the goal of UASW's Bilingual Housing Assistance program is to help prevent refugees from becoming homeless by improving their access to housing and by providing housing counseling, referrals, outreach, landlord/tenant mediation, and eviction prevention. UASW provides culturally sensitive help for various populations, such as Hmong, Thai, and Cambodian. Refugees have very limited English skills, and UASW provides translation services. They are also applying to WUCMA and to United Way for funding.

Estante asked for questions from Commissioners.

Discussion highlights:

- UASW was formerly called the United Refugee Services.
- Regarding UASW's performance measures, Thomas said she would prefer UASW provide data regarding the numbers of persons they have assisted.
- UASW sometimes collaborates with CAC for eviction prevention.
- UASW does do fundraising, such as their summer festival, as a revenue source. Additionally, the board is planning to find other avenues of fundraising. The total amount UASW generated through fundraising and donations in 2005 was \$25,600.
- UASW offers ESL classes.

Porchlight, Inc., Hospitality House, (A-hm-1), Housing Operations, (A-hm-2), SRO Housing, (A-hm-3), and SRO Support Services, (A-hm-4), Steve Schooler, Executive Director

Schooler said he would describe what Porchlight does overall, which will allow him to touch upon most of the programs, as opposed to describing each program one-by-one individually.

Porchlight provides a variety of services to the homeless in its continuum of care. Among the services they provide are a drop-in men's shelter; shelter for mentally ill clients called Safe Haven; Hospitality House where they provide housing and employment assistance; and 240 transitional and permanent scattered site SRO, 1-bedroom and efficiency housing units.

With the Hospitality House program, Porchlight tallies the number of client contacts as its performance measure. Clients seeking housing or jobs use Hospitality House's address, phone number, and their own private voice mail account when filling out housing or employment applications. Hospitality House also provides clients with bus tickets, ID's, and other support services.

The DIGS program provides emergency housing. Schooler said that many people are spending 40-60% of their income on housing costs. If they get caught in an emergency situation, they can easily lose their housing money in dealing with the sudden problem, which can lead to homelessness.

Porchlight leverages its funds with funds from the faith community and other agencies and serves the poorest of the poor, those at 0-30% AMI.

Safe Haven serves clients with mental health and chemical dependency issues. The scattered site program serves both homeless individuals and families.

Porchlight focuses its programs to deal with specific issues. They have community-based residential treatment facilities (CBRF's) that provide two-year transitional housing for men with serious mental illness. Those with drugs or alcohol problems are required to have jobs, go to Alcoholics Anonymous or similar recovery assistance programs, and perform community service.

Pheasant Ridge Trail provides 16 housing units for persons with disabilities.

Estante asked for questions from Commissioners.

Discussion highlights:

- *Porchlight has programs that provide outreach to homeless persons on the streets.*
- *The chronically homeless usually have severe mental illness and/or alcohol problems, and Porchlight helps get them into treatment.*
- *The Housing First program for women first gets clients into housing and then assists*

them with coordinating treatment and services for mental illness or chemical dependency issues. Porchlight is trying the same program for men.

- Porchlight assigns case managers to all clients living in their housing units.
- Porchlight has workers doing outreach to meet and assist the homeless on State Street.
- Porchlight provides job counseling, childcare referral, and transit help to clients.
- Porchlight assists families as well as individuals.
- Porchlight collaborates with Dane County on providing services.
- The greatest gap in the continuum of care for Porchlight is in the number of housing units it has versus what is needed.
- Porchlight has six case managers to serve its clientele. This allows 25 families per case manager and 30 individuals per case manager. The Brooks Street site has its own case manager.
- The number of single adult homeless has increased in the past few years. Porchlight is unsure about the reason for the increase.
- Overall, people served by Porchlight are retaining housing.

YWCA Madison, Inc., Second Chance Financial Case Management (A-hm-5), Gayle Ihlenfeld, Executive Director and Martha Lemnus, Second Chance Program Coordinator

Lemnus said that Second Chance is a tenant education service. She said Second Chance consists of two consecutive workshops, each three hours long. Speakers come to educate clients on a variety of topics, including the eviction process, fair housing issues, legal rights and responsibilities; budgeting, and credit reports (i.e., how to read and fix credit reports). Students need to pass a quiz at the end of the course, and they get a certificate of completion, which some landlords allow clients to use to strengthen their applications. They have case management, both short-term and long-term.

Estante asked for questions from Commissioners.

Discussion highlights:

- Most Second Chance participants are homeless, and some have AODA issues. Some are in severe crisis when they get to the YWCA.
- The Second Chance program is not duplicative of Tenant Resources Center's (TRC) services, and in fact, the TRC is one of the presenters at the Second Chance seminars.
- YWCA has no way to track clients' progress post-class, unless they are living in their shelter.
- Clients in case management can be tracked, and case managers do home visits.
- Case management usually involves two visits or calls to clients per month. The YWCA also works with landlords to make sure clients are paying rent.
- The YWCA helps clients obtain other resources when needed (e.g., parenting skills, etc.).

Tellurian / YSOSW, ReachOut (A-hm-6), Joseph Bednarowski

Bednarowski said the ReachOut program was developed in 2003 in the State Street area. Downtown merchants had noted increased disturbances by youth and homeless individuals. Tellurian and YSOSW worked with Downtown Madison, Inc. and the police to design the program that runs through Briarpatch, which has outreach workers that actively engage street youth. The program helps clients get shelter, treatment for AODA, meals, and medicine. It also helps youth clients make the transition off the street. They have applied for other funding from grants (federal) on top of CDBG funds.

The program takes a comprehensive approach to homeless and youth clients and

assists them with a variety of issues. Case managers are in contact with police and merchants to determine which clients are still causing disturbances on State Street.

Estante asked for questions from Commissioners.

Discussion highlights:

- Outreach workers will be passing out pamphlets about the program in the State Street area soon.*
- Tellurian measures its performance by the number of hours they have reduced disruptive behavior. Another way they measure performance is keeping track of number of referrals that return to safe housing. Last year 80% returned to safe, stable housing after referrals.*
- Tellurian's outreach program is five years old. It started as a funding piece of a ReachOut program four years ago. CDBG is only one piece of Tellurian and Briarpatch's ReachOut funding. They have other funders as well.*

Following presentations, Hurie asked commissioners for their goldenrod voting sheets and reminded them that the next meeting is next Thursday, July 6, at 5:00 in Room 260 of the Madison Municipal Building.

ADJOURNMENT

Robinson moved to adjourn the meeting. Rosas seconded. The Commission voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:10 PM.

*Respectfully submitted,
Anne Kenny*