



## Community Services Commission

*The Advisory Tri-Partite Board of the Maricopa County Community Action Agency*

### Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 20, 2023 – 6:00PM

**Online:** [Link to Teams](#) | **Phone:** (480) 702-3496 ID: 163 659 494#

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COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:	Bonnie Temme, Lauriane Hanson, Chris Groninger, Robert Sotomayor, Ty Rosensteel
COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:	Adonis Deniz
STAFF PRESENT:	Deputy Director: Shawn Pierce Assistant Director: Cathy Chiang Administrative Services Supervisor: Laurie Ontiveros Community Action Program Coordinator: Regina Lopez Landlord Coordinator: Nawal Bakheit-Apura Program Supervisor: Heidi Hopkins-Basen
GUESTS:	Jackie Solares – St. Vincent de Paul

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- **Call to Order**

Chair, Lauriane Hanson, called the meeting to order at 6:07 P.M.

- **Roll Call**

Community Action Program Coordinator, Regina Lopez, conducted roll call. Five (5) of the six (6) Commission members were present. A quorum was established.

- **Pledge of Allegiance**

The pledge was led by Commissioner, Bonnie Temme.

- **Community Action Promise**

Regina Lopez recited the Community Action Promise.

- **Director's Message**

Human Services Department (HSD) Deputy Director, Shawn Pierce, thanked the Commission for their time and the opportunity to tell them about the work being done in Human Services (HSD). HSD is working with leadership and staff to implement the new goals and strategies for the coming year plus. Part of those strategies is focusing on the client centered approach/evidence based coaching model, which looks at the needs of the whole family across the board. Using this approach, HSD is asking:



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What will this look like?

How will we right-size our services?

How will we support the growing need of the community?

The new strategy also offers an opportunity to help our clients identify what their goals are for their families. This helps to ensure that they have resiliency and will help build well-being within the community.

Mr. Pierce noted that we will continue to use our inclusive/equitable approach to ensure clients have easier access to services. This means that we will be building bridges across each of the HSD programs to help remove any barriers to services for clients. Staff members will also be engaged in meeting deliverables through annual goals set in their performance evaluations.

Due to technical issues, the strategies and goals were not immediately available for Commissioners to view during the meeting; however, Mr. Pierce promised to have a copy sent to the Commissioners after the meeting.

Mr. Pierce also touched on the upcoming announcement of the new County Manager who will be replacing outgoing County Manager, Joy Rich, who is retiring on April 7. He expressed his appreciation for Ms. Rich's efforts at both the County level and also for her public service outside of the County.

Chair Lauriane Hanson commented on the new County logo, which is being used across all departments within Maricopa County. She appreciates the cohesive message this sends and sees that there are a lot of opportunities for the departments to integrate with each other. Chair Hanson also asked if there is a plan for more integration with the work HSD is doing.

Mr. Pierce appreciated the comment and question. He noted that the new brand really does tie all of Maricopa County together as "one Maricopa County." He spoke of efforts to work closely with departments, such as Public Health and the libraries, and to strengthen those relationships.

- **Community Action Agency Report**

Assistant Director, Cathy Chiang, advised the Commission about changes to how the Financial Report will be delivered due to changes in how DES funds are being delivered to eligible clients. Rather than displaying each Department of Economic Security (DES) fund as separate items, the total of all DES funds will be combined. The Community Services Division (CSD) Financial Report will now include rental and utility assistance totals for ERA (Emergency Rental Assistance) and ERA 2.0 as well as the total number of clients being navigated to the DES portal for LIHEAP services once we are able to obtain this data. CSD will continue to include the



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total number of unique households served through ERA and DES funds paid through Maricopa County.

As of March 13, 2023, CSD has expended just over \$25 million in ERA 1.0, \$4.5 million in ERA 2.0, and almost \$1.1 million in DES funds. So far this year, CSD has served 6,019 unique households with rental, mortgage and utility assistance.

Chair, Lauriane Hanson, asked if CSD has seen an increase in requests for services since the end of the public health emergency. Ms. Chiang confirmed that requests for service have remained steady and have not increased.

Commissioner, Bonnie Temme, asked if there is an ETA on the sunset of ERA. Ms. Chiang estimates that ERA will be exhausted in August 2023. Ms. Chiang did note that there is another pot of money that CSD has worked hard to preserve in order to make the "COVID cliff" a little less severe. She also noted a change made in order to help preserve funds while still helping families. Where families had once been able to obtain up to 18 months of financial assistance, the duration has now changed to up to 6 months of financial assistance.

Chair Hanson asked if CSD is tracking the families to see how the reduction in funding is affecting them, and she gave the example of the higher cost of living with stagnant wages.

Deputy Director Pierce acknowledged this concern and reiterated that CSD has shifted to the coaching/whole family approach in order to help families become stable and resilient even as the economic climate poses an obstacle.

Administrative Services Supervisor, Laurie Ontiveros, briefly touched on the shift for agency partners coming in fiscal year 2024. Where we have historically been focused on outputs of emergency services, we will now shift to a focus on the outcomes of the services being provided. Ms. Ontiveros stressed the importance of documenting the outcomes, as this helps us see if there has been a positive impact in our efforts to help families step out of poverty.

AD Chiang also talked about the development of the Financial Empowerment series which will be used as a tool to help clients. The classes are ready and are now being posted at both the East Valley and West Valley Career Centers where the Workforce Development training teams will offer multiple opportunities for training. The training team will also work with our CAP partners to facilitate training classes for clients who enroll. Financial Empowerment classes will be available to any client of the Human Services Department, regardless of age or which division they have entered through. Classes are also being offered in Spanish.

Ms. Chiang also announced staffing changes/updates in CSD. Contact Center Program Coordinator, Celia Lara, will be leaving at the end of March. CSD will begin recruiting to fill her position in the near future.



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Ms. Chiang also updated the Commission on the collapse of Housing and Community Development (HCD) into CSD, which includes the Weatherization Program. Weatherization has now been rebranded as CSD-H.

- **Professional Staff Development**

Program Supervisor, Heidi Hopkins-Basen, spoke to the Commission about the Community Action Partnership Management and Leadership Training Conference which she attended in New Orleans in February. Ms. Hopkins-Basen focused her time at the conference on attending breakout sessions which dealt in the topic of Weatherization. These sessions helped to expand her knowledge on the network surrounding Weatherization, where she also received updates on the latest funding initiatives. She also advised the Commission on how the updated funding can help CSD-H clients.

Landlord Coordinator, Nawal Bakheit-Apura, spoke to the Commission about the Arizona Housing Coalition, Refocus : Reframe conference that she attended in Mesa, also in February. The conference offered an opportunity to gain understanding about the issues/barriers around affordable housing in Arizona. Notable for Ms. Bakheit-Apura was learning that Arizona is on the forefront of eviction discussion in the country, with about 67,000 eviction filings in 2022. Although Arizona HB 2485 shields eviction records, there are still efforts in academia to try to uncover more information around the evictions in order to learn more about property owners and patterns around the high eviction rate.

- **Strategic Plan Update**

Community Action Program Coordinator, Regina Lopez, offered a brief update on the CSD Strategic Plan. Final revisions were made which incorporated feedback from Director Jacqueline Edwards, CSD staff, and the Commissioners. The Strategic Plan now includes the Executive Summary which emphasizes the One Team Approach of the Maricopa County Community Action Agency and our CAP partners. Each CAP office participated in strategic planning sessions which, in conjunction with the Community Needs Assessment (CNA) for each area and CAP office staff SWOT assessments, helped inform Strategic Plans specific to the needs of each geographic area.

Chair, Lauriane Hanson, asked if the high-level goals of the CAP Strategic Plans and the Maricopa County CSD Strategic Plan were the same but with different strategies to approach the issues. Ms. Lopez advised that each CAP Strategic Plan focused on the specific critical unmet needs from the CNA as well as feedback from CAP office staff on what they see as the critical unmet needs of the community.

Commissioner, Ty Rosensteel, said he was impressed with the strategies listed in the plan but was curious about the methodology for obtaining feedback from the customers/clients being served. Administrative Supervisor Laurie Ontiveros briefly talked about the Customer



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Satisfaction Survey that will be rolled out through the Dynamics system prior to the end of the year, which will help us evaluate the impact of our services.

AD Chiang also commented that this will be the first time that CSD has created a Strategic Plan that will be used to hold us accountable for the services we provide and the impact we are having on the community.

- **Action Items**

- **Approval of January 23, 2023, Meeting Minutes**

- Motion to approve the Meeting Minutes was made by Commissioner, Bonnie Temme, seconded by Commissioner, Ty Rosensteel. Commissioner, Chris Groninger, abstained. The motion passed with four (4) votes, (1) one abstention.

- **Approval of Strategic Plan**

- Motion to approve the Strategic Plan was made by Commissioner, Chris Groninger, seconded by Ty Rosensteel. The motion was passed unanimously.

- **Call to Public**

Chair Lauriane Hanson put out a call to the public for comments. She asked Commission nominee, Jackie Solares, to share a little bit about herself.

Ms. Solares comes to the Commission from St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP) where she works with the community and community partners as the Manager of Prevention Services. Ms. Solares noted SVdP's strong partnership with Arizona Wildfire, but also emphasized partnerships with other agencies who come in to help bridge gaps in services. A lack of affordable housing in the community is also a top concern for Ms. Solares and SVdP, as she is seeing families from various socio-economic levels competing for the same limited number of housing units. Ms. Solares is very excited to join the Commission and to be a part of the great and important work that they do.

Commissioner, Bonnie Temme, told the Commission that it has been a privilege to work with Ms. Solares as a partner and that she is happy to see her joining the Commission as of the June 19<sup>th</sup> vote where her nomination will be approved.

Ms. Lopez also wanted to advise the Commission that the meeting schedule for next year would be going out to all Commissioners on Tuesday, March 21st.

- **Adjournment**

There being no other business, the Chair, Lauriane Hanson, adjourned the meeting at 7:18 P.M.