



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

DRAFT
Meeting Minutes
City of Fort Lauderdale
Community Services Board
July 12, 2021 – 4:00 P.M.
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

October 2020-September 2021

MEMBERS		PRESENT	ABSENT
April Kirk, Chair	P	8	0
Marisol Simon, Vice Chair	P	7	1
Pamela Aiken	A	5	2
Emma Collum	A	0	1
Elizabeth Cupido	P	8	0
Christina Disbrow	P	7	1
Christi Rice	A	7	1
Shackera Scott	A	4	3
Terra Sickler	A	6	2
Dana Somerstein	A	4	4

Staff Present

Rachel Williams, Housing and Community Development Manager
Eveline Dsouza, Senior Administrative Assistant, Housing and Community Development
Jamie Opperlee, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communication to the City Commission

None.

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- **Quorum Requirement – As of July 1, 2021, there are 10 appointed members to the Board, which means 6 constitutes a quorum**

Chair Kirk called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m. Roll was called and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. WELCOME / BOARD AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MAY 10, 2021

As a quorum was not present, minutes could not be approved at this time.

IV. 2020-2021 CDBG PARTICIPANTS PERFORMANCE REPORT

1. HOPE Fair Housing

Charmaine Williams, representing HOPE Fair Housing, stated that the organization was awarded \$30,000 for fiscal year (FY) 2020-2021. They have used \$21,457.42 thus far. At present, they have served at least 795 clients against a goal of 300 and have exceeded their goal of 10 fair housing educational outreach sessions. They have one provider training session yet to be offered in August or September 2021 and have held their National Fair Housing Month event in Broward. They continue to operate the housing discrimination help line, and the final newsletter will be published later this month.

2. Broward Partnership for the Homeless, Inc.

Nick Green, representing Broward Partnership for the Homeless, Inc., reported that the organization was provided assistance for their 230-bed Homeless Assistance Center in Fort Lauderdale. This covered food and bus passes for participants. They were awarded \$50,000, of which they have expended \$16,015 thus far. The Partnership has served 625 unduplicated clients against a target of 700 to 800.

There are three major performance indicators for this grant:

- At least 80% of participants identified as heads of household must achieve at least one case plan goal within their individual service plan: at present, the Partnership is meeting 100% of this goal
- At least 35% of unduplicated participants will exit shelter to stable housing: they are currently at 33%
- At least 50% of Fort Lauderdale participants will receive a bus pass for travel to employment activities, job searches, or medical appointments: as buses did not charge fares for several months during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Partnership was unable to use funds for the purchase of bus passes

Mr. Green noted that additionally, the Partnership has spent less than intended on food due to a shortage of clients and client turnover. Due to the pandemic, they were only permitted to fill 65% of their 230-bed capacity. It is hoped that they will be permitted to reach full capacity within the next two to three months. If they do not progress toward meeting their goals by September 2021, the Partnership will meet with the City to discuss potential remedies for the situation.

Chair Kirk asked if the funds intended for use toward bus passes could be transferred to other uses. Mr. Green replied that the agency has budgeted \$35,000 for food and \$15,000 for bus passes; they are currently purchasing more food in preparation for hurricane season. He was not certain that they would be able to expend all funds intended for bus passes without shifting them to another use, such as food. He was confident that the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) contract would permit this change to spending.

Ms. Cupido asked if there is any flexibility regarding contract dates, such as permitting extensions. Ms. Williams replied that if an agency is having difficulty spending their allocation, they may seek a written extension of their contract at least 30 days prior to the contract's expiration date. They may also submit a budget modification to move funds into other eligible spending areas during the same time frame. She noted that in the past, the Partnership has been able to spend a portion of their funds on hurricane preparedness.

3. Housing Opportunities, Mortgage Assistance and Effective Neighborhood Solutions, Inc. (HOMES, Inc.)

RaShani Boynton, representing HOMES, Inc., advised that this agency received \$124,000 and has spent all of it. They have served 21 young people against a goal of 16, with more youth expected to come over the next few months. Young people in the program have remained in school and 90% regularly attend monthly meetings. 100% of youth were employed in some capacity, although the pandemic may have interrupted some periods of employment. 100% of participants have attended vocational or secondary educational training.

HOMES, Inc. has been able to provide food, transportation, and personal protective equipment (PPE) for clients during the pandemic. Internships with employers continued during this time, either virtually or socially distanced. 22 youth were employed over the program year. Participants remain in contact with the organization's life coaches, and donors provided furniture and business clothes.

4. Prevention Central, Inc. (formerly Mt. Bethel, Inc.)

Tierra Smith, representing Prevention Central, Inc., reported that the agency received \$71,000 and has spent \$47,737.51. They have served 13 heads of household and 38 beneficiaries against a goal of 40. 100% of clients have submitted documentation that meet the necessary criteria to receive services, and 100% of clients receiving auxiliary services have received information and referrals for these services. The agency has partnered with other entities throughout the area to meet the needs of their clients.

90% of clients have expressed satisfaction with overall services. The agency ensures that all documentation is complete within 72 hours of the intake process. 90% of homeless clients received shelter or permanent housing within three days to one week of submitting their applications. 100% of clients enrolled in the food pantry program receive food and toiletries on a weekly basis. Prevention Central has continued to provide services during the COVID-19 pandemic with the assistance of partner agencies.

Vice Chair Simon expressed concern that the agency's expenditures to date appear to be lagging. Ms. Smith stated that the agency is planning back-to-school and hurricane

preparation events for all client families, which are expected to expend the remaining grant funds.

5. South Florida Institute on Aging, Inc. (SoFIA, Inc.)

Victoria Ruiz, representing South Florida Institute on Aging (SoFIA), Inc., advised that their goal for FY 2020-2021 was to have 18 senior companion volunteers serve 45 isolated older adults, adults with disabilities, and caregivers. As of June 30, 2021, the Senior Companion program has used 13 volunteers to provide companionship, supportive, and respite service to 19 Fort Lauderdale residents. In addition, there were 16 Fort Lauderdale residents served by the program, as well as 20 volunteers who served the program and received a stipend, who did not fall within the specified requirements or were not comfortable providing the required documentation.

35 Fort Lauderdale residents received assessments by case managers, linkage to community resources, and companionship, supportive, and respite services. The Senior Companion program received \$50,000 in CDBG funding for the fiscal year, as well as \$9217 carried forward from the previous fiscal year, to provide emergency in-home services through partnerships with local agencies. As of May 2021, they have expended \$16,835 and \$5542 of these funds respectively.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected the Senior Companion program's ability to provide clients with in-home visits and hindered its progress in spending down funds and enrolling new participants; however, the agency has pursued other avenues to maintain client and volunteer engagement. The program transitioned to telephone reassurance calls and virtual engagement, provided volunteers with data-enabled tablets and technology training for participation in monthly in-service meetings, and connected volunteers with training and community resources to share with their clients. PPE was distributed to both volunteers and clients.

SoFIA partnered with the City as well as with Holy Cross Hospital to assist in vaccination efforts, particularly for older adults who lacked transportation or were homebound. They also connected clients and volunteers with meal and grocery delivery services through the Area Agency on Aging and Broward Share offices. The emergency rapid response program helped four Fort Lauderdale families continue to receive in-person services.

90% of clients reported feeling less lonely as a result of weekly contacts with their Senior Companion volunteers. This exceeded the goal of 85%. 97% of volunteers against a goal of 80% reported sharing information they received from in-service meetings, as well as community resources, with their clients. 89% of respondents reported being more satisfied with their lives as a result of weekly contact with a Senior Companion volunteer against a goal of 86%.

97% of volunteers reported being more active or able to live independently as a result of their volunteer activity, which exceeded the goal of 90%. 73% of caregivers against a goal of 90% reported feeling less stress in their lives as a result of the program.

Ms. Ruiz concluded that the Senior Companion program has resumed in-person service for vaccinated volunteers and clients. 81% of volunteers have been vaccinated. It is hoped that this amount will increase in July, with full resumption in August 2021.

Chair Kirk requested additional information on the shortfall in the program's final goal of less stress in the lives of caregivers. Ms. Ruiz explained that caregivers need a volunteer to be in the home in order to provide respite services. This was the area of the program in which there was a significant decline in impact. She added that as in-person services resume, more funds will be spent on mileage and hours, which will allow SoFIA to spend more of their allocation. They currently have a waiting list of 87 clients who hope to receive in-person services and 22 volunteers hoping to enroll in the program.

6. Sunshine for All, Inc.

No representative of this agency was present.

7. Turnstone Development, Inc.

Valentina Lopera, representing Turnstone Development, advised that the agency has spent \$12,911 of its \$25,000 allocation as of March 31, 2021. The goal of their program is to help eligible families gain skills, training, and education to become gainfully employed and financially independent of public assistance programs. They have served 62 clients against a goal of 35 thus far.

The next performance indicator was for 85% of participants in financial literacy programming to demonstrate active budgeting and obtain a bank account as applicable. This program achieved 75% of its goal. Another indicator was for 50% employable residents to participate in quarterly job fairs held on-site. This goal was fully met.

75% of identified participants improved their economic status in relation to their careers as applicable, which also met the target goal. Ten residents, or 100% of the goal, enrolled in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

Chair Kirk asked how the pandemic has affected Turnstone Development. Ms. Lopera replied that she works as a family support coordinator, and has experienced some difficulty because individuals receiving unemployment payment may not be looking for work. The agency keeps them apprised of available jobs and works with Career Source Broward each month. She noted that vaccination is making it easier for clients to seek work in person.

Vice Chair Simon noted that the information provided is dated June 30, 2021, but the amounts expended only go through March 31. Chair Kirk requested that Turnstone provide another update the following month.

8. Women in Distress, Inc.

Debra Lamb, representing Women in Distress, Inc., stated that the agency received \$37,500, with a program emphasis on providing shelter to Fort Lauderdale residents. To date, they have spent \$29,720.90. They have served 48 clients against a target of 35.

All performance indicators have been met or exceeded thus far. 100% of participants residing in the organization's shelter receive supportive services, such as case management, advocacy, housing, and employment assistance, exceeding the goal of 90%. 20 of 36 shelter residents from Fort Lauderdale have indicated that they will transition to secure and independent housing. 100% of Fort Lauderdale residents living in the shelter established a safety plan within 72 hours of arrival, again exceeding the goal of 90%. Ms. Lamb noted that this is a standard required for all certified domestic violence centers.

Chair Kirk asked if there are any compliance concerns from Staff regarding any of the CDBG agencies. Ms. Williams replied that there are none, pointing out that billing for Turnstone Development, Inc. comes from a different location from the local office. This can result in a gap between the reporting and billing dates. She felt the agency will expend or nearly expend all its allocated funds. She also noted that Turnstone spent their matching funds before their grant funds, which is not the typical order and also contributed to the delay in billing.

Chair Kirk expressed concern with Sunshine for All, Inc. Ms. Williams advised that Staff has spoken to a representative of this agency, which has experienced some difficulties with the CDBG program. The previous week, they expressed willingness via email to relinquish their funds. Ms. Williams further clarified that Sunshine for All had had difficulty establishing partnerships even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although their goal was to provide meals to homes, some clients did not want in-home food delivery during the pandemic.

Ms. Williams advised that relinquishment of Sunshine for All's funds would be finalized by the next Board meeting so any agencies in need of additional funds can come back to the Board to request them. Those agencies would have up to one year to use any redistributed funds they might receive. Ms. Williams recommended discussing this further at the next meeting, when a quorum is present.

V. GOOD OF THE ORDER

Chair Kirk asked that any organizations in need of face shields reach out to her, as her organization can provide several of these items. She added that she is also aware of a

number of nonprofit job opportunities for clients who may be seeking entry-level employment. She also manages a community calendar for nonprofit fundraising events, and suggested that interested organizations leave their contact information after the meeting if they would like to participate.

Chair Kirk stated that she would like the Board to continue meeting in a hybrid in-person/online or telephonic format if possible, pointing out that this was requested prior to the pandemic. She requested feedback from other members regarding the best way to broach this issue with the City, and suggested that a formal communication be sent to the City Commission on this topic following the next meeting. It was noted that the City's Charter does not permit individuals participating telephonically to cast votes.

Chair Kirk concluded that she would also like to work with the City's Budget Advisory Board (BAB) with regard to the allocation of non-CDBG grant funds to nonprofit entities. She advised that the BAB has no set scoring criteria for this process, and felt that the Community Services Board (CSB) may be able to provide some guidance.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

VII. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

It was noted that the next meeting will include approval of the June 2021 minutes, an update from Turnstone Development on their CDBG expenditures, a discussion of redistribution of Sunshine for All's funds, and further discussion of hybrid meetings. Ms. Dsouza added that Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) agencies will also provide updates at the next meeting.

VIII. COMMUNICATION TO CITY COMMISSION

None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:14 p.m.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]