

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT
3rd CDBG CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
February 11, 2022, 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM
FINAL MINUTES

Roll Call: The meeting was started at 10:04 am.

Members Present: Pauline Gudas, David Nielsen, Jr., Ashley Medina, Stephanie Gelinas, Paul Robinson, Abdikadir Negeye

Members Absent: NA

Staff Present: Lincoln Jeffers, Jessica Wilson, Luis Dias and Pauline Chouinard

1) Discussion on CDBG process

The committee welcomed Luis Dias as our new grants accountant and Pauline Chouinard as the new Administrative assistant. .

2) Agency Interviews: Tree Street Youth, New Beginnings, Center for Wisdom Women, and Literacy Volunteers

a) Tree Street Youth

Presenters: Julia Sleeper

Need funding for the Maple Program which targets on leadership and work force development skills for teens. Group workshops include:

- Financial literacy
- Community
- Working in the world
- Working with visions
- Leadership
- Responsibility
- How to inspire others- leadership roles as peer leaders

Questions:

- 1) Q. After reading review, on page 2- 95% college acceptance success rate. That is incredible! Is that tracked periodically? A. Tracking is specific for Branches Program which is a component of the Maple program. They are required to spend 8 hours in branches per week. They focus on all things adulting and have great success in getting accepted in schools.
- 2) Q. Trying to understand ask. \$20,000 for program manager position. Is that a current position? A. Yes it is a current position and would cover half of the position.

- 3) Comment: Support and mentors are important. Keep up the good work!
- 4) Q. Are there weekend offerings? A. Usually M-F attached to an afterschool program. Maple leaders do come in on weekends and school vacations. Pandemic has shifted to online meetings.
- 5) Q. Is everyone up to date on reporting? A. Yes

b) New Beginnings

Presenters: Signe Lynch

Need funding for the education program who work with:

- Youth ages 14-22
- Runaway, homeless or at risk
- Residential, Transitional, Shelter
- Drop in center

Work with the individuals to offer assistance with educational and employment support. This year we helped 70 unduplicated youth and have growing demand. Can meet virtually and in person.

Outcomes measuring program performance:

- Homeless youth that are enrolled in educational programming and are looking for additional support. Goal is to serve 90% of youth to meet these skills
- Youth that are disconnected from their education. Help with long term plans for finishing their education.
- Youth that are looking into higher education or job search. Support: Have a grant to go back to school, FASFA assistance, resume building, job search assistance.

This grant will help fund this program and allows this direct service for Lewiston residents and allows us to grow the program.

Questions: no questions at this time.

Comment: Thank you for the work done and keep up the good work! Pauline stated she remembers when they were located across from the Greene IGA and have been helping the community for 42 years.

c) Center for Wisdom's Women

Presenters: Sue Kingsland

Need funding for Sophia's House. Housing first residency program for women who have suffered with:

- Domestic violence
- Sex Trafficking
- Incarceration
- Addiction
- Low income, no income or 80% of median

Currently no other program like it in Maine. This fits well with CBDG priorities and aligns well with the 2020 -2024 Consolidated Plan.

Delivers:

- 24 months of free rent
- Community support to live honest, sober, self-sufficient lives
- Healing
- Educational and paid vocational opportunities,
- Match savings plan through Community Credit Union

Outreach and recruiting program. Last year formalized admission program.

Strategy: Love, kindness and support

Four phases:

- 1) **Welcome to the Circle** (first 6 months of residency) – addiction recovery, set personal growth and financial goals, maintain physical, mental emotional and behavioral health
- 2) **Consider the Sunflower** (6-12 months of residency)-recovery and treatment from past physical and substance abuse, employment at Herban Works or outside work, complete high school or GED and set expanded educational goals
- 3) **Find Way Home** (12-24 months of residency) Continue with Phase 2 treatments and activities but also start taking more leadership roles in meetings/operation of Sophia's House, start earning visitation and overnight pass privileges , serve as mentors to new residents
- 4) **Sisters for Life** (graduation and beyond) after successfully completing first 3 phases women are expected to have saved a minimum of \$1,000, have employment or a monthly income, secured safe permanent housing, actively utilize a long term relapse prevention plan, have successfully completed her individual and community goal plan, and participate in periodic follow up interviews

This year Sophia's House hired its first Sisters of Life graduate!

Questions:

- 1) Q. Can they remove themselves from the program? A. Yes
- 2) Q. Can they reenter the program? A. Yes everyone is a sister for life.
- 3) Q. Question on tracking. Idea of success rate? A. Started in January 2020. There was a huge learning curve. Learned how to assess and interview. 10-12 women touched and helped.
- 4) Q. What is the current population at Sophia's House? A. 4 women and 2 in the pipeline.
- 5) Q. Grant period. How many women have gone through Sophia's house last year? A. 8 Women.

d) Literacy Volunteers

Presenters: Tahlia Chamberlain

Need funding for two programs targeted to the immigrant community in order to improve their work readiness:

- One on one tutoring- reading and writing
- One on one English conversation

Volunteers (many of which are retired teachers) work one on one with adults on learning:

- Assist with barriers
- Assist in learning the English language - reading and writing
- Assist with getting jobs
- Assist with Navigating the Community
- Assist with conversing with colleagues
- Assist with learning our culture

After 50 hours or more, 95% have reached two or more goals in literacy which improves quality of life.

Questions:

- 1) Q. What is the age group? A. Adults 18 and older. Usually over 25 years old.
- 2) Q. What are the areas served? A. Serve all of Androscoggin County, mostly the Lewiston Auburn area. Funding provided here is specific to Lewiston.

Comments:

- We get more bang for our buck with this program.
- Only way out of poverty is education
- Very important to be able to speak the language

3) Review and approval of January 28, 2022 CDBG meeting minutes.

The following motion was made:

MOTION: by **David Neilson Jr** to accept the January 28, 2022 CDBG meeting minutes. Second by **Stephanie Gelin**

VOTED: 7-0 (Passed)

4) Any other business members may have relating to the duties of the CDBG Committee. Reminder that the next meeting is in person. February 25th, 2022 at 10am in the 3rd floor conference room.

5) Adjournment

The following motion was made:

MOTION: by **Stephanie Gelin**as to adjourn meeting at 11:12 a.m. Second by **Paul Robinson**

VOTED: 7-0 (Passed)