



## MEETING NOTES

### Region 54 Action Council Meeting

**Date & Time: Tuesday, January 24, 2023, 11:30 AM**

Council Members present: Cynthia Smith, Elizabeth Cannon, Mary Surprenant, Niah Hamilton, Tamera Forthenberry, and Tim Dudley

Council Members absent: Chris Rice, Cindy Montgomery, Kathy Vines, Kris Kellerhals, Lisa Abdelghani, Lisa Langellier, Melissa Hollingsworth, Mia Harrier, Michael Marron, Odette Hyatt-Watson, and Tamara L Red

#### **Welcome and Icebreaker (15 minutes)**

Notes: This meeting was completely virtual. Council members that did attend via zoom took turns answering the icebreaker question: If you could spend a day living in any children's book, which book would it be and why?

#### **Special Speakers (30 minutes)**

Notes: Linda M. McLaughlin, Program Coordinator with Permanent Housing Program/HUD, and Brandie L. Kuchefski District 118 Title I Grants Coordinator, both presented on how their organizations help our local priority populations.

#### **Discuss Priority populations (25 minutes)**

Notes: Council members reviewed a PowerPoint with the 12 priority populations that were determined to meet the criteria. Statistics were shown of some priority populations that affect Vermilion County.

1. Children of teen parents
2. Children experiencing homelessness
3. Children in families in poverty or deep poverty
4. Children/families with Department of Children and Family Services involvement
5. Children with disabilities (physical, mental, and emotional)
6. Children of migrant or seasonal workers
7. Children in families with low caregiver education attainment



8. Children in families that face barriers based on culture, language, and religion
9. Children of a parent or legal guardian with a disability
10. Children/families with refugee or asylum status
11. Children in families who face barriers due to immigration status.
12. Children who are Impacted by Parental Involvement in the Criminal Justice System

It was noticed right away that missing from this list are Children of Military families and children in LGBTQ communities

Next Steps: Creating more focus groups to get a better insight into the needs of priority populations in our county.

### **Review and Recap (45 minutes)**

Notes: Council Members discussed which priority populations are more common in Vermilion County. Keeping those discussed in mind, there was discussion around the following:

1. What are the barriers preventing equitable access to ECEC programs and services for each of the priority populations?
2. What are the root causes of these barriers? Why do they exist?
3. What are the various dimensions of the barriers and what are their effects on each priority population?
4. What or who contributes to these barriers and their root causes?
5. What are you or someone else already doing to respond to these barriers?
6. Considering what is already happening with these barriers, why haven't we resolved them?
7. What are some stories and/or anecdotal evidence you can share to help illustrate how members of each priority population experience these barriers?

Everyone was in agreement that lack of knowledge plays a role for many. People just simply do not know all the resources that are offered in each area. Council members discussed that there needs to be a "one-stop-shop" of resources for their current barrier, that way they at least have a known starting point. Income, or lack of it, is another common barrier. With children involved it's difficult to even begin working when you don't have money to pay for the daycare for the first two weeks before they



get their first paycheck. A council member asked, “What are employers doing to help parents with daycare before that first check?”. Something else that came up was a lack of knowledge, in many different aspects. Some people may not know where to go to get the help they need. Some don’t get help because they don’t know that disabilities can be mental and emotional also. Some may be homeless but don’t realize it because they sleep with a roof over their head, and they are determined to be experiencing homelessness. Or simply people may not know any different because it’s been one way all their life.

Overall, there needs to be a better source of communication for everybody. If there could be a given starting point that people knew they could go to when they need help. Making sure people are aware of the resources that Vermilion County already offers and looking forward to what is to come.

### **Parting Question (5 minutes)**

Notes: Is there other data that we should look for or people we should talk to to learn more about priority populations in our region?

Next Steps: Tammy is sending out a Google Form to the council members with the questions above so that if they think of anything else they can answer it there.