

Minutes
VA State Board of Social Services
Poverty Committee Meeting
June 20, 2007

Albemarle County Office Building
Charlottesville, Virginia

Members and Staff Present

Trudy Brisendine, Chair
Brenda Hornsby
Peppy Linden
Maggi Luca
Nettie Simon-Owens
Jim Schuyler
Anthony Conyers, Jr.
Marianne McGhee
Erik Beecroft
Karin Clark

Special Guests

Marijean Jagers
Becky Waybright

Welcome and Introductions

The committee meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM by Trudy Brisendine, Committee Chair.

Approval of Minutes

April 18, 2007

ON MOTION DULY MADE (Ms. Simon-Owens) and seconded (Ms. Linden) moved to approve the April Poverty Committee meeting minutes as provided. Motion carried with all in favor.

Leadership Charlottesville Web Site

Marijean Jagers, accompanied by Becky Waybright, gave a presentation on the Voices of Poverty website. Voices of Poverty – a pod cast site - provides 5 –10 minute edited interviews with individuals in the Charlottesville area who are living in poverty. The site also provides links to a variety of resources and to a United Way volunteer site. It is a project of the 2006 Leadership Charlottesville class. Ms. Jagers briefed the committee on the background of the website, and discussed the project marketing, sponsorship and budget. The committee was then given a demonstration of the website, which included listening to a podcast.

Key Poverty-Related Measures/Statistics

Erik Beecroft provided a handout of key questions about poverty and possible data sources. There was discussion about how this could be prepared and updated on a regional or local level. The committee agreed that this kind of information facilitated their goal of increasing public awareness in communities statewide, and that it should be available via a web site. Erik indicated that it would be somewhat labor intensive to do the research and maintain it on the web site.

Status of Logo (“Bug”) Initiative

Marianne McGhee discussed the committee’s logo initiative and explained that the actual design of the logo would be relatively simple. She recommended that the committee first determine the direction in which they want to go with Voices of Poverty. Funding for such an undertaking would need to be identified.

Commissioner Conyers indicated that there is potential to take the Voices of Poverty statewide, but cautioned on the need to protect the integrity of the sight. There was general discussion on the best way to partner with the site. All agreed on the need to localize and regionalize the Voices of Poverty approach, to make it as relevant as possible statewide. In addition, committee members acknowledged that, whatever approach is taken, a “call to action” should be one of the goals.

Commissioner Conyers acknowledged that more conversation with Voices of Poverty would be appropriate. Marianne recommended that the Department approach Voices of Poverty with the thought of being a contributing author. She also recommended that the initiative start out modestly, targeting one region of the state. Such an arrangement would provide the Poverty Committee with a dynamic mechanism to bring awareness to poverty, while helping the Voices project thrive. Marianne will begin discussions with Voices of Poverty on possible opportunities.

Maggi Luca suggested the need for an interim progress report before the next meeting, to which members expressed agreement.

Report on Community Action Partnership’s National Symposium

Jim Schuyler briefed the committee on the National Community Action Symposium on Poverty and Economic Security, held in May 2007. He noted a significant increase in the number of governmental and other organizations setting timelines and establishing goals to eliminate poverty; and provided reading materials that included statewide and national perspectives.

Adjournment

Ms. Brisendine and members thanked the Commissioner and his staff for their continued efforts in assisting the committee to meet their goal. The committee adjourned at 5:30 PM. The next meeting will be held in Norfolk, Virginia, on August 15, 2007, upon recess of the State Board of Social Services.