

MEETING RECORD
Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting
December 10, 2014

CAC in Attendance: Gure Ali, Lisa Cote, Adam Dow, Kelli Aiken Flynn, Belinda Gerry, Joe Gray, Adam Lee, Steve Letourneau, Tom Poulin, Doris Russell, Theresa Smith, Mitch Thomas and Rick Whiting

Guests: Lewiston CAC; Andy Choate, Pauline Gudas, Richard White, Brain Wood, Sue Charron, Nathan Libby and Sarah Goodrich

Consultants: Frank O’Hara and Sarah Curran

Staff: Lincoln Jeffers, Reine Mynahan, and Lori Lewis

Welcome:

Committee Chair Adam Lee welcomed all to today’s meeting including Lewiston CAC members and public.

Introductions:

Auburn and Lewis ton CAC member introduced themselves and told what they liked best about the opposite City. Tom Poulin also introduced the youth from Franklin School who prepared our meal. Present were; Devon, Corey, Tim, Joey and Linda Austin, Coordinator at Franklin School.

Presentation of Poverty, Disabilities and Homeless Issues: Frank O’Hara gave a Powerpoint presentation about three issues that the Consolidated Plan must address: homelessness, disabilities and anti-poverty.

Causes of Poverty

Loss of job; recession; elderly; lack of employment skills; young people; disability (will become an even larger issue in the next 5 years)

Typical Characteristics of Family in Poverty

Life for the moment – no sense of the future; job for survival, not career; future implications are rarely considered

Causes of Homelessness

Life crisis; domestic violence; health crisis; education; literacy; life skills; loss of Job

LAASH Ideas for Homeless Solutions

Clubhouse to connect homeless to services and staff; mentoring; comprehensive approach

Report of Consultation with 50 Social Service Providers

Basic challenges: safe and affordable housing; public transportation; childcare; food; education and job opportunities

Basic needs for Youth:

Stable homes; safe places to go; positive role models; flexible education

Basic needs for Parents

Parenting skills; life skills; community support; coordinated services; job training, work related skills; empowerment

Basic needs for the Elderly

Feel valued/needed; stay in their homes; activities in the community

Discussion: what should be CDBG's roll/how can we have an impact

1. *How do we feel about a single focus vs. many programs?*
Response: Instead of a lot of small grants have fewer and more focused grants.
2. *Should we be tracking something different than numbers?*
Response: Federal agencies are pushing for tracking with outcomes. There should not be any double counting.
3. *The Federal government is proposing flat funding for CDBG with a 10% reduction in HOME.*
4. *Some programs need a "token" payment from the city to get grants from outside sources.*
5. *Need to change mind set and attitudes; landlords and tenants are pointing fingers at each other.*
6. *What is the niche for social services?*
Response: Come up with priority areas and focus on the outcomes; look at bigger picture, a lot of generational poverty.
7. *Further understanding of the different agencies that are already out there; what are the funds that we are matching.*
8. *Help the children get out of poverty; set a frame work; start with the kids and work your way up.*
9. *Work with the families as a whole; don't make the parents feel alienated.*
10. *There needs to be better support for families, especially single parents.*
11. *Are the different programs that are already out there being used to the fullest?*
12. *Food banks could teach a class on how to use the food or hand out specific directions.*
13. *The leading cause of death in 15-24 year olds is suicide, mostly from people with mental illness.*
14. *Look at a spectrum of needs.*
15. *"Back to Basics"*

Bridges Out of Poverty:

- Focus on skills training, skills that will help them succeed at work.
- Mentoring: role models to help learn new ways.
- Stabilize their environment.
- Facilitate community understanding of poverty.
- Support for mentors and participants.
- Community Concepts in working towards developing a Bridges-type program.

Questions/Comments:

1. *Early childhood education and care is a burden on families.*
2. *Success is measured more easily for 15-18 year olds; they are easier to follow.*
3. *Bridges might not work for everyone, especially people with disabilities.*
4. *The languages that are used in some of the classes that are meant to help people are not helpful. Lower income people get the feeling of being talked down to and looked at as not worthy.*
5. *The system is broke and needs to be fixed.*

Public Comments:

Jane Morrison from Safe Voices spoke about the challenges that they face on behalf of domestic violence.

- Victims need to feel safe and secure.
- Agency finds out what their goals are and works with them on jobs, education, etc. whatever they need.
- Domestic violence and other acts of violence are major contributors to poverty.
- Drugs contribute to homelessness. You can't talk about getting people out of poverty without talking about drugs.
- Safe Voices gets funding from 26 different sources.

Craig Phillips from Tedford Housing spoke about affordable housing.

- Tedford has developed affordable housing in Lewiston and Auburn.
- People need stable housing and organized support systems.
- Getting homeless people out of shelters and into homes should be a priority in helping to keep families together.
- CDBG funds are a key in keeping programs going.

Pete Phair from NAMI Maine spoke about the challenges for the mentally ill.

- We need to teach landlords about mental illness.
- Mental health first aid training for those that have mental illnesses; need learn how to deal with illness and where to go to get help.
- Try to address their basic needs—they are often misunderstood.
- "Bridges" may be way beyond their capability.
- Provide training for everyone, not just the social workers.

Julia Sleeper from the Tree Street Youth Program in Lewiston spoke about the challenges for kids that are homeless or poverty stricken.

- Tree Street provides an after school program, most that come are within walking distance from the center on Howe Street.
- 120-150 kids come to the program and are provided mentoring, arts, tutors, etc.
- They have a street leader program that teaches them leadership skills and to be role models.
- College prep program has had great success; graduates of the program are at 2 and 4 year colleges and some already have jobs.
- Investment in youth is the key to breaking the cycle.

Auburn CAC Meeting:

What does Auburn CAC want as a focus

- Youth and programs that include the whole family.
- Program effectiveness.
- Look to change intergenerational poverty.
- Use programs that are already having success; PALS, Tree Street, etc.
- Use programs that are sustainable in a 2 year period.

- Work to finding a measurement that we could use to compare.
- More work ready programs.
- PAL has outgrown their kitchen and has a waiting list.
- Community gardens; work with science class at the schools.
- Teach soft skills; start at a younger age.

Questions the committee has

- Where are the dollars already going?
- Have the programs done what they said they were going to do?
- Can we create a cap for administrative duties?

For the next meeting get a list of Agencies that we are already funded and find out what their impact has been. Also get more information on match funding.

Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Lewis
Community Development Assistant