

MINUTES

The Vernon County W-2 Steering Committee met on Tuesday, December 4, 2007. The meeting was called to order at 10:07 by Chairperson Lori Kleppe. Proper public notice was given. At this time there was no quorum so the minutes could not be approved. Introductions were given by all present. Nancy Thompson introduced Brenda Wright as a new employee in her unit. Thompson stated Brenda is scanning cases, coding files and prescreening applicants who apply for assistance until the vacant position in the ESS unit is filled.

Food Share Employment and Training program update – Amy Gabrielson

Gabrielson handed out Couleecaps Community Concerns Newsletter “The face of Poverty in the Coulee Region”. Gabrielson stated that in Crawford, La Crosse, Monroe and Vernon counties more than 21,000 people live at or below the poverty line, including 6,500 who are children under the age of 18 and 2,100 who are over the age of 65. Eitland stated she will bring more statistics on poverty to the next meeting. Al Hanson stated another statistic is that 38% of all land owned in this area is owned by absentee owners.

Gabrielson had another Community Concerns handout assembled by Couleecap on affordable housing. Gabrielson stated that renters in Wisconsin spend 30% or more of their income for rent. Gabrielson stated that there were 34 referrals to her program in September. Half of those referred did not show up for enrollment into the program. Gabrielson stated this is possibly due to pride and/or transportation difficulties. To date, 196 people have been referred to the FSET program.

Gabrielson also wanted to inform those present of the website “Worknet” that shows available jobs. Gabrielson stated the top employer in Vernon County is Vernon Memorial Hospital. Gabrielson gave examples of types of employment available and barriers that stand in the way of employment. The current unemployment rate in Vernon County is 4.3%. Mark Michel stated Vernon County needs more entry level positions. Al Hanson stated there is a mismatch between skills and available jobs.

Chairperson Kleppe stated there was a quorum now and the minutes could be approved. Motion made by Al Hanson to approve the minutes as sent. Second by Kay Starr. Motion carried.

W-2 Review of Program Requirements – Nancy Thompson

Thompson gave a review of upcoming changes to program requirements for the W-2 program since TANF has been reauthorized. Thompson stated that staff are currently taking training in regards to these subjects.

Thompson stated the 2008 plan has been submitted for the Children First Program. The Children First Program is Case Managed by Amy Gabrielson. Gabrielson gave a detailed description of the Children First Program and its purpose to the committee. It is expected that Children First Awards for 2008 will be made by the end of the year. Thompson stated the total dollar award for this program is approximately \$3,600.

Thompson gave an update on BadgerCare Plus. Thompson stated it is anticipated that this program will provide access to affordable health care to 98% of the state's population. Thompson stated that implementation of BadgerCare Plus is scheduled for February 1, 2008. Staff are currently taking on-line training and will be attending face-to-face training next week.

Thompson also stated her unit is working on electronic case file transfer. Thompson also wanted to inform those present that Human Services is not longer offering the WHEAP/Energy Assistance Program. Couleecap has taken over the administration of the WHEAP Program.

Al Hanson asked for an update on the Banta Building. Eitland stated that the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) will be housed there. This will be a part of Family Care. Eitland stated Family Care is a new way of providing care to the elderly, disabled and physically disabled. Eitland stated this is an entitlement program and that with the implementation of Family Care all waiting lists will be eliminated. Eitland stated a resolution will be presented to the County Board and when approved the program should begin July 1, 2008. Eitland stated it will take approximately 2 years to get the program up and running.

Thompson asked for suggestions for the next Community Steering Committee meeting agenda. Suggestions were 1) BadgerCare Plus 2) Statistics on Poverty 3) Family Care update 4) Funding for Training 5) Update on Housing Coalition.

The next meeting of the W-2 Steering Committee was scheduled for Tuesday, March 4, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.

Motion made by Al Hanson to adjourn. Second by Mark Michel. Motion carried.

Submitted by,

Kim Tainter
Clerk III

Members Present

Lori Kleppe
Nancy Thompson
Kay Starr
Mark Michel
Pamela Eitland
Kim Cable
Ron Moilien
Dave Dregne
Al Hanson

Members Absent

Marv McNeal
Kathy Neidert
Dawn Simonson
Jim Young
Julia Barth

Others Present

Amy Gabrielson
Kim Tainter
Brenda Wright