



Department of Human Services

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Family Resource Network (FRN) Regional Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 11, 2024

3:00-4:30pm, MS Teams

Attendance

Present

- Robin Bohannon
- Elizabeth Crowe
- Miranda Fisher
- Kaycee Headrick
- Lexi Nolan
- Christina Pacheco,
- Johnny Terrel
- Simon Smith
- Karin Stayton
- Anne Tapp
- Julie Van Domelen

Absent

- BVSD (Vacant Seat)
- Jorge De Santiago
- Dr. Perla Delgado
- Jennifer Leosz
- Jackie List
- Mandy Perera

Staff Present

- Georgina Becerril (proxy for Susan Caskey)
- Bill Cole
- Katrina Harms
- Joni Lynch (proxy for Marc Cowell)
- Katie Warning (proxy for Suzanne Crawford)
- Whitney Wilcox
- Hilda Zamora Hursh

Welcome and Introductions

The Family Resource Network (FRN) Regional Council meeting was called to order by Julie Van Domelen. She welcomed the new Executive Director of the Early Childhood Council of Boulder County (ECCBC), Kaycee Headrick, to the FRN. The meeting aimed to address how the FRN can collectively navigate current needs amidst changing funding.

Approval of January 2024 FRN Regional Council Meeting Minutes

Georgina Becerril made a motion to approve the January 2024 Regional Council meeting minutes, which was seconded by Miranda Fisher. The motion passed unanimously with no revisions.

FRN Chair and Vice Chair Elections

Marc Cowell was nominated for FRN Chair, and Elizabeth Crowe was nominated for FRN Vice Chair. Both were unanimously elected. The members expressed appreciation for Julie's leadership. Elizabeth chaired the remainder of the meeting.

Rental Assistance Dashboard Review and Discussion

Elizabeth and Whitney Wilcox provided an overview of the Rental Assistance Dashboard, an FRN work plan strategy. A work group was formed to develop a county-wide dashboard to track rental assistance provided by partnering agencies (Sister Carmen, EFAA, OUR Center, County HHS and City of Boulder HHS) to help estimate needs, identify resource gaps, and improve coordination among service providers.

The dashboard (still under development) initially tracked the number of households assisted and total funds disbursed by participating agencies. However, this didn't capture the full scope of need. To address this gap, Sister Carmen and OUR Center began tracking both requested and disbursed assistance in 2023. This revealed significant unmet needs, with agencies funding on average just over 50% of requests.

Agency Updates

EFAA: Julie reported a 2.5-fold increase in funding and disbursement compared to pre-pandemic levels. They anticipate disbursing \$3.2 million by the end of June (fiscal year end), with a projected \$2.5 million budget for the next year, and anticipate a reduction in assistance due to funding changes. This data includes EFAA clients in the mountains but excludes those served by other agencies.

OUR Center: Joni Lynch highlighted high demand, prompting changes to services, including caps on rent and utility assistance, and limiting it to once per year.

Sister Carmen: Katie Warning mentioned that the dashboard's data doesn't include denials due to receiving prior assistance, indicating even greater need.

City of Boulder HHS: Elizabeth noted a budget increase for 2024 and beyond, with the City allocating funds and partnering with EFAA for distribution.

Boulder County HHS: Whitney, on behalf of Gwen Mossman, shared that demand remains high. The Housing Stabilization Program (HSP) has exhausted its funds and is not taking referrals due to resource constraints. Katie added that their HSP agency waiting list is the longest it's ever been.

The dashboard is not intended for public use but to identify gaps and inform strategic planning for resource allocation. Data is de-identified and access is controlled through an MOU. Karin Stayton said it'd be helpful if the data was updated in real-time and asked how often it'd be reviewed. The work group has been meeting monthly but will transition to no more than quarterly meetings. For questions, contact Whitney.

Human Services Alliance Update

Julie provided an update on the most recent Human Services Alliance (HSA) meeting. A county commissioner provided updates on funding processes, and representatives from city and county human services agencies discussed funding priorities. Both city and county are important funders for Boulder County nonprofits. There was brief discussion about potential opportunities to coordinate strategies across the FRN and the HSA.

The Current Funding Landscape and Its Impact on the Safety Net

Council members reported significant funding shortfalls across various programs as well as a rise in demand for services. Below are key updates by organization:

- **OUR Center (Joni):** Increased demand across all services (rent, utilities, food). Appointments were booked out three months for rent/utility assistance, shifted model so now only book one month out. Seeing more households doubling up due to rising costs. Seeing influx of new migrants to the area.
- **SPAN (Anne):** Seeing requests for multiple months of assistance. Potential state and federal funding cuts to rental assistance starting in August (\$10k month state decrease, potentially \$175k federal decrease). Difficulty placing clients due to lack of affordable housing.
- **County HHS (Georgina):** State allocations insufficient to meet growing need across child welfare, CCAP, and public benefits programs. Previously community-invested funds are being used to maintain some mandated services. Service delivery changes likely due to funding limitations.
- **County Community Services (Robin):** County addressing budget deficit, working through a priority-based budget and equity-focused budgeting process. Seeing impact of one-time ARPA funds ending, particularly for nonprofits. Met about Justice 40 initiative, which will allocate 40% of its funding for climate action to communities of color disproportionately impacted by climate change.
- **City of Longmont (Christina and Hilda):** Resource allocation not keeping up with demand. Initiated nonprofit engagement sessions using a world café model to explore

how to improve leveraging existing resources. Seeing rising demand for services from immigrant youth, expanding outreach to schools with newcomer programs to address housing instability and mental health needs. Lack of knowledge about available resources among immigrant families.

- **Peak to Peak Housing and Human Services Alliance (Katrina and Miranda):** Town of Nederland funding for short-term housing halved. Increased demand for emergency rental assistance. Staff capacity concerns due to higher support needs and limited resources, potential challenges with workforce burnout and turnover. Concerned about jurisdictions and municipalities no longer able to apply for County HHS's community funding. Multijurisdictional housing authority feasibility study including Central City, Gilpin, Nederland, and Lyons.
- **EFAA (Julie):** Food bank visits increased significantly (21k visits last year up from 16k visits for the same period last year, and 10k from two years ago). New access rules implemented due to limited resources (frequency reduced from weekly to twice a month). Looking at data to mitigate impacts. Interested in new resources to connect clients with SNAP benefits.
- **BHP (Karin):** Affordable housing units under development, bringing food onsite to make it more accessible. Hilltop senior housing, opening mid-September, 60 units; Hawthorne Court, 73 units; and Rally Flats, Spring 2025, 100 units.
- **Sister Carmen (Katie):** Increased demand, particularly for the food bank. Concerns about ARPA funds ending and impacting food quantity and quality. Fewer food donations. Seeing more newcomers. Wondering how Willoughby Corner will impact food bank demand. Meeting 50-55% of rental assistance requests. Exploring service changes. Concerned about funding cuts.
- **ECCBC (Kaycee):** CCAP freeze impacting families. State budget cuts funding their work. Focused on mapping access to high quality and affordable child care, collecting data around provider closures (3 providers have closed in the last month).
- **Boulder County Public Health (Daphne and Lexi):** WIC funding formula changes may lead to \$100k cut. WIC benefits for fruit and vegetables to increase, no documentation requirements. Family Connect visits seeing people needing resource connections. Parents stressed about lack of resources.
- **Clinica (Simon):** Disenrollment from Medicaid is biggest challenge. Significant drop in patients with Medicaid coverage (around 35% or 13,000 patients), leading to many uninsured patients, impacting both patient access to care and Clinica's financial health. The proportion of Medicaid to uninsured patients is now similar to pre-Affordable Care Act (ACA) levels, representing a major setback in health care access. Lexi added that a large portion of disenrollment (around 2/3) is due to administrative issues and not eligibility.

- **City of Boulder HHS (Elizabeth):** Similar areas of need as others. Collaborating with Funders Collaborative members around resource allocation. Using ARPA funds for mortgage assistance at the Ponderosa and exploring other transformative programs. Working with the City Manager’s office to hold information sessions for immigrant communities.
- **SVVSD (Johnny Terrell - Chat):** Families in SVVSD consistently seek mental health support and housing assistance.

Next Steps

In May, the FRN will move from identifying trends to outlining specific areas for strategic collaboration. One potential area for collaboration is assisting individuals in enrolling for various benefits programs. This could involve exploring ways the FRN can leverage its network to streamline enrollment processes.

Closing

Robin expressed gratitude to all partners on the call for the ongoing commitment to the community. She acknowledged the tenacity and leadership demonstrated by the group in addressing past and current challenges.

The meeting was adjourned.