

Minutes of the
MAG Human Services Technical Committee
June 11, 2020
Zoom Meeting

<p><u>MEMBERS ATTENDING</u> Melanie Dykstra, Town of Gilbert *Naomi Farrell, City of Tempe Autumn Grooms, City of El Mirage Laura Guild, DES Susan Hallet, City of Phoenix Mary Lynn Kasunic, Area Agency on Aging *Jacqueline Edwards, Maricopa County, Vice Chair</p> <p>*Neither present nor represented by proxy</p> <p>MAG STAFF Brande Mead Tina Lopez</p>	<p>Chris Lopez, City of Avondale [Edith Baltierrez] Christina Panaitescu, City of Goodyear, Chair *Debbie Pearson, City of Peoria Leah Powell, City of Chandler *Cindy Saverino, DES Stephanie Small, City of Glendale Jayson Matthews, Valley of the Sun</p>
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1. Call to Order and Introductions

Christina Panaitescu, City of Goodyear, Chair of the Human Services Technical Committee (HSTC), called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. Introductions ensued.

2. Call to the Audience

No public comments were made.

3. Approval of the Consent Agenda

Melanie Dykstra, Town of Gilbert, motioned to approve the December 12, 2020 meeting minutes. Chris Lopez, City of Avondale, seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Title VI and Environmental Justice 2020 Program

Marcy McMacken, MAG, Title VI Coordinator, shared a Powerpoint presentation on Title VI and Environmental Justice activities. In May 2019, the MAG Regional Council approved MAG's Title VI and Environmental Justice 2020 Program. Maricopa Association of Governments performs outreach activities throughout the region. There are fiscal maps which illustrate income levels and areas in the region that experience poverty. Bus maps have been illustrated from 2020-2024. Each year there is ADOT Title VI training.

Ms. McMacken presented the 2020 Title VI and Environmental Justice Program for recommended approval. Mary Lynn Kasunic, Area Agency on Aging made a motion to recommend approval of the 2020 plan. The motion was seconded by Jayson Matthews, Valley of the Sun United Way. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Impact of COVID-19 and Human Services Assessments

Christina Panaitescu, Chair, invited members to speak about the impact of COVID-19. Melanie Dykstra, Town of Gilbert stated 1,200 employees are telecommuting as a result. Autumn Grooms, City of El Mirage, stated that similar telecommuting practices are being implemented.

Laura Guild, DES, expressed concerns over homelessness, domestic violence, and the aging population during COVID-19.

Susan Hallett, City of Phoenix, noted there is \$290 million dollars in Cares Act funding that will need to be distributed. This will include \$5 million dollars to expand food assistance programs. There was a need expressed for more food donations. Funding for landlords/tenants and legal assistance was also noted as being needed. She also noted a need for funding for senior center activities. Ms. Hallett continued that the Phoenix Convention Center is opening up to provide day respite for people experiencing homelessness.

Mary Lynn Kasunic, Area Agency on Aging, reported that they have received 26,000 calls on the senior help line since March 18th. She added that 2,056 food boxes had been distributed, 1,400 home delivered meals had been provided and she acknowledged the senior centers for stepping up in providing grab and go meals. Ms. Kasunic acknowledged funding from the City of Phoenix for their Goods to Homes program and mentioned the partnership with Fry's Grocery store for their Hi Neighbor program.

Chris Lopez, Avondale, noted that the City is looking at their service delivery model. They have switched to grab and go with libraries offering curbside services. He added that the City is engaged with wellness checks and are committed to providing heat relief services.

Jayson Matthews, Valley of the Sun United Way (VSUW), reported that he has taken a role at VSUW and will be working on a new community impact framework. He added that they have partnered with Arizona Community Foundation to provide quick turn-around grant funding. He mentioned upcoming listening sessions to determine where funding gaps exist in the community. He also indicated that they are ramping up their racial equity work.

Leah Powell, City of Chandler, said that most staff are working remotely as well and they have closed the lobby to the public due to COVID-19. She indicated that the city has developed efficiencies including well checks in conjunction with the Census. She added that churches are providing hand washing and restrooms and said they have provided \$850,000 of funds in a quick turn-around for programs. She said now they are looking at the Cares Act funding. In addition, their webpage includes a link for people to provide donations as well as to volunteer.

Melanie Dykstra, Town of Gilbert, said the town has made adjustments and moved to more flexibility with work being performed in the online platforms. She added there will be an increase of access to technology provided to vulnerable populations. She has been surprised at the responses of the coalition of churches and noted approximately 900 volunteers who responded to the public need. She reported that 85,000 pounds of food and \$32,000.00 dollars in funds were provided.

Chair Panaitescu, City of Goodyear, noted that the Meals on Wheels volunteers stepped up as well.

Some additional feedback provided:

- Flexibility is important
- Fear of getting sick
- Lack of access to technology is a challenge as libraries have closed and people don't have access to computers.
- Providing outreach and connection to services has helped
- Weekly chats with staff are common, providing updates and trying to lift spirits.
- Mental health of employees is important
- Access to data and technology is important, work will be done in future to get seniors connected to technology.

- Concerns over the increase of domestic violence due to more at home and at risk.

Chair Panaitescu led the Committee through an activity to collect feedback on impact COVID-19 has had with human services delivery. The dialogue included the following feedback:

What has surprised you about the response so far?

- The ability to work with faith-groups has been helpful
- The website "Helper" – 900 people volunteered to help, there was a three day food drive
- Inequities have been exposed
- How will we maintain this level of service?

What has been most frustrating?

- There are many layers and many challenges
- How to maintain safety and provide services at the same time is a challenge

How have the needs of vulnerable population changed?

- Greater need for rental assistance and for a longer period of time

What are ideas for positive change moving forward?

- Flexible work schedules and flexible work environments
- Loosening of restrictions or red tape has been helpful to allow for quick turn-around grants
- The use of technology in ways to help streamline service delivery
- Increased collaboration among providers
- Curbside and grab and go options are very responsive
- Volunteer engagement
- Collaboration with grocery stores around meal delivery
- Public increase of using health protocols like hand washing
- Addressing racial inequities

Chair Panaitescu thanked members for providing such important feedback. The following members volunteered to meet in a small group to synthesize the feedback and bring common themes back to the group: Jayson Matthews, Laura Guild, Melanie Dykstra, and Leah Powell. Brande Mead, MAG, will arrange for a small group meeting and will provide feedback to the Committee on the outcome of the small group discussion.

6. Lighting Round

This item was tabled due to lack of time.

7. Future Agenda Items

No future agenda items.

Adjourn

There being no further business, Melanie Dykstra, Town of Gilbert, made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Jayson Matthews, Valley of the Sun and the motion was unanimously approved.