

CAAP BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

CEO REPORT ON CAAP ACTIVITIES

FOR THE PERIOD

APRIL 28 - JULY 15, 2020

1) KEY FOCUS AREAS

a) Coronavirus

This is our current focus. Most of our time has been committed to the response and we expect that will continue with the response and stimulus activities.

We attend several meetings a week, telephonically or web, with state agencies and national partners, to stay informed of any new information that may be shared with our PA CAAs. Emails are sent daily to PA CAAs, though we keep it to the minimal amount possible to limit email inundation for the agencies. Our CAAP website has been updated with a Coronavirus section that includes both a Resource page, with links to other state and national partner sites with guidance, and an update page with newer information as it comes in.

We set up a weekly Monday morning call, which is now bi-weekly, for PA CAAs to share concerns and needs, and to ask questions; the call includes DCED. The meetings are well attended and participation is excellent which allows for good communication between the agencies themselves and with DCED in seeking solutions to barriers and providing opportunities. The meetings have engaged the agencies on many facets of running an agency during a pandemic, though at this stage there is a focus on how to open and operate safely both for clients and staff.

Contact with DCED has increased as we work jointly to seek answers and solutions to agency questions and concerns as well as following the Supplemental CSBG Funding provided for Community Action in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. We have consulted with CAPLAW several times regarding legal interpretations of the CARES Act, including the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), for information and interpretation that can assist our agencies.

b) Social Justice

We have initiated a Social Justice Task Force to look at and determine what CAAs across Pennsylvania can do to make change in their agencies, communities, and systems so that bias – whether blatant, implicit or institutional - can be identified and addressed.

Meetings are held every other Monday and there have been two such meetings. The first meetings have been organizational with the 22 participants introducing themselves and sharing why they wanted to be on the Task Force. Leadership, a chair and two vice chairs, were elected.

2) COMMUNICATIONS

Newsletters

Will begin again with July, during which there may be multiple issues to catch up on happenings.

Social Media

The same for social media. We have from time to time posted on Facebook and received notice. This will again become more regular.

Website

The home page has been updated to include the CAAP Value Statement on Social Justice. We wanted to place this statement over the faces of the African Americans lost over the last years. Some believe this is too busy and we are trying various fixes. The website program is working against us as it has a very set pattern.

The Coronavirus section has kept the important issues. We will consolidate the two pages into one, deleting outdated information.

The rest of the website will continue to be monitored and updated.

3) VISTA PROGRAM

This report covers the third quarter of VISTA service for current VISTA members who started service in July and August of 2019. The “stay at home order” which was put in place in March by Governor Wolf

has been officially lifted for the state. All VISTAs at this time are currently tele-serving from their homes. A summary of their progress during this quarter is listed below:

CAAP: Communications and Marketing Associate VISTA Carolina Nicholson is working the third and final year of the Toolkit project. At the time of this reporting 25 toolkits have been completed and several have been sent to the appropriate agency for review and feedback.

Provided in each toolkit are Word Document versions of each file. Each year, the agencies can update that information in the Word Document and continue to use the toolkit for as long as possible. This is a nice addition for the agencies, as it should ensure they will have control over their toolkits and the data within. Each agency can move ahead with their own changes internally to really make the toolkit their own!

There is also a training document included, which explains what each type of file is and how it can be used. (For example, a PNG file is better for social media because it is an image. But a PDF file is better for printing. And so on).

At this time, it has been determined that no in-person trainings will be feasible by the end of the project. However, Carolina did her best to make the training document really thorough for our agencies.

CAPLANC: Community Action Partnership of Lancaster County has three projects as follows:

- a) As events or initiatives are started and completed, the Coalition Coordinator VISTA Chelsey Tennis continues creating sustainability documents which outline important information around the logistics of the event or initiatives, including contact information, planning and implementation strategies and timelines, and specific outcomes or action items that need to happen for the event. Also, before taking on any new reoccurring projects, the Coalition Coordinator talks with the Action Chair Teams or Coalition Chair to talk about what will happen to the project and who will lead it after the term of service is done. The Coalition Coordinator is also working on building an internal policy document to help institutionalize processes around leadership changes and accountability to ensure that after the VISTA project is completed that the Coalition to Combat Poverty has a system of policy to help any new staff continue to operate smoothly. Like her two other cohorts, Chelsey is working on the virtual Neighbor Forum. She is working on crating child virtual Kids activity packet on a digital scale.

b) Lancaster Equity: To ensure the sustainability of the projects that the Lancaster Equity Coordinator VISTA Patrick Monahan is currently involved with, is to create a collection of documents and a list of contacts to guide the upcoming AmeriCorps VISTA with all the information necessary to keep these projects moving forward. As Patrick feels passionate in this goal, he will do everything within his ability to allow this project to reach the finish line. If the park still requires continual efforts by the end of his year of service, he will make sure that the next AmeriCorps VISTA of this year will have access to all information and an understanding of this project along with any new goals that have developed from this point until the end of his year of service. . Patrick is also working on the Neighbor to Neighbor virtual forum as well as the Annual Report.

c) Block CAPtains: This program exists in order to provide concerned community members with the experience, resources, and connections to have a lasting positive impact on their community. Joe Sorkin is currently working with Block CAPtains and the community at large to eventually become independently organized. Joe is continuing to work on the Neighbor to Neighbor Forum which will be virtual this year. He is also working on the Food committee and Beaver Street Park fundraiser.

Union Snyder: Food security Coordinator VISTA Nicole Peterson has gone above and beyond to streamline operations and expand capacity to serve people living with food insecurity in Union and Snyder counties. She has successfully created COVID19 care packages for residents who are finding themselves in a position of getting food is harder, an on-line form has been created to request the care packages. The agency is not open to clients yet all communication with clients is made online or telephone. New this year will be a “summer meal” program, Union-Snyder is coordinating with the school system to make meals available to students in need during the summer. Nicole is also working on the end of year reporting for the state.

Nicole continues to prepare “ emergency food bags”, which are prepared bags of nonperishable food for 3 days that staff can quickly grab from our pantry when they have a customer in need, or they are on their way to a home visit. This will increase the amount of food distributed by our service staff and ensure that customers are getting enough food to feed their families for a designated period of time.

Tri-County Community Action: Farmers Market Coordinator VISTA: The Farmers Market officially opened on Wednesday, June 10, 2020 with 4 vendors. The softshell opening was considered a ‘huge success’ This week 6/17/2020, the market is expected to have double the number of vendors this week. The market is located at 1421 Derry Street, Harrisburg.

Holy Family: Literacy Coordinator VISTA Keilah Gussie: Through Keilah’s efforts 6 out of 10 students CBM reading fluency has improved. This has brought them much closer to grade level. Keilah is also working in the library organizing, cataloging, and purging books. She is also developing a Reading curriculum for the upcoming school year. She is hoping to base this curriculum on books that that students enjoy.

FOTP (Friends of the Poor): The Volunteer Coordinator VISTA Shayna Canty, has been recruiting and scheduling volunteers for the upcoming community dinners and food giveaways. She at this time is touching bases with volunteer drivers in preparation of the food pantries reopening. At this time Monroe County is in the green and Lackawanna County is in the yellow and coordinating with the food pantries in these 2 counties in order to set a schedule for the days the Food Pantries can begin serving residents.

Dane is continuing to work on bis VAD and has begun working on his Exit Binder for the next VISTA.

4. OTHER:

Regional Performance & Innovation Consortium (RPIC) Grant

We completed our 6-month report that covered activities through March.

We are looking at augmenting our ROMA Trainers with the new ROMA manual and Trainer’s manual so they may familiarize themselves with the material as it has been updated. Additionally, Region 3 both Implementer and Trainer trainees will be part of the first virtual trainings this summer. Their input will be sought to refine the training.

CSBG DATA Task Force

OCS had not been responsive on documents the task force had submitted for review and approval during the latter part of 2019. The task force activities have been suspended until such time they may be resumed with OCS's participation. This is not likely to occur.

DCED Services Contract

DCED has been most understanding as the goals have been changed on the fly dealing with coronavirus and social justice matters this year. As we get into August we will be evaluating next steps and activities.

CAAP Community Needs Assessment Tool

A few agencies have requested updated memberships.

Work Ready

The status is unchanged:

We contacted DHS several times in order to get any available guidance on the program during the pandemic. In the end, DHS stopped County Assistance Offices from referring clients to all Education and Training programs, including Work Ready. DHS explained that "continuing program referrals, would cause undue hardship on brand new participants (who would not receive special allowances or childcare), our CAOs (who are already overwrought with work), and create the potential for a loss of participants once we return to programming because they do not have the supports in place to transition them into brick and mortar facilities. To that end, this was not done to slight Work Ready programs. Instead it was done to align ourselves with the Governor's initiatives and keeping Pennsylvanians safe."

Community Action Toolkits

Our VISTA, Carolina Nicholson, is steadily working on editing the toolkit project so that each agency will receive a toolkit customized with their information. As of mid-July, we have 25 toolkits completed. This is slightly ahead of track for completing all toolkits in August, but she is going to attempt to complete 3 per week so we have some time for evaluation.