



**CARES Act Task Force Committee to Assist the Most Vulnerable Meeting
Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, July 22, 2020
4:00 p.m. Virtual Zoom Webinar**

Attendance:

Committee Members Present: Chairperson Senator Elizabeth Lockman, Co-Chair Marcus Henry, Carrie Casey, Judge Aida Wasserstein, Chuck McCausland, Valerie George, Marihelen Barrett

Committee Members Absent: State Representative Nnamdi Chukwuocha, Ian McConnel, Ashley Christopher, Reverend Clifford Johnson, Renee Beaman

Others in Attendance: New Castle County Attorney Mary Jacobson, County Chief of Staff Aundrea Almond, County Community Services Secretary Rachel Burton and eleven members of the public

Proceedings:

- Meeting called to order at 4:03 p.m. by Chairperson Senator Lockman
- Roll call.
- Chairperson Senator Lockman outlined the tasks of the subcommittees for the previous week.
- Carrie Casey presented data findings along with census data for the Housing Access Subcommittee. Carrie shared the estimated 50-million-dollar State of Delaware need for rental assistance and emphasized the need for rental assistance funding and counseling. Carrie mentioned that mortgage forbearance programs have significantly reduced the need for mortgage assistance programs and purposed housing counseling support for those populations undergoing forbearance. Carrie emphasized the need to creating a housing surge, getting the homeless populations out of motels/hotels by creating permanent supportive housing. Carrie brought attention to housing repair programs experiencing an overwhelming increase for services due to Covid-19 and their need for additional funding. Carrie concluded that the Housing Access Subcommittee is creating a comprehensive list of programs/funding supports to be finalized by next week.
- Judge Aida Wasserstein made recommendation for skill/education opportunities for Housing Access program recipients to prevent the disrepair of any provided houses.
- Co-Chair Marcus Henry shared for the Low-Resourced Households Subcommittee the recommendation review for food distribution, transportation funding and technology/internet access. Marcus mentioned distribution of a feedback survey on July 22nd, 2020, with results being available for committee and public review after July 24th, 2020.
- Co-Chair Marcus Henry outlined survey results from the Special Populations Subcommittee. The results outlined the need for mobile and direct services to include outreach and delivery of basic need items such as food and medicine, additionally outlining the need for computers and smartphones along with transportation means. The survey also including the concern of safe environments for employees and clients, along with access to PPE. Marcus brought attention to the need for a monitoring system to ensure resources are utilized

in compliance with the CARES Act and that youth programs operate within State guidelines. Marcus emphasized the need for program considerations to include those that provide case management and to ensure that translation/bilingual services are made available. Marcus mentioned concern relating to the special needs populations and the challenges created by the lack of direct services and families without the technology needed for virtual services; along with the need to support education supplemental programs to fill the gaps created by virtual learning environments.

- Marihelen Barrett emphasized, from the survey results, the need for case management for the formerly incarcerated population group. Co-Chair Marcus Henry outlined the need for collaboration with the DOC relating to the relocation of this population group and what resources are being made available to them.
- Chairperson Senator Lockman noted the pattern of outreach, communications and case management needed across the different population groups.
- Judge Aida Wasserstein brought attention to the need for expanding daycare services.
- Carrie Casey outlined the survey response for the Behavioral Health Subcommittee, many organizations have moved to telehealth, phone and email services but many are still offering in-person services that are facing challenges relating to technology access, medication distribution, treatment resistant clients, access to PPE and cleaning supplies, smaller environments, program cancellations, client participation and/or relapses. Carrie brought attention to clients experiencing lack of privacy and communication along with the increase in cases of depression, anxiety and stress, especially relating to basic needs and job/insurance loss; along with the mental and physical health concerns of staff due to overworking, stress and fear of sickness. Carrie concluded with the recommendation for funding and grant support for behavioral health agencies.
- Co-Chair Marcus Henry stated that committee members will consolidate recommendations and adjust according to the data received; this review of recommendations will not include funding levels and recommendations will need to be reviewed for compliance. This recommendation consolidation will be drafted for committee review on July 27th, 2020 and presented for approval on July 29th, 2020.
- Mary Jacobson recommended that committee members focus on funding for specific uses and/or reimbursement programs for compliance with CARES Act, outlining that programs given funding flexibility will come under strict review. Mary also mentioned that requirements and restrictions for compliance along with funding could change in the coming weeks.
- July 15th, 2020 minutes approved.
- Chairperson Senator Lockman called for public comment.

Public Comment:

- Brad Dunn, with Good Neighbors, outlined their programs current workload and needs. Brad brought attention to the increase they are seeing related to Covid-19 job losses and lack of employment opportunities, along with changes in funding sources. Brad Dunn extended Good Neighbors assistance to the committee.
- Robert Wasserbach, New Castle County Auditor, made recommendation for committee review of the US Treasury website under Guidance and FAQ's for program compliance.
- Kathleen Purcell, Executive Director of Wilmington Senior Center, offered to assist the committee. Kathleen Purcell questioned if funding will be grant-based or large scale, the result was a hybrid approach is most probable. Kathleen Purcell emphasized that transportation and social isolation are great concerns within

senior populations and questioned where the senior population fit into the committees focus, the result being that needs for the senior populations are currently being reported and are included with the Low-Resourced Households population groups.

- Dr. Stephen Metraux, with University of Delaware's School of Public Policy, gave support to the Housing Access Subcommittees work. Dr. Stephen Metraux recommended supporting a housing surge along with investing in homelessness prevention and supportive housing programs. Dr. Stephen Metraux mentioned that shelter supplies are shrinking, creating a need for motel/hotel continuation and that outreach is needed in Delaware, especially during Covid-19.
- Verna Hensley, with Easterseals Delaware, mentioned that the senior population is fast growing within their organization, and that they are facing a redesign of services due to Covid-19 to best serve their populations. Verna Hensley brought attention to the importance of technology for addressing social isolation, along with the potential to provide teletherapies to families, youth and seniors who currently are unable to receive these services.

Adjournment:

- Chairperson Senator Lockman adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.