



MEETING NOTES

Region 47 Action Council Meeting

Location: Zoom

Date & Time: December 13, 2022, 10:10 am-11:10 am

Council Members present: Andrea Cossey, Rachael DeSpain, Maggie Fern, Anji Garza, Aaqil Khan, Lisa Lilja, Diana Merdian, Lois Meisenheimer, Kris Noble, Beth Smaka, Lauren Stafford, Monica Wolfley

Council Members absent: Liz Buckwalter, Kimberly Crump, Dr. Tara Kristoff, Diane Lynn Ott, Dr. Joe Mullikin

10:10 am Welcome, Introductions & Updates (10 minutes)

Notes: Introductions & Icebreaker Activity:

- Action Council meeting started after the Sauk Valley STARS meeting
- Introduced our new members Aaqil Khan, Director, Decision Support, KSB Hospital (Healthcare Employee), and Lauren Stafford, Lee County Parent (Parent/Family member)

10:20 am Community Agreements Recap (5 minutes)

Notes: Council was presented the updated community agreements asking members for approval.

Decisions made: Members approved changes and it was reiterated that members can update the agreements at any time, with a goal of a welcoming meeting environment.

10:25 am Region 47 Early Childhood Demographics (10 minutes)

Notes: Members were provided data on early childhood demographics prior to the meeting. To expand upon the Community Based Planning that took place last year using 2019 data, a comparison from 2019 to 2020 was presented. An overview of this data was discussed, including the following:

- 2019 vs 2020 population
- 2019 vs 2020 population of children under 5 years old by race/ethnicity
- 2019 vs 2020 working families with children under 5 years old
- Discussion of federal poverty guidelines
- Children by age and federal poverty level 2020
- Current childcare assistance program provider rates



- Region 47 early childhood programs community report
- Early childhood programs map
- Lee, Ogle & Whiteside County child care list
- Most recent data presented was from 2020 (IECAM). As new data becomes available, members will be updated.
- It was discussed that it is currently unclear what the full impact COVID has had on the number of available slots for children and the type of child care settings that are still open or have had to adjust their programming.
- County child care lists were created using Sunshine data from the Illinois Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS)
- Lois (Sauk Valley STARS) gave a recap on Community Based Planning on what was found last year during the region's work with Illinois Action for Children.
 - There are many children from birth to five who are eligible for services, and many are not receiving them with no room to add additional spots for children who qualify.
 - Many of the available child care programs do not serve the needs of their communities. Programs also have long waitlists.
 - Parent surveys indicated the need for full-day programs. Families struggle with half-day programs and finding programming that is within the county they work or live in. Many families go to outlying larger towns/cities to receive services.
 - Further discussions on facilities, transportation, location of services, and care.

10:35 am Demographics Breakout Groups and Large Group Discussion (30 minutes)

Notes: Council members were put into breakout groups to have small group discussions on the data presented. Groups looked specifically at the early childhood demographics of the region, children living with working parents, the Federal Poverty Level, cost of care, and early childhood programs and providers.

- During the large group discussion, the groups presented their answers to some of the questions posed. Some discussion points were:
 - Looking at the regional map, the programs/providers are in the areas with a high density of people and a lack of programs in many areas with a lower density of people.



- Some families must travel across the counties to access child care or services.
- The child care by county list differs from the actual slots available and times of operation.
- Not all providers accept the Child Care Assistance Program, but 4-C (Child Care Resource and Referral) can help families with a specific list to find providers that do accept.
- Families who do not qualify for assistance will keep their children home with rising costs of child care.
- COVID has worsened burnout among child care professionals, leading to workforce shortage and programming shortages.

Decisions made: It was established that time ran short, and more time was needed for additional discussion time.

Next Steps: A survey was sent out to members asking for meeting feedback on meeting structure and additional meeting time.

11:05 am Conclusion

Notes:

- Brief discussion on adding an additional meeting and the time of day that works well for members. Discussion on moving forward with the work and the next steps of going through the region's slot gap data.

Follow-up/Next Steps:

- Council members will complete the survey to ensure members have the resources needed to participate in meetings effectively.
- The Birth to Five team will review surveys and follow up with the results.

Next Meeting:

Date: January 10th, 2023

Time: 10:00 am-11:00 am