



## REGION 8 ACTION COUNCIL MEETING NOTES

1 p.m. Feb 15, 2023,

ZOOM: Emily Dixon, Amiee Schoenhaar, Janine Patty-Anderson, Sarah Kuhlemeier, Devan Spellman.

Regional Council Manager Lou Ann Hayes called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

Lou Ann told the Council members the topic of the meeting would be priority populations which includes homeless and ESL.

Lou Ann reviewed survey answers on question of what programs are available to help migrants and immigrants. There aren't many but some at Head Start. Janine stated there are some in Carroll County that help with bills and outreach workers help them sign up. In Stephenson, three agencies have similar help programs.

Members said it's important to educate our population on what priority populations means and includes. Especially in rural areas, there is an opportunity to educate families about the help they qualify for but do not take advantage of.

Regarding helping migrant families, Janine said their information does travel with them if they are enrolled in Head Start which helps with immunization records. Lou Ann asked if Illinois could start doing the traveling records and Sarah said there could be problems transferring records if they cross State lines since we are close to Wisconsin and Iowa.

The next survey question was what impact did COVID have on ECEC in the region? Answers were services still in place, still same problems as before it and not a healthy situation.

Was there any good that came from COVID? Members said class sizes were down that led to not as many behavioral problems. Families got to spend more time together and highlighted how important ECEC is because when child care is not available things shut down. There was a change in values and many realized reliable internet service is a necessity now.



**Phone**  
(309)-245-1873



**Email**  
tmckenna@birthtofiveil.com



**Address**  
50 W. Douglas St Suite 605  
Freeport, IL 61032

Lou Ann said a lot more food pantries popped up, schools and churches were handing out food.

Sarah said much has changed now two years after COVID because schools don't give everyone free lunch anymore, so families have to pay again which then reduces donations they used to make to food pantries. There will be ripple effects from the post-COVID recovery. Families now pay more for everything. Kids were isolated then and now need more socialization but providers aren't available to give that. Encouraged that more money in State budget for ECEC.

Lou Ann then talked about how all of the information discussed by the Council previously will be put into a regional scan that can be used to apply for grants.

She then talked about the McKenney-Vento program that covers kids in many categories focusing on homelessness. She presented census numbers and Council members thought they were low for Region 8 because of how homelessness is defined. They believed there are many kids and families not counted in this total.

There was much discussion on parents and kids that live in a "doubled-up" situation. This happens when a parent and kids move in with a grandparent. Often these families aren't included in McKenney-Vento numbers for various reasons, but should be if barriers exist that the family can't live afford to live on their own. Members also said families in these situations don't want to ask for help for fear of the stigma of homelessness.

The final topic was discussing percentages of Spanish speaking people in our Region. Members said there are pockets of people like this but some areas have few numbers while others have more. That can skew the percentages.

The meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m. The next meeting is at 1 p.m. on March 1.

Todd McKenna  
Administrative Support  
Birth to Five Illinois Region 8

