

**Michigan Commission on Community Action and
Economic Opportunity
Tuesday, September 28**

2:00pm – 5:00 pm – VIA ZOOM

Commission Meeting Minutes

Members: Jill Edwards-Sutton (Chair), Carolyn Bloodworth, Joelle-Jude Fontaine, Miguel Rodriguez, Kelly Garrett, Shamayim Harris, Justin Hodge, Tiffany Mayers, Ashley Slack, Theresa Thompson, Ravi Yalamanchi
Staff: Kris Schoenow, Janice Harvey, Melanie Sanford, Courtney Lousma Chong-Anna Canfora

Guests: Patrick Cooney, U of M Poverty Solutions
Kelly Rose, MSHDA
Susan Newhof
Courtney Hierlihy, Wayne Metro
Damon Tidwell, Wayne Metro
Stacey Smith, Wayne Metro (client)
Shakenda Williams, Wayne Metro (client)
Toby Berry
Michelle LaJoie
Lisa Bolen

Absent: Milinda Ysasi
Paula Kaiser-VanDam

- I. Welcome and introductions
 - Chair Edwards-Sutton called the meeting to order via Zoom at 2:00 pm.
- II. Approval of June 3, 2021 Meeting Minutes – Chair Edwards-Sutton requested a motion to approve the minutes from the June 3, 2021 MCCAEO meeting. Miguel Rodriguez made the motion to approve the minutes; Carolyn Bloodworth seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- III. Child Tax Credit- Patrick Cooney, U of M Poverty Solutions
 - Patrick shared a PowerPoint Presentation outlining the Child Tax Credit (CTC), what it is, who is eligible, how it is different than previous credits, how to get payments, the antipoverty impact, and answered FAQs.
 - CTC has caused the poverty rate to decline
 - Allows 3.5 million children to be kept out of poverty (reduce child poverty by 49%)
 - Most families are using CTC to pay for food
 - Data shows it is critical to stabilize local economies
 - Patrick shared two websites for more information:

- [Child Tax Credit | Poverty Solutions \(umich.edu\)](#)
- www.getthetaxfacts.org (Detroit area data – UWSEM)
- See PowerPoint presentation

IV. CERA Program/Eviction Prevention- Kelly Rose, MSHDA

- Kelly shared a PowerPoint Presentation outlining rental assistance programs during the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Eviction Diversion Program (EDP) 7/2020-1/2021
 - 15,500 households served, with an average of \$3,350 in assistance
- COVID Emergency Rental Assistance (CERA) Program
 - \$622 Million- ERA 1
 - \$423 Million- ERA 2
 - Administered through local non-profits
 - Turnaround time: 80% of counties are 35 days or less; Wayne County are 38% of the cases presented and are taking a bit longer to process
 - Spending \$60-70 million per month
 - 12th in country as percentage spent
- Additional benefits
 - Rental assistance, internet assistance, utility (heating, water, sewer, trash), assistance for non-lease holders.
- CERA Partnerships: Michigan Legal Help, and State Court Administrative Offices.
- See PowerPoint Presentation
- Commissioners asked if there was any early data that shows lessons learned, equity. Kelly shared they are looking at demographic data serving low-income clients and will do a zip code analysis to look at underserved. Will also continue to do more outreach for the program.
- Kris asked about utility payments. Kelly shared that \$23 million was spent on utilities which assisted in addition to the MEAP grant.

V. Wayne Metro Client’s CERA Program Stories

- Shakenda Williams (Tenant)

Summary: Very grateful for the CERA Program. It allowed her to pay her rent/utilities and focus on obtaining transportation.

Barriers: issues with landlord, slow process, transportation, young children

Future plans: plans to save money to buy a house and buy a car so she has reliable transportation to get her two-year-old into childcare.

- Stacey Smith (Landlord)

Summary: during the pandemic, she had 2 clients in need of assistance. When EDP funds ran out, Wayne Metro reached out to her about CERA. CERA helped her tenants, helped with utilities, and other bills.

Barriers: caseworker turnover

VI. Commissioner Discussion

- Susan asked what direction the MCCAEO wants to take our recommendations this year?

- Chong-Anna shared that she is concerned about unbanked clients and those making \$25,000 or less not getting Child Tax Credit at rates higher income families are. That getting access to this funding is important.
- Kris started a discussion around food assistance and the Child Tax Credit. What does this money ultimately do to improve quality of life? Puts family in a stable condition with income and cash supports and increases funds for families.
- Ravi shared that there is an economic impact with this program as it stabilizes the family, adds value to economy, and landlords paying taxes.
- How do we measure economic impact of assistance families are receiving and then share that information with local leaders.
- Chong-Anna shared the concern that the food assistance that flooded out during the pandemic won't be maintained.
- Kris asked what it will look like when it goes away? Build up cash assistance; use ALICE data to build case.
- Next steps: Commissioners to identify areas to focus on for this year's report.
- Susan Newhof shared that information from community assessments with CAAs. Priorities appear to be: rental assistance, food, utility assistance, health, education, and transportation.
 - More interviews of CAA Staff may be needed.

VII. BCAEO Update and Action Items – Kris Schoenow

- Due to time constraints, Kris shared a brief BCAEO update.
- Commission Appointments
- Funding Updates
 - CSBG
 - CARES
 - DOE
 - LIHEAP
 - MEAP
 - LIHWAP
- BCAEO Summary of Activities
 - LIHEAP- \$36 million to CAAs
 - Governor's MI Healthy Communities Plan - \$40 million in home repair and plumbing assistance
 - CSBG/CARES- FPL changes
 - Weatherization- Infrastructure Deal \$3.5 billion
- See Kris' 9-28 BCAEO Report.

VIII. Public Comment - None

IX. Adjournment – Meeting was adjourned at 4:58 pm.