

Long Branch Partners (LBP) Meeting Minutes (4/21)

❖ Meeting Scheduled Start (3:30)

➤ Agenda

- Review Needs Expressed in Previous Meeting
- Floor Open for Additional Needs
- How Can we Collaborate to Address Identified Needs?
- Other Ways We Can Support One Another

❖ Introductions (3:31) – 16 attendees

- Bruce Baker – CHEER
- Melissa Ferguson. – Community Action Agency
- Emily Luyo. – Community Health Advocates
- Vanessa Pinto. – CHEER
- Carolyn – Clifton Park Baptist Church
- Anthea Levy. – CHEER
- Reemberto Rodriguez. Director of Silver Spring Regional Center
- Julia Sarmiento. – City of Takoma Park
- Ron Hardy. – City of Takoma Park Emergency Preparedness
- John Brill. – New Hampshire Estates ES and CHEER
- Christopher Hinton. – CHEER
- Maureen Larenas. – TESS Center
- Eddie Mendes. – Community Action Agency
- Sara Mussie. – Impact Silver Spring
- Dayana Muniz. – CentroNía
- Pat Wellington. - Community Health Nurse for Montgomery County

❖ Review Needs Expressed in Previous Meeting (3:41)

- Unemployment
 - Particular need to assist individuals apply for unemployment benefits
- Food Insecurity
 - Particularly assisting people access food from Manna and other sources
 - Assistance applying for SNAP benefits
 - ◆ Particularly for Spanish speakers who avoided signing up in the past for fear of Public Charge
 - Income Insecurity/Cash Assistance
 - Assistance paying rent and utilities
- Education
 - Families need help supporting children with online learning
 - Assistance gaining access to technology to facilitate online learning
 - ◆ Schools have been working to fill these gaps, but they may still persist
- Generally keeping people informed of resources and providing personal support

❖ Floor Open for Additional Needs (3:43)

➤ Carolyn (3:43)

- Clifton Park Baptist Church is a TEFAP site

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- Third Wednesday of every month
- 4-6 PM
- TEFAP – The Emergency Food Assistance Program
- **Sara (4:44)**
 - Have continued to call individuals/families for check-ins
 - Shared story about a man and his family
 - ◆ Shares home with 5 others
 - ◆ Everyone in the home has COVID-19 symptoms except for youngest (2 years old)
 - ◆ Brother-in-law got tested w/out health insurance
 - ◆ Cost him \$150 dollars
 - ◆ Family cannot afford testing for everyone
 - ◆ Symptoms are worsening
 - ◆ IMPACT is assisting family
 - Sara suggests adding “Access to COVID-19 Testing” to list of needs as well as “Support for Quarantine”
 - Brings up great point about how families can isolate themselves if a member is showing symptoms
 - ◆ Some families have can have as many as 8 individuals in one home
 - ◆ This presents a difficult issue
- **Reemberto (3:47)**
 - Testing becomes more expensive with each additional family member
 - Is there funding that already exists to address this issue?
- **Melissa (3:47)**
 - Media outlets reporting availability of hotel rooms for families with multiple members who need to isolate themselves
 - Mentions how internationally some countries like South Korea and Taiwan did not send individuals home after getting tested
 - Italy and Spain did send individuals home which resulted in increased spread of the disease
 - Council Member Craig Rice says there are efforts toward making hotels available
- **Dayana (3:49)**
 - Expressed thanks to IMPACT Silver Spring for assisting families with gift cards to Giant
 - Tess Center, IMPACT, and CentroNía have worked together to provide diapers to the community
- ❖ **How Can We Collaborate to Address Identified Needs? (3:51)**
 - 3 Ideas mentioned in previous meeting
 - Share information, resources, and services
 - ◆ Tess Community Action Center has a compilation of frequently asked questions/needs
 - ◆ Will be share with Long Branch Partners via Bruce

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- ◆ Please mention if you have methods other than the Long Branch Partners group list for members to share information
- Identify ways partners can collaborate to address unmet needs for community members
 - ◆ A number of people do not qualify for stimulus support or other federal financial support
 - ◆ These individuals/families need cash assistance for rent and utilities
 - ◆ Income insecurity is a risk factor for food insecurity
 - **How can we work together to identify individuals or organizations to have cash assistance available to meet the needs of community members?**
 - ◆ IMPACT has been able to provide direct assistance
 - ◆ Casa has been raising money
 - ◆ MHP has been able to provide cash assistance
 - Can Long Branch Partners create a central list of agencies/organizations providing cash assistance so that individuals/families, who may not be in contact with or aware of these opportunities, can access them and get the assistance they need
- **John (3:55)**
 - We should begin by prioritizing the issues
 - Some issues can be addressed individually by an organization, some issues need collaboration
 - Suggests we address any money-related issues first (unemployment, cash assistance, food assistance)
- **Bruce (3:57)**
 - Heard a story about a taxi driver who applied for unemployment benefits but was rejected because the system does not accommodate this profession
 - We need to be able to walk people through the process who may encounter barriers such as this
- **Sara (3:58)**
 - Is there an organization that already has the capacity to help filling out forms like unemployment via phone?
- **Maureen (3:59)**
 - Had a client who along with his roommate was showing symptoms of COVID-19
 - Client was triaged by CDC and was able to get tested for \$50
 - Testing is free, fee comes from the laboratory that reads the test
 - Mentions that success of distribution for HHS with holiday giving program is because a group manages the distribution
 - There was an issue with some organizations taking more than others
 - How do you decide who has priority or who can get helped if the funds are coming from different directions there's a lack of coordination or monitoring?
 - Mentions that Test does help clients via telephone and online with unemployment applications by appointment
- **Bruce (4:01)**
 - It is a good idea to have a central point of contact when collaborating
 - Would like to divide how we address needs amongst the Long Branch Partners; some organizations or individuals take on some needs while organizations/individuals take

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on other needs (**Editor Note: Down the line creating sub-committee's for addressing each issue or a combination of issues may be a good option for organizing our response efforts**)

- We are still in an early phase of the “tsunami” (Great analogy)
 - We are adjusting to the initial wave caused by coronavirus
 - As the wave recedes it pulls everything out with it (economic impact of the pandemic)
- We need to do what we can to help make sure people don't get displaced, to provide food and cash supports
- Fortunately, people can't get evicted during this time but when this is over people will be responsible for their rent again
- We will have to rebuild institutions and services, hopefully in a way that is more collaborative and mutually supportive way than in the past
- This will be a long-term effort
 - We may not find answers right now, but we are going to engage in a process where each partner can offer what they do best and support others
- **Anthea (4:04)**
 - Maryland received 500,000 testing kits
 - Hopefully they will be made available soon
- **John (4:05)**
 - Having an idea of what each organization in LBP is doing will inform us how to move forward
 - **Melissa**
 - Is COAD (Community Organizations Active in Disaster) already doing something similar to what John suggested?
 - **Bruce**
 - Somewhat, they have an informational list of what response and recovery can offer during an emergency response
 - Does not necessarily include what they do with respect to long-term recovery from an economic impact
- **Melissa (4:06)**
 - Included in chat a link to resource guide on County Council Member Craig Rice's website
 - Mentions that people who normally provide social services typically assist with unemployment applications
- **Sara (4:08)**
 - Connected with Dayana from CentroNía thanks to last week's LBP meeting
 - Mentions that sometimes in crisis you are unaware of the resources you have
 - For now, we should not make a massive collaboration effort, but just building these relationships and having this dialogue is beneficial
- **Bruce (4:10)**
 - In regard to sharing information about what each organization is doing, Bruce mentions that CHEER can create a membership roster of all non-profit organizations on a google sheet

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- List of needs will be included, and organizations/individuals can fill in what they are doing with relation to that need
- **Reemberto (4:12)**
 - Would like to let community members who are looking to support locally about what each organization is doing
 - Bruce to provide list of LBP member organizations via google sheet with their websites included
- ❖ **Other Ways We Can Support One Another**
 - **Creating google sheet with LBP names and websites**
 - **Reemberto reaching out to community members looking to contribute**
 - **Vanessa (4:15)**
 - Would like to know what way LBP organizations are working with the community and what is their capacity or reach
 - For example: Who do you serve specifically? What communities? How many people?
 - Include this as a field in the google sheet
 - **John**
 - Suggests there be a field for each need, when the organization does something to address the need, they can briefly mention the activity in the field on the google sheet
 - **Bruce**
 - Possible categories: Individual Name, Organization, Food Insecurity, Income Insecurity (Unemployment), Education, Technology, Capacity
 - If people have suggestions to the format mention it to Bruce so he can incorporate
 - **Vanessa**
 - Can this be updated constantly?
 - **Bruce**
 - Yes, we can send notices via google groups as the availability of services changes
 - **Carolyn (4:22)**
 - Contact at Capital Area Food Bank who trained Clifton Park in TEFAP calls at least every other week so she can get an update on whether or not Clifton Park is still serving food
 - TEFAP
 - People automatically qualify if they already receive assistance via Medicaid, SNAP, unemployment etc.
 - If not receiving government assistance, an individual would qualify on the basis of the number of people in their household and a pay scale requirement
 - Clifton Park is receiving pre-packaged boxes of food for families of 3-4
 - Partnering with 5 other organizations, including IMPACT, to make a list of families they believe need this assistance
 - **John (4:26)**
 - Question about cash assistance for undocumented residents in Montgomery County is rolling out
 - **Reemberto**
 - Details about this should be rolling out soon

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➤ **Bruce (4:27)**

- Confirmation to meet bi-weekly
- CHEER will take the lead on two action items
 - Creating google sheet for LBP to describe their activities
 - Creating list of LBP and websites to provide to Reemberto
- Next meeting will be Tuesday May 5th, 2020
- Moving forward, we will continue to work on sharing information, understanding each other's resources, and revising list of needs

➤ **Pat (4:30)**

- Question about who she can direct her patients to for food cards
- **Melissa**
 - Included a link in the chat the Montgomery County Food Council (MCFC) is keeping a list of Montgomery County food resources
 - For food distributors, MCFC has weekly food security calls from 1-2:30 on Mondays
 - Contact Daniel Bowen or Amanda Neshor to be added to this list
 - Answer about food cards may be on this website
- **Sara**
 - IMPACT is distributing gift cards but with limited resources
 - Suggests her and Pat speak after the meeting to find a solution
- **John**
 - Families with students at New Hampshire Estates Elementary School, they are giving away \$50 gift cards to Giant
 - Contact John

➤ **Reemberto (4:34)**

- Conversation with Guatemalan Consulate expressing concern about where Guatemalan's in need are
- Consulate wants to make sure Guatemalan's who want to connect with the consulate can do so
- Will send this information to Bruce
- **Maureen**
 - What is embassy offering?
- **Reemberto**
 - Not entirely sure
 - They are making food baskets for Guatemalans in need
 - Right now they're helping in PG County and Virginia
 - Not geared to make a large response effort for something like the COVID-19 outbreak but they are looking to check in with people and help in small ways

❖ **Next Meeting: Tuesday May 5th @ 3:30 PM**