

DRAFT

Two-Generation Family Economic Security Commission and Pilot Program Meeting Minutes 10/30/2017
1:30pm-3:30 pm
Allegany County Department of Social Services 1 Frederick St, Cumberland, MD 21502

I. Opening

A. Lieutenant Governor Boyd Rutherford

1. Good Afternoon, Thank you for joining us today for the Two-Generation meeting here at the Allegany County Department of Social Services and a special Thank you to the Allegheny culinary arts program who showed off their skills today.
2. The input of the constituents we hear from today is so critical because it will allow us to develop systems that fit their need. The changes we discuss are not specific to any local jurisdiction it is a need for a system wide change.
3. To make that kind of systemic change we need to hear from the people here on the ground level.
4. It is critical that any door that a constituent comes in that they can be connected with the programs they need. To do that we need to connect those programs at the state level so the person across the desk from them when they ask for something knows what is out there and available to the constituent who needs that help.

B. Secretary Lourdes R. Padilla (Department of Human Services)

1. I want to thank our host here as well as the constituents for taking time out of their day to speak with us today.
2. It is hearing from them that is the most important as we continue our work.
3. We know that the best programs we have are the ones driven by those who use them.
4. I was in Aspen last week at a conference about the two generation approach and Maryland has been thrust into the spotlight as a leader due to this very commission.
5. At that conference Data was stressed as a critical need for agencies so they can respond in real time to the needs of the people they serve change. The needs are not fixed and change over time. To be able to change with those needs we need reliable data and feedback from the same people we seek to serve.

II. PowerPoint Presentation's

C. Courtney Thomas-Winterberg (Director, Allegany County Department of Social Services)

1. I am very proud to be able to say that Allegheny and Garrett County have been using the two generation approach for some time now.
2. It is very easy for people to make judgments about people thinking that their situation is due to some decision that person made without knowing that the reason is generational and their circumstance is a direct result of previous generations.
3. *Benefits Cliff Chart Shown values discussed* this shows as you go up in income which benefits you lose and at what point you lose the benefit. If we were to assign the dollar value of the benefit received you can see that every time you have an increase that results in a benefit loss you end up with a net loss in income.
4. If we start at the poverty level in this state \$9.25hr which is above the MD minimum wage which is the determining factor that allows you to qualify for the majority of benefits. It takes a raise to \$19.30hr for you to break even from the benefits you received at that original income.
5. It is for this reason so many people opt not to take that raise or seek that other job which could be a stepping stone because the net loss is so great.

D. Duane Yoder (Director, Garrett County Community Action)

1. As you heard from me in Ocean City a few years ago the White House Rural council put out a pilot program for two generation approach applications.
2. Western Maryland was selected by this to be one of 10 sites across the nation to pilot this and since then we have really embraced the approach.
3. Garrett and Allegany have similar populations and therefore similar problems. The two community action agencies have worked very closely together because of this.

4. To track out outcomes we have been tracking the early High School and High school populations and have about 600 families that we track with a common shared data system.
5. Doing this has really enhanced our partnerships with the community colleges and social services and been so vital to breaking down those silos' that we talk about.
6. We also share this data with the school system which was found to be so critical in identifying where our deficiencies lay.
7. Unfortunately because the program is so new we do not yet have data to share on the outcomes as our first tracked group will be graduating high school in the fall giving us our first data point.

III. Panel Presentation (Facilitated by Nicholette Smith-Bligen)

A. Panelist 1

1. Discussed that she has two children in high school and that her husband works but that due to their limited income if she were to begin working it would cause them to lose their benefits.
2. Described supporting their family as a balancing act.

Nicholette Smith-Bligen

1. What is a specific challenge you face that you can share with us

Panelist 1

3. 'I try not to look at anything as a challenge but saving money to get ahead is a real challenge because for certain programs you don't qualify because of assets. So if I want to try and get ahead by buying a house or something I can't.'

B. Panelist 2

1. Discussed that she ended up needing services which she found ironic because she used to be a family navigator. Discussed that she was the one who helped people connect with services and turns out she didn't know of all of what was out there. She discussed that she had a premature child and then became the one who needed the services.
2. Spoke to that she never really had an appreciation for the programs and services she referred people to until she was on the other end.
3. Talked about how she had a family navigator come out to her house to help and they referred her to a 3 year old head start program that she didn't even know about.
4. Discussed that it was so valuable because those partnerships and providers were out there and connecting with them can be so hard. Spoke to that if she as a person who was promoting programs was referred to one she didn't know about it shows how important it is to know what is out there because your average person really isn't going to know.

Nicholette Smith-Bligen

1. What are the gaps in services you see being on both sides?

Panelist 2

5. That services need to go to where the families and people are not the other way around. Described the need for services to be in nontraditional settings such as churches.

C. Panelist 3

1. Discussed that she is new to Cumberland and that she came with nothing, but after 7 months because she was connected with the community action network and now has a place to stay, childcare, a job, and is enrolled in classes to get her CNA.
2. Explained that all of those things are coming from different resources. But the approach the community action network used was to connect her across agencies and programs to give her a whole network of things to assist her.

Nicholette Smith-Bligen

1. What would you like to see changed?

Panelist 3

3. That the people you interact with they need to have heart. A lot of times when they come to you it is because there is nothing left. You are their support system. They need you because they have nothing and too many people are cold and distant looking to just get the person in and out. That's part of why they aren't asking the questions that lead to connecting services. That was the difference the community action worker made.

D. Panelist 4

1. Discussed that she joined the head start program for her child and it was that touch point that helped her get assistance. But as she moves forward and works more she gets less benefit. She discussed that often her work is seasonal and not guaranteed but that the benefits don't account for that.
2. Discussed that due to the nature of her job there may be one week she makes enough that she does not qualify for any benefits and then nothing the next week because that is when her employer gave her hours.
3. Stated that if she does not work the extra hours the one week she may not get any hours the next or could lose her job.
4. Stated that the more she works the less she comes out ahead because the benefits start and stop.

E. Panelist 5

1. Discussed that her husband lost his job in 2011 and they applied for housing assistance but it was a two year wait.
2. Two years after her application she was approved for the assistance but at this time it did her no good because they had already lost their home.
3. Discussed that the benefit she qualified for and should have received and would have saved her home wasn't available to her when she needed it because there wasn't money available in that program that year.
4. Discussed that they lost their house and their health insurance because of the job and then didn't qualify for the insurance until after they lost their house due to their assets.

Secretary Lourdes R. Padilla

1. What is something that is not status quo that we could have done differently that you would like for us to take back to the governor?

Panelist 5

5. Everything is income eligible. For example when we lost our health insurance we were told we did not qualify because we were \$35 over that year. The simple reality is that extra \$35 dollars my husband made is not going to pay for our health insurance.

IV. Comments and Questions (Facilitated by Nicholette Smith-Bligen)

1. Lieutenant Governor - the last panelist really hit on something that we really need is what income requirements are federally mandated and which ones can we change as a state.
2. Secretary Padilla - there are very few that are not in some why income limited but for example we do have some room in certain programs like TANF which is a block grant tied to income guidelines. So in that instance we can go up to 200% of the federal poverty rate which the rate varies by jurisdiction.
3. Courtney Thomas-Winterberg another example is energy assistance. There are flex funds collected by the state that you can see on your energy bill. How those funds are spent though is mandated by the state.
4. Delegate Metzgar- Would it be possible to volunteer to make up that difference when you go over to keep the benefit.
5. Lieutenant Governor - If you volunteered your \$35 dollars worth but I'm sure that would be program by program depending on federal requirements.
6. Arlene Lee – HUD has programs that are very flexible and we can look at those as good examples of flexible funding.
7. Secretary Padilla – Each department could create a one pager and submit it to a coordinating body to show which programs have flexibility.
8. Lieutenant Governor – Not denigrating our government employees but they really don't have heart when they are dealing with that volume. It becomes mechanical and overcautious; which is necessary when dealing with these prescriptive funds. This is really why we do need to partner with the faith community and non-profits.
9. Alexandria Warrick Adams - engaging the local management boards is what we need to do.
10. Senator Salling – I know the Local Management boards have done this successfully in counties getting those success models out there are important so they can be shared with the other counties then applied.
11. Nicholette Smith-Bligen – The Secretary, Brandon, Courtney, and Dwayne all attended the Aspen conference and I can say that they stressed the data sharing component heavily and that states are looking

at Maryland as the ones out ahead of this with our modernization taking place at the same time as this commission.

12. Arlene Lee – We need to look at staff training as Duane said it took 3 years to make that change in mentality in Western Maryland. Because we do have the home visiting in the counties and 5 models approved in the state. We already have evidence based practice and home visits that are funded. So we don't need to reinvent the wheel.
13. Angela Martin- I know that for the community action agencies their main issue is their lack of caseworkers.
14. Lieutenant Governor What I am hearing is that we need to have a more collaborative approach to get more bang for your buck. There are only so many dollars and every program is the most important so it's not that these programs exist its if they are producing results.
15. Brandon Butler – We have 3 things we have programs that work, programs we could administer better, and what we need. We can think about that in the same way as who we are trying to help with the programs. We have the youth, the school age child, and the adult. Looking at our programs in these two ways we can see what we need to do.
16. Secretary Abed (Secretary of Juvenile Services –Audience participant) I really see that collocation is so important. I think we really need to be looped in here at DJS so we know that when Mom has a workforce development meeting she isn't also required to bring her child in for a probation hearing. That needed coordination among agencies spans all of the state agencies.
17. Secretary Abed - something I have also seen is the predatory lending on low income families. Something I really think we need to get creative about and possible look at offering something through the state credit union.
18. Lieutenant Governor - one of the linkage areas we can have is the financial education piece because we know those programs are out there and like the state with the nonprofits.
19. Senator Salling - How can we get our community colleges to develop these programs its really important that when a person reaches that success level there is something to fall back on when hard times hit. We are all just one disaster away from being completely reliant on these programs.
20. Delegate Metzgar – Well in doing so we need to recognize that once you give a person something they don't want it take away.

V. Conclusion - Lt. Governor Boyd K. Rutherford

1. Thanked all the members in attendance for traveling to the meeting reminded members that that there is only one more meeting before the interim report is due and that while a date has not been set the next meeting will be held in Prince Georges County.
2. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes from 10/3/2017 No changes made draft accepted.
3. Meeting concluded.