

NORTHEAST MICHIGAN COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCY, INC.
CLIENT SERVICES
POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES
October 24, 2017

Members present were Carrie Badgero, Leo Marciniak, Kelcey Lilly, and Cathy McClure

Staff members present were Valerie Williams, Tammy Dean, Debbie Wilds, Arnie Dellar, Ashley Gagnon, Nikki Amrich

Meeting called to order at 10:00 am by Tammy Dean.

TEFAP: Presenter Tammy Dean and Debbie Wilds

- Number of slots increase by 50 based on Continuing Resolution. Funding amounts and final caseload slots won't be available until December or January.
- A new trucking company will be delivering the food to the distribution sites.
- Asked that signatures are collected on any donated food boxes. These can be used in the count for the reports.

CSFP: Presenter Tammy Dean and Debbie Wilds

- Numbers are down slightly but it was expected but still continue to remain above the 95% mark
- Individuals are now able to self-declare income, which helps to sign them up at the distribution sites
- Final number of caseload slots will also not be available until December or January.

Produce Giveaway:

- New this year and has been a big success
 - Reached 1482 families and 3933 individuals
 - Evening hours allow for more attendance
 - Volunteers are excited and want to help monthly and even had a local farmer donate
- The 7th and final Free Produce Giveaway of the year is October 26th
- Program will start back up in the Spring

Weatherization: Presenter Arnie Dellar

- Currently catching up on production goals, which is set at 68 homes this year.
- Focus was to remove homes that have been on the waitlist for around 3 years. These applications have about a 50% return rate by the time their names come up. Some have passed away, moved, or no longer need the service.
- With the announcement of LIHEAP funding this will help with Health & Safety concerns that may need to be addressed.

Homeless Prevention: Presenter Valerie Williams

- ESG funding has been extended to 12/31/17 in order to spend out the remaining funds. These funds cover rent for 6 months
- FRP and RRP funding remained the same as last year. These funds can cover rent from 1 to 18 months as needed.

Motel Vouchers: Presenter Valerie Williams

- Beginning our 2nd year and really started to build the foundation for the program.
- These funds are used to assist individuals/families that cannot access shelter for some reason, such as no available beds or pets.

Crisis Prevention Program: Presenter Nikki Amrich and Valerie Williams

- Recently received the signed contract for the metered program so applications are beginning to arrive.
- Funding is down from \$163,500 to \$92,000 and will be used to help supplement deliverable fuels until the LCA funding is received.
- Donated funds are also being used to supplement deliverable fuels instead of the furnace replacement program we were considering.

- Deliverable fuels allowed are firewood, fuel oil, and propane. Currently wood pellets or corn are not allowed.
- MEAP is strongly pushing a connection with Financial Self-Sufficiency (FSS) programs
 - DHHS already has some type of fee schedule set up for these and Carrie Badgero will look into the details
 - Leo Marciniak stated St. Vincent's may be able to help with some of the client's co-pays

Community Development: Presenter Ashley Gagnon

- Step-Forward funds will pay the entire amount of the property taxes, up to \$30,000, but will not cover just a co-pay
- When educating clients, she suggests they apply for the poverty exemption as well as the property tax credits
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NEMCSA updates: the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) is a platform used to discuss the policies, manuals, and by-laws of the client services department. We also need representation from the PAC Committee on our Board of Directors. Mileage is reimbursed and a meal is provided. The Board meetings are held the 1st Friday of every month, except for July. Valerie will get Board packets out to Leo, Cathy, and Kelcey to review.

Agency Updates:

Leo M. with Mikado St. Vincent DePaul: He's already been receiving the phone calls for the heat/electric assistance. He is referring them to other agencies, such as DHHS and NEMCSA, for initial assistance as he is capped at \$300 per fiscal year. The only restriction is the individual must live in Alcona County and must have a decision notice. The Mikado St. Vincent DePaul will also be hosting their own Produce Giveaway on November 14th.

Carrie B. with Alpena Department of Health & Human Services: Discussed the current enrollment numbers for food assistance and cash assistance is a few of the counties. Currently they are in the end stages of rolling out a new application, which will only be about 5 pages long, plus 1 for each additional program. She also discussed the new MI Bridges and the benefits of becoming a partner agency as well as the new universal caseloads for the case managers, which will hopefully streamline calls and assistance for the clients. DHHS will begin their utility assistance November 1st and she believe Tru North will get there's soon as well.

- Thanksgiving baskets are approaching and St. Vincent's of Alpena are in need of about 120 families for the donations. St. Vincent's in Alcona does not do the Thanksgiving baskets but does about 180 larger Christmas baskets, which includes a large amount of food, a toy for each kid, and an item of clothing for each kid.
- Carrie also suggested supplementing the Project Connect event that is happening at New Beginnings in Hillman with the produce giveaway the end of January beginning of February. Official date has not yet been set.
- As a reminder, DHHS and the Medicaid Health Plans will help assist clients with transportation needs.

Cathy McClure with Alpena St. Vincent de Paul: Cathy discussed being new to the position and that her main focus is on the commodities, however, she does assist a little bit with the emergency assistance. The Food Pantry is open 3 days per week with hours on Tuesday and Thursday 12:00 to 2:30 and Wednesday 3:00 to 5:00. The ServSafe training is being used and changes will slowly be implemented.

Kelcey Lilly with Hope Shores: Kelcey mentioned the Domestic Violence Awareness month is coming to an end. Currently there are no openings for the transitional housing but they continue to take applications for the waitlist. Interested individuals can contact them at 989-356-2560. She also announced that the Thrift Store in Oscoda will be closing at the end of the year.

Meeting adjourned at 11:28 am

The next PAC meeting is scheduled for February 27, 2018 10-11am.

If you have questions you can contact Nikki at:

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