

St. Mary's County
Department of Social Services Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
May 28th 2019

The regular scheduled meeting of the St. Mary's County Department of Social Services Advisory Board was held on Tuesday, May 28th 2019 in the board room of the Joseph D. Carter building.

Member's Present:

Michael Blackwell, Chair

Richard Buckler

Katie Paul

Adam Dyson

Also Present:

Alexis Zoss, Director

Jennifer Neff, FI/Services Supervisor

- I. Call to Order
 - Called to Order 5:30pm
- II. Establish Quorum
 - A quorum was established 5:30pm and called to order 5:30pm
- III. Approval of Minutes
 - A motion was made to approve the minutes from March 26th 2019. Seconded and carried unanimously.
- IV. Directors Report
 - Last meeting board was provided update on organizational changes on the executive team. Jennifer Neff was selected and appointed interim director for FI Supervisor. Jennifer brings 15 years of agency experience and hopes to improve the concept of 'teaming.' Graduated with masters of social work, clinical and macro work, improving systems and community. Also licensed certified clinical social workers. Jennifer is here to give an overview of her program ambitions.
 - i. Jennifer has been assessing current state of FI program and has identified work participation rate, customer care unit, teaming of TCA and services conjoined for work participation, increased RC incentives, enhancing FI and working for services to bring an intern program into the department, better assessments for families to eliminate barriers to employment, enable a computer lab in Lexington park for various benefits. Met with pathways to work with employment program and getting more jobs for customers. The hope is to bring pathways in-house and help remove customers from TCA and into stable employment. Many of the TCA clients have barriers and pathways are the experts at eliminating them. Anthony Branch queries how much TCA is and it varies per household and family size. It is hoped that getting clients onto social security and lower work participation rates. Another part is how to identify and eliminate barriers. Some of the items are staffing 8 TCA cases a month with services team and help work together to eliminate barriers. In the process getting health and substance abuse treatments where needed. Adam Dyson questioned whether Walden was still participating with DSS for identifying barriers. They are still used for substance abuse screenings. Another concern

are jobs that lead to non career statuses. Benefits cliffs start to limit child care, state funding bill passed recently was to give benefits to those working certain amounts of hours and still in need of benefits. RC have been set up to more trainings to help identify and limit barriers. They will also receive in-house assessment training. The idea of a computer lab will allow customers more hands on in helping job research instead of 'Jobsource' or the library independently. Jennifer maintains other duties such as APS for St. Mary's county and working with Respite program and Three Oaks to enhance that program and expand oversight. Richard question of how TCA works. 60 months or 5 years is the limit to the cash assistance. The barriers sometimes keep people on TCA longer and there are other issues that need to be addressed before the cases close out and the staffings are the avenue to do this. The cases that are the highest will be addressed first and then work backwards. It is hoped to help improve our work participation rate. Adam Dyson Question whether DSS helps weight in on someone trying to apply for SSI. Cases where there is documentation to back-up a customer trying to apply for SSI. Alexis stated Services workers will assist on a case-by-case basis. They are based on how well people are functioning. Adam stated there can be a disconnect when physicians are not involved in the application process. Jennifer stated Southern Maryland Center for Independent Living will assist with people so have sever need and help to qualify for fast track or SORE process. Anthony questioned how the labor rate affects customers being on or off TCA. DSS must maintain a 50% work participation rate but is difficult when 30% of population is disabled. Physicians can give work exemptions in the form of a 500 form that can qualify them as 'disabled.' 30% will use 500 form that will prevent them from being work required. There should be another way to gain work capacity. This is what is hoped for Pathways. Entire board welcomes Jennifer. Forum was opened for other questions.

V. Chair Report

- Three things on agenda: Lunch and Learn partnership with Library. Monday – Friday throughout the first 3 weeks of summer, then go to school and the back to library 2 weeks before school resumes. Judy Center also participates helping to educate children. Title one kids can get a free meal at Lexington park library. If parents of the children want to come they can attend for 4 dollar meal or free. Hunger is debilitating and can affect academics. It is hoped that it will maintain education and nutrition. There are about 20 people in the program.
- Food bank-Finding a location has become difficult. Rotary Club is main contributors. Great Mills would be a hopeful spot. This is a place where food pantries can go and get food, a distribution center. Holy Angels School is for rent and can be used as a location. Adam stated the location could be used for its space and kitchen essentials. Hopes to be launched in the next 6 months.
- Final idea deals with fundraising. Couple of possibilities. Michael passed out list of possible ideas. MASSB foundation could be communicated with to partner and they could establish independent fund. There would be no fee or issues in establishing, all projects must be a Social Services project. Any program the Social Services program. No treasurer is needed but they would need a board member to take responsibility for this task. There will be some work involved. Old Town Pub no longer a possible option. Chick-Fil-A or Ledo's pizza has similar programs but must be asked for by name. Time

and commitment is needed. Direct fund raising letters would be the easiest concept. Primary cost would be postage to send letter to send to organizations and what programs would need most support. Example: adoption and getting support for this idea and how much could be obtained. No 501C3 would need to be established but it would involve work from the board to achieve. Without full board approval there would be no ability to move forward, simple tasks such as stuffing envelopes. Michael will send an email on the possible path and requirements to move forward. Even a couple thousand a year would be welcomed funding and get names out to the community. Michael will follow up. Either participate or alternative ideas on fundraising. The second sheet suggests possible donations across the state and third page breaks it down by counties and their signature events. Michael says hopes not to get involved in United Way as return is not very effective. Anthony stated it would not take very much and it would be a good idea. Alexis spoke with Calvert and how to receive funding and much of it comes from St. Mary's County contractors. There is funding to be made. Question whether it would be good to copy Calvert model for fundraising and Michael had tried corresponding but not received any response. Mark stated he will help board where needed. Will be placed on the agenda for meeting in August.

VI. Other Items

- Michael stated would be beneficial to have someone attend MASSB but would consider it. This will also be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

VII. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn. Motion seconded and passed at 6:13pm.