MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
HUMAN SERVICES TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 14, 2006

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Carl Harris-Morgan, Town of Gilbert, Chairman
*Lorenzo Aguirre, City of El Mirage
* Judy Bowden, Mesa United Way
Deanna Jonovich, City of Phoenix
Paige Garrett, Glendale Human Services Council
*Kate Hanley, Tempe Community Council
*Connie James, City of Scottsdale
Jim Knaut for Mary Lynn Kasunic, Area Agency on Aging
Eileen Harnett for Margarita Leyvas, Maricopa County
*Joy McClain, City of Tolleson
Joyce Lopez-Powell, VSUW
*Dan Lundberg, City of Surprise
Doris Marshall, City of Phoenix
Jeff Young for Sandra Mendez, DES/CSA
Kyle Moore, DES/ACYF
*Susan Neidlinger, DES/DDD
*Sandra Reagan, Southwest Community Network
Sylvia Sheffield, City of Avondale
*Linda Snidecor, City of Goodyear
*Judy Tapscott, City of Tempe
Wayne Tormala, City of Phoenix, Vice Chair
Jessica Ponzio for Patrick Tyrrell, City of Chandler
Neal Young, City of Phoenix

OTHERS PRESENT

Wendell Akers, DES
Don Ellwanger, DES
Teresa Franquiz, MAG
Jerry Hancock, DES
Jose Mercado, City of Phoenix
Amy St. Peter, MAG
Betty Wangsness, DES/RSA
Anna Lira, DES/RSA

+Those members present by audio/videoconferencing.
**Those members neither present nor represented by proxy.*

1. Open Meeting for Discussion
   Chairman Carl Harris- Morgan, Town of Gilbert, called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. and introductions ensued.

2. Call to the Audience
   No comments were made.

3. Approval of August 10, 2006 Human Services Technical Committee Meeting
   Chairman Harris-Morgan called for a motion to approve the August 10, 2006, meeting minutes. Wayne Tormala, City of Phoenix, moved to approve the minutes.

Deanna Jonovich, City of Phoenix, seconded the motion. The minutes passed unanimously with no revisions.

4. Presentation from the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES)
Chairman Harris-Morgan introduced Kyle Moore, DES Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), who provided an overview of the contracted agencies that receive Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) funding from ACYF annually. He referred to the handouts he had prepared for the committee, which included the scopes of work for each funded program. He also referred to the pages containing the comments of members of the evaluation committee that reviews the project proposals. He noted that every member of the evaluation committee provides comments in writing. These comments are compiled and the projects are scored based upon them. SSBG awards are given through this DES contracting and evaluation process. He referred the committee to the list of awarded contractors. He stressed that each contracted designs its own programming, not DES.

Chair Harris-Morgan asked how the programs are publicized. Mr. Moore replied that all contractors must be registered on the DES Spirit procurement system. Through this system, the Department puts out solicitations and can receive applications from eligible contractors if they are properly registered. Mr. Harris-Morgan clarified his question and asked how potential clients know that the services are available. Mr. Moore answered that many of the contractors collaborate with schools, often by connecting first with school counselors. Many referrals come from school counselors, or sometimes contractors go to the schools directly. Chair Harris-Morgan thanked him for the clarification and for bringing in this information.

Joyce Lopez Powell, VSUW, asked if the handouts correspond to what the committee has worked on before related to the SSBG allocation recommendation process. Ms. St. Peter responded yes, although the service categories the committee is most familiar with do not correspond directly by division at DES. This is because HSTC works with four defined target groups (Adult, Children, Youth & Families; Elderly; Persons With Disabilities; and Persons With Developmental Disabilities), while DES has five divisions that provide services to these target groups (Administration for Children, Youth & Families; Community Services Administration; Aging and Adult Administration; Rehabilitation Services Administration; and Division of Developmental Disabilities).

Vice-Chair Wayne Tormala asked if the locally planned SSBG dollars received by the City of Phoenix are included on the handouts. Jerry Hancock, DES, answered that some agencies, like City of Phoenix, receive MAG planned funds as well as state planned dollars. The handouts only reflect the locally planned amounts. Therefore, from the City of Phoenix perspective, the amount may seem low because it does not include the funds they receive annually from state planned dollars. Jim Knaut clarified further that some City of Phoenix dollars may get funneled through another agency level, like through the Area Agency on Aging, before reaching the City.

Therefore, the amount ultimately received by the City will appear larger when taking their total received into account.

Ms. Powell said that not being able to identify all the pass-through money still makes it hard to determine which agencies will be most impacted by the reduction in funds if SSBG is cut at the federal level. Chair Harris-Morgan asked the members if they would like to ask some larger provider agencies to share more information about where their pass-through dollars come from. Mr. Knaut offered that in many cases, such as with the AAA, it would be very difficult to identify every individual contract that receives SSBG funding and how much it receives. This is because agencies can move the SSBG funds from one group/contract to another as needed. He offered to provide what he can from the AAA at the next meeting.

Jose Mercado, City of Phoenix, commented that the committee may still need to receive more information from DES on the state planned SSBG dollars, and how they are applied within each district. The committee needs to know where the state dollars are going to determine where local dollars should go.

Ms. St. Peter clarified that DES did provide the information that the committee requested for this particular report, and she thanked the DES representatives for doing so. She noted that while it is important to look at big picture of where all of the dollars are going, it is also important to make sure the committee is staying within the scope of its role in the overall allocation recommendation process.

Mr. Hancock added that if one looks at the State Plan for SSBG, each Administration section individually lists the districts within Arizona, with Maricopa County being District One. It then shows the services planned for that district. Each individual service listed also shows the amount received and how much is coming from local dollars, as well as state dollars. Some services receive both state and locally planned dollars, but in others, state dollars are provided to areas not funded by locally planned dollars. An exception is in the Aging and Adult Administration, which typically gets funding from both. These funds are blended with other aging funds that come in from the federal government and are not as easily tracked, as Mr. Knaut noted earlier. This is also true with the Community Services Administration. Some funds distributed through CSA are given to local agencies, but are blended with other sources as well.

Mr. Tormala noted that the handout packet was missing the page that reflects the $1.7 million locally planned dollars distributed through CSA. Copies were made and distributed to the committee.

Chairman Harris-Morgan then introduced the new representative from the Rehabilitation Services Administration, Anna Lira. She offered a brief overview of the department and their commitment to employment based services for people with disabilities. Ms. Lira, DES/RSA, explained that the programs she works with are very patient-driven and focused on transitioning disabled clients into the working world.

Ms. Lira continued by saying that Maricopa County provides 66 percent of the services funded through RSA. The majority of these are employment related programs with facilities spread throughout the Valley. They also provided supportive intervention; for example, services for the deaf. There are also several independent living programs. There are always tremendous needs and the money goes very fast. More outreach is done every year, raising the number of clients in need of services. There are also more people surviving accidents with enhanced medical technologies, which likewise raises the number of people in need of rehabilitation services.

The main focus of RSA programs is to provide for supervised long-term employment. RSA works closely with DDD to provide supports in order for clients to work out in the community. She noted that RSA also follows the same state procurement system that Mr. Moore referred to. She offered to forward the scopes of work for the funded programs, as well as service descriptions. There were no questions at this time. Chair Harris-Morgan thanked her for her presentation.

5. DES Report on SSBG Contractors and Services

Ms. St. Peter explained that the committee had asked DES for the information they provided today in order to make more informed decisions about local SSBG allocation recommendations. She asked the members if there is any additional information needed in order to make more informed decisions. She noted that she would welcome Mr. Knaut providing what he can from the Area Agency on Aging. Ms. Powell praised the presentation provided by CSA at the previous HSTC meeting and said that she felt they really identified what the committee was looking for. Mainly, this is a question of which agencies, and which target populations, may be impacted the most when the committee needs to make decisions about potential cuts. Mr. Knaut said that he can provide more detail on services provided by AAA, but reiterated that it will be hard to more specifically identify the dollar amounts because of the blending of funding from various sources.

Ms. St. Peter thanked DES for the information they had provided. She asked the members if they were interested in hearing presentation from the provider agencies that contract with DES to provided the SSBG funded services. Ms. Powell answered that agencies always say it is hard to plan because they do not know in advance what the funding levels are going to be, and may look to this committee for answers that are not currently available. Chairman Harris-Morgan suggested that because the committee is not making recommendations related to specific agencies, it may not be as helpful to hear presentation from the agency level. Ms. St. Peter agreed, but also asked the member if they felt it would help to humanize the services. Ms. Garrett commented that some agencies might think an invitation to present would be an opportunity to ask for more money, and potentially set up false expectations. Ms. Powell added that it was helpful to have an agency here when the committee was discussing the cuts, however. Chair Harris-Morgan suggested working with DES to identify agencies that might have useful information to present, rather than the committee choosing, which would be inappropriate since this body does not handle the contracts. Ms. Lopez-Powell agreed and added that if an agency is doing

exemplary, innovative work, then the committee would likely want to hear from them. She stressed that this point should be included in framing the request for presentations.

6. Committee Membership Contact Information
   Ms. St. Peter informed the membership that it is currently MAG's policy to refrain from providing committee member contact information when it is requested. She asked the committee if they would be interested in waiving the current policy and allowing their contact information to be shared for networking purposes. She asked the members to individually contact her after the meeting and let her know if they prefer to keep their information confidential. Many members indicated that because their information is public record, they would not mind sharing it by request. She asked everyone to email her after the meeting to let her know their preference at Astpeter@mag.maricopa.gov.

7. HUD USDA Conference Presentation
   Chairman Harris-Morgan introduced Cynthia Zwick, Arizona Community Action Association (ACAA), who offered a presentation on a recent HUD/USDA conference concerning food stamp programs. Ms. Zwick thanked the committee for the invitation to present. The explained that ACAA has a contract with DES to perform food stamp outreach. They have been recognized federally for some of their programs. However, outreach funding was recently cut from the federal budget.

   The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Housing and Urban Development hosted a conference two months ago with a dual focus. Much of the discussion focused on how the state of Florida has implemented innovative outreach programs to homeless people. The homeless population has not been targeted in Arizona for outreach. Ms. Zwick attended the conference with Family Assistance Administration staff from DES. She explained that in Arizona, FAA provides assistance with eligibility for Medicaid, TANF, and other assistance programs.

   The conference explained that two catastrophic events led the state of Florida to change their business plan for the way they would provide food stamp assistance. These events were the influx of evacuees following Hurricane Katrina, and a notice from their state legislature that their department would be unfunded and future food stamp assistance would be privatized.

   In response to these events, Florida has gone to paperless processing of applications and is driving all new applicants and potential applicants to the Internet. Any paperwork done in person is immediately scanned. They no longer do any face-to-face interviews; everything is done over the phone. They worked with software companies in Japan to create the technology to achieve this. They are now saving $83 million per year. In order to implement these steps, they had to have support of their Governor and the state department heads to order to move forward.

She added that compared to Arizona, the food stamp offices in Florida were beautiful and clean. The public had access to computers, and staff was positioned in lobbies to answer questions. The money saved through the paperless system is being reinvested in remodeling the office spaces. They also have a huge call center. They have had to cut back on the number of staff, but they have been able to do so through attrition. She noted that turnover is still quite high, at 30 to 40 percent in the call centers.

They have contracted all outreach to community based groups, like homeless coalitions, and have supplied them with laptop computers equipped with wireless connections. Now, providers can go to potential clients and enroll them on the spot. They have also gotten permission to allow restaurants to accept food stamps. Right now, they are implementing a pilot of this project with Burger King and Subway. The average cost is $5 per meal. Burger Kings in the pilot area are making $12,000 - $15,000 per month in income from food stamps.

Ms. Zwick went on to say that ACAA is now working on getting more information about these programs from Florida's state agencies. The contracted agencies that enroll people for food stamps get paid via contracts. She added that she would like to start facilitating these discussions here in Arizona. She said she has met with two assistant directors at DES. The DES staff members that were on the trip were also very impressed. ACAA has submitted a letter to the DES management team recommending that they explore this business process. In Florida, the entire redesign was done in three months. She noted, however, that the state had received a waiver from the federal government allowing volunteers to enroll new food stamp applicants.

Vice Chair Tormala asked how food stamp utilization compares in Florida as to Arizona. Ms. Zwick replied that from a percentage standpoint, utilization rates are very similar. The error rate Florida is experiencing is fairly high, and local officials recognize this. USDA used to be stricter about who they would allow to administer food stamp applications. They are now signaling more flexibility, maybe partially because the error rate of volunteers is comparable to that of professionals. Ms. Knaut asked if the rationale is to implement these types of reforms here and if so, is a crisis needed to get a waiver from USDA to allow other people to process food stamp applications. Ms. Zwick said that it appears that USDA is moving toward more flexibility in this area, and noted that other states are moving in the same direction. Texas has plans to privatize, as well as other states. She added that USDA paid for the attendees to come to the conference in order to learn about these programs, which in itself signals that USDA is pleased with the results thus far.

Chairman Harris-Morgan thanked Ms. Zwick for presenting to the committee. He added that if the committee has more questions, please contact Ms. Zwick.

8. Announcements

Ms. St. Peter announced that on Tuesday, September 26 there will be a training on Alternatives for Improving Options for Homeless People at ASU Downtown Campus. If interested, please contact Brande Mead at MAG to register. She added that the

Continuum of Care Regional Committee on Homelessness is having their annual appreciation luncheon on December 8, 2006 at 11:30 – 1:30 p.m. at the Biltmore Hotel. All HSTC members are invited to attend.

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:10pm. The next Human Services Technical Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 12, 2006 at 1:00 p.m. at the MAG offices, 2nd floor, Cholla Room.