

## Department of Social Services Advisory Board Meeting

November 17, 2022 @ 6:30 PM – First Floor Conference room

Manassas DSS  
9324 West Street  
Manassas, VA 20110

**Social Services Advisory Board members present:** Larry Cain, Yajaira Balcarcel, Robyn Johnson, Irma Mejia Lewis, and Michelle Tapia. A quorum was present.

**Members Absent:** Benjamin Berger and Damita Gilliam Frye

**Staff present:** Anita Brown, LaTanya Buckhalter, Michele Childs, Catrina Ewen, Nicole Kirven, and Tanya Robinson.

**Others:** None

Call to Order: At 6:30 pm, Larry Cain, Advisory Board chair convened the Social Services Advisory Board meeting held on Thursday, November 17, 2022.

Public Present: None

Additions to Agenda: None

Welcome: Members and DSS staff took this time to introduce themselves.

Review of Minutes:

Motion to approve the minutes of September 23, 2021, January 27, March 24, May 26 and July 28, 2022, minutes

Presenter(s): Kimberly King-Anderson, Human Service Supervisor. Ms. King-Anderson gave a tour of the Lobby and new customer service sign-in system. The DSS Check-in is much like you would see at the doctor's offices. It captures all customers that come into the agency as well as providing an accurate count for statistical reporting. Overall, the system enables us to capture an accurate count of customers coming in, the wait time for the client and length of time of the process (from the time the client came in, to the time they leave the office). It also enables administrative users to monitor if a worker's sign-in failed or was successful as administrative users can pull reports, update, add or delete reasons, reset passwords, and edit users.

As the Check In system is a computer which captures digital data, by no means is it here to replace human workers. Once signed in on the kiosk, customers will be assisted by actual workers that are courteous, empathetic, and knowledgeable. As good customer service is our priority, the Check In system enhances our process to great customer service. The system also offers a Spanish reason/sub-reason option for those who are Spanish speakers.

**DIRECTOR TIME:**

A. Holiday Programs:

- i. Food assistance (Tummy Yum Yum flyer)- share with community to assist those in need. Food baskets will be provided as long as donations last. First come first serve basis.
- ii. Untrim-a-tree: Seniors needing additional support.

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- iii. City also has the “Twelve days of giving” for volunteers to support in different areas in the city.
- B. Integration “We are the city” – Organizational vision: we are a community that takes pride in our authentic history, livable neighborhoods, quality schools, healthy economy and outstanding quality of life. Our goal is to start off with a 5-year strategic plan building off the city's strategic plan right now which is community vitality, transformative mobility, sustaining excellence, educational attainment and economic prosperity.

The city comprises approximately 10-mile radius and has 41,000 residents. To break it down further for the locality of Manassas: Children 0-17= 11,000, Adults 18-64 = 26,000 and Adults 65+ = 4,500. Number of people living in poverty – 3,196, Percentage of people (all ages) living in poverty = 8%. Number of children living in poverty = 1,432 and percent of children under the age of 18 living in poverty = 14%. What this means is that every child in school in Manassas receives free breakfast and lunch. For the city, 38% of households are considered Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE), the working poor. How do we help these households to the next step? Is it through providing extra trainings for free, helping them go to school, from there do they need extra supplies, a laptop, work boots etc.? We can and are here to assist, but they must be willing to take that next step. Social Services has additional programs to assist residents, from the Benefit units, whose programs consist of SNAP (Food assistance), Medicaid (medical coverage), TANF (small cash assistance), VIEW (employment services) and Child Daycare. Also, there is the Housing Choice voucher program which provides housing assistance to qualified residents. The state does not have an unlimited amount of funding, so the agency strives to work with community partners to assist residents.

- C. Holiday Involvement: Judging of holiday agency contest. Each year the agency has an event to build unity and have a little fun. This year each staff member was given an 8x10 blank canvas board. They were to decorate the board in any fashion with the theme being “Merry and Bright”. The agency asked if three board members would be willing to come on the evening of December 8<sup>th</sup> and judge the entries? Volunteers were Larry Cain, Robyn Johnson and Ben Berger.
- D. State of the agency: PHE Unwinding-the state has begun notifying clients of review of their cases. Many requirements were reduced due to COVID. Right now, the state is asking us to get the word out to clients so they can update their information. Any changes that need to be made to their cases such as: change in address, household composition, etc. Just from personal experience it sometimes it makes it challenging for people to submit documentation. Are we going to accept information virtual or an e-mail, the Dropbox? All will be accepted. DMAS has already sent out letters to existing clients they've already been mailing that for months now they've already sent them a letter stating clients need to update their information if any changes are needed.

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E. MOU- Continuum of Care- The other piece that we are working on is a Continuum of Care and our MOU that really focuses on homelessness. I try to talk very clearly but it tends to be a little more confusing we have what's considered homeless population. Those are individuals that cannot identify where they've last place their head in building or shelter. We consider wherever the last place of shelter, so 24 hours where they slept that's their residence. The agency will contact Coordinated Entry for housing supportive services, but it does not stop there. So, we're looking at it on a 2-fold front meaning not just sending the client saying hey coordinated entry but also assess the client for other services while the client is here. Then on the opposite side we talk about the housing and our wait list, the housing side has been very successful in getting their wait list reduced significantly, down from 2150 to approximately 170 right now so that's taking some time.

F. Departmental reports

**Services:** Child Protective Services -To most people, CPS is investigating child abuse neglect and that's a real big part of it but it's a little more than that. The agency receives the overwhelming vast majority of our Child Protective Services through “Intake” over the phone or in person. Also, the agency does receive complaints from the state hotline. We cannot investigate very call we get there's four criteria that has to be met or we legally cannot go out and try to do an investigation:

- the child has to be under the age of 18 at the time of the report
- what's alleged in the complaint estimate a definition of abuse or neglect
- alleged abuser has to be acted in a caretaker role and
- we have to have jurisdiction to investigate

If any of those four things are not met that we legally cannot go out and just check on that that we don't do well visits that's something that we cannot do. If it's screened out it will run the no column. We will make referrals to that family who could benefit from a service. If the report is screened “in” we have two options, we can open a CPS investigation or we can open a family assessment. An investigation must be conducted if any allegation of sexual abuse or a severe injury. Also, if that family has three prior complaints in the last 12 months, it has to be an investigation other than that we can open a family assessment. They're virtually identical except a family assessment cannot lead to a founded disposition of child abuse or neglect it can only lead to does that family need services. A CPS investigation can lead to a founded disposition only in those case types we do what we call a risk assessment and that's our intake worker generally or one of our social workers completes it online and answer several questions. The system will assign that family of risk rating of abusing/ neglect happening in the future. Low risk, moderate, higher, very high. If they're high or very high, we open an ongoing CPS case. In on-going CPS cases we will work with that family for a number of months just to stay involved with that family or refer to services. This month I know so far in November we've gotten 21 child abuse complaints. In the months prior to November, one was

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around 50 and the other 70. Throughout the state, Virginia the average screen out rate those that are going to “no” columns generally around 50 or 60%. Manassas is a little higher here in Manassas normally. Right now we're currently working 17 family assessments, 6 CPS investigations and we have 7 prevention cases open.

**Benefits:** Catrina Ewen, Benefit Programs Unit

Public Assistance programs consist of SNAP (food assistance), Medicaid, TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Child Care Assistance, and Virginia Initiative for Education and Work program (VIEW).

Currently, we do have two vacancies for our BPS unit which we are in the process of offering we just wrapped up interviewing hopefully offer here shortly. Interviews for the vacant self-sufficiency Specialist position which is our view program that goes with the TANF program just wrapped up. It is anticipated that we will be offering the position shortly in addition we're advertising for another benefit manager. The Benefit unit is the largest one here. Currently there are 15 Benefit workers, 1 Self Sufficiency and 1 Daycare worker.

Beginning January 1<sup>st</sup>, we are back to normal with all the exemptions that were running during the public health emergency are ending as of December 31<sup>st</sup>. TANF is temporary assistance for needy families that's when we get families that are applying, you have to have children under the age of 18 in the home or we do get some parent caretakers which are like grandparents who have custody of their kids they come in and apply however more likely those cases are just payee cases so they don't have to participate in VIEW. But when you are just a regular TANF case consisting of a mom and dad or a single parent with two kids unless they meet an exemption then they don't have to participate but if they do not meet an exemption, they are mandated to participate in the VIEW program and that's the Virginia initiative for Employment and Work. Basically, either you are going back to school or job training, job readiness something along those lines so for the past two years roughly with the pandemic those exemptions were put in place where people did not have to participate. On January 1st everyone has to participate so we're starting to do unwinding of those cases. Workers are reaching out to start those assessments and get them into an activity service plan and get them into some type of component and once they do agree to those terms then we can help them with other type of services. For example, you know you are going out for interviews we're helping people with their resumes, clothes for the jobs. We will still be evaluating people if they have hardships, if there's any type of barriers or mental health services, etc., hardships and exemptions still will apply but for the majority of the people the goal is to get them back into the workforce.

Currently, the agency has 75 TANF cases, 43 are in the VIEW program. In the SNAP program, we'd always have to interview on a brand new application that came in for intake the feds gave us a waiver where we do not have to do interviews other than we may have to reach out for some clarification of some information on the application but other than that we're kind of just processing through because our workload has you know double tripled in the last couple of years with the amount of applications so that's set in but that's set to expire as of

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December 31<sup>st</sup>. Any new applications for TANF, interviews will be conducted. Currently the agency has approximately 1700 cases for SNAP. The agency is also building a new program called SNAPET. The ET part is the employment side. The SNAPET program is a volunteer program for those clients receiving food stamps who are willing to participate in the program. If they participate in the program we are able to help them with other supportive services you know for transfer you know and move forward regarding education they wanted to go back to school right now I pretty much if they're going through like and a career works is pretty much paid for the city of Manassas also has an additional call Manassas works that pays the difference so the education so literally, if you're looking at a two year school, if you're looking at nursing that's a high need, if you're looking for tech that's a highly need. Those are 100% funded. This is the opportunity of sitting on the table all you do is have open snap case. Only those who have a Social Security number would be eligible for this program.

On the Medicaid side of our program so with the public health emergency that's still in effect as of right now we can't close or reduce people's coverage. There are only three reasons why we could close somebody you know somebody passes, they move, or they request it to be closed. Right now, the agency is seeing a lot of applications coming in because of open enrollment. The federal marketplace, a lot of times if they see that a client could possibly be eligible to pretty much sending all their applications to us. Once you make it determination, if they're not eligible then we send it back to them so then the client would be notified that they've been denied for Medicaid but there's a possibility they are eligible through the federal marketplace. We're waiting to hear of the possibility that the unwinding for Medicaid would start but that has not been said. There's a possibility of the waiver being extended into the springtime. The agency has approximately 6000 Medicaid cases. Enrollees number about 11,500 people enrolled in the city on Medicaid.

Fuel or energy program just wrapped up and the agency had about 118 applications, 103 were approved. The Crisis program which just started as of November 1st and that program is for servicing like repairs and replacements on heating equipment. Come January 1st that's when we can help with like a disconnect notices.

For Daycare, during COVID, parents received a break in that the federal government paid the co-payments for childcare recipients. The co-payments are beginning back up in January 2023. The agency has 165 of daycare cases.

The state has a new water assistance program that began in October 2022 and will be handled at the state level and not locally. It is designed to assist Virginia residents with their water bills.

**Housing: Michele Childs-** The last time Manassas/Manassas Park's waiting list open was 2014 and we were open for three hours and 4,500 people applied. If we had let normal attrition take place it would have been 18 to 20 years before we had filtered through the list. What we did this past year, was run an update and sent updates out to everybody on the list and that's how we ended up reducing the number of people on the list because they've just

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disappeared. Reducing the list will allow us to reopen. We have to get to 0 before Virginia housing will reopen the waiting list. It's projected this time, that they're going to run a lottery so whatever time frame that it's open there'll be a lottery they won't be first come first serve and those people will go on to the waiting list. We are not certain how it's going to work. It's never happened here before. We've always been first come, first serve and then there's preferences built in. There's always been a pre application to the waiting list. No information is verified at that time, it's just their self-statement to get on the waiting list. Verification happens when they come off the waiting list. The difference between housing and benefits is benefits if you apply for something and you're eligible you receive it. Housing, you can apply for it but it's based on funds available. We have currently about 312 leased. That means they're in units with leases. We're paying assistance but I have 20 some issued and searching the markets been hard the last two years you know prices escalated, vacancies were very low families had a really hard time but that is we're just seeing that start to ease we're actually saw rents reduced. That's a good sign and there's more availability too and now which means families are now starting to move. Because of the area we have this back and forth so we're starting to see a lot of port in port out kind of action going on. Is the city planning any type of affordable housing? The new affordable housing that is being looking at, is around about 12 unit complex. It's for veterans preference I think that's the best way to put it. You probably heard it in the City Council meetings. It's working with People Inc which is a long standing institution and they're working pretty much trying to repurpose the land itself to where you have a veteran's preference literally, vouchers that are attached to the units for those that that would be roughly 6 and then the other side of the house would be the additional other six units would be kind of you may have history of being a veteran or you may have a disability and so that's the goal in moving forward with this initiative. The units would be located on Prince William Street where the VFW property is located. It would be a new VFW building and then the units. It's currently under public hearing.

**Administration: LaTanya Buckhalter**-Assistant Director-Admin/Fiscal Unit

CSA- the children services that also known as the CSA program is made-up of a state pool funds. The state pool funds come from four different agencies the Department of Social services (DSS) the Department of Education (DOE)/Manassas City Schools (MCPS) the Court Services unit (CS) and then the Community Services Board(CSB). Currently today as of today CSA funding is as has assisted and/or is assisting 32 youth and families in the city of Manassas. These 32 cases consist of 17 youth from DSS, 7 youth from the CSB, 7 youth from MCPS and 1 youth from the CS. The expenses paid out of CSA funds are for basic maintenance for foster care children as well as clothing, parent coaching, counseling services, parent coaching with the goal being for reunification, residential education, dental expenses, and a discretionary allowance that allows for the purchase of birthday gifts, graduation gifts, other milestone accomplishments for the children. The youth from the CSB, we've helped with substance abuse treatment, eating disorder treatment, and mental health. From the MCPS, we assist with private day placements for children who cannot be serviced in the Manassas city public schools needed an enhanced level of education. These are children who may have, and individualized education plan also known IEP. In addition, to the education

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they may have education related services such as speech or occupational therapy. CSA funding also pays for that and then the 1 youth funded through the CS. It's for residential education as part of the base substance abuse program. As stated previously, we have 32 youth and their families. CSA is a comprehensive program so if the family needs services as well. It can be some of our evidence-based practices, such as functional family therapy. This is where we include family, the whole family in trying to help that family coexist together. So far, we have committed funds in the CSA program of over \$960,000.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

#### NEW BUSINESS:

a. Volunteer opportunities

1. Volunteer for Pending Point in time (homeless count)

The PIT is an annual count of persons experiencing homelessness on a single night each year in January as required by the Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD). The Prince William County Department of Social Services (DSS) is the lead for the Prince William Area Continuum of Care (PWA CoC), which includes the areas of Prince William County and the cities of Manassas and Manassas Park.

#### Why is the PIT Count Important?

The PIT provides a “snapshot” of the nature and extent of homelessness in our area. The data collected during the count is used to inform funding decisions, support services and resource planning, as well as raise public awareness about homelessness.

This year's count will take place on **Wednesday, January 25th and end on Thursday, January 26th. The count will be conducted in multiple "shifts" throughout the 24-hour period** with a back-up date of Thursday, January 26th to Friday, January 27th in case of inclement weather.

As in previous years, volunteers are needed to help us complete the “unsheltered” portion of the count, which involves visiting places where persons experiencing homelessness are sleeping in a “place not meant for human habitation” (such as their vehicle, an abandoned building, or anywhere outside). Volunteers will be placed in teams, led by an experienced “Team Lead”, and will complete surveys with participants at pre-identified locations. Link to sign up will be sent out by LaTanya.

2. 150<sup>th</sup> City of Manassas Anniversary- The City will be celebrating their 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2023 with the Kickoff being on April 1, 2023. Social Services will be at many community events. June has been designated as the month where Social Services will be the most active.

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3. Foster Care recruitment- Social Services is always looking for good foster homes. At the meeting in January, recruitment cards will be available for anyone wishing to take and share with others.
- b. Budget presentation- LaTanya shared the FY21 budget with board members. The administrative cost for last year FY21 we spent over \$4 million staff and operations all overhead costs in rent office supplies anything that we need or use to run into the sea and then we have our services service purchased for our clients we spent \$97,000 client benefits spending that the client benefits spending basically that the money that the federal and state government has paid directly to our client or on behalf of our clients and money that has been put back into our community so that was \$66 million that includes the medical services that includes childcare for staff and if you heard about all those different assistance programs that we help our clients with so our total spending for social services was \$71 million and so our city budget we work off of two budgets we have a state budget state budget is 5.1 little bit over \$5.1 million our city budget is \$7.9 million and the reason why our city budget is higher is because the state budget is only Department of Social services it doesn't include housing it does that include it does not include the money that we get to serve or to Virginia juvenile crime against children at VJCCCA and our budget this year our directive that we were given is that we were going to have a flat budget and a flat budget meeting that our program cost can go up because what the program cost that means that the state is giving us more money so as long as our expenditures revenues balance we're good that they want us to keep maintain a flat budget from the money that we received from the general fund and we've received \$2.6 million from the general fund that is only 32% of our total budget so our budget is due on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Department's budget meeting with Mr. Pate is scheduled for January 9<sup>th</sup>. The Department is not requesting any supplementals, no new positions, hardware, software or equipment this year.
- c. Sheltering- There are some churches in the area that provide a warming shelter. This information is sent out on a regular basis via email. Social Services in the event of a disaster in Manassas is responsible for opening and staffing a shelter. The Department has a "First responder" team that will open the shelter and operate as needed on 12-hour shifts. Normally the shelter site is Osbourn High School. Volunteers are always welcome.
- d. Board member training – The northern regional office of Social Services will be reaching out to all new board members in regard to new board member training.

Next scheduled in-person meeting January 26, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT With no further business to discuss, meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Anita Brown