



**GENERAL ASSISTANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, April 13<sup>th</sup> 2022 at 2:00 PM**

**PRESENT:** Erin Koehn, Aaron Terrones, Vicki Ellison, Randy Knudson

**STAFF:** Ashley Balius and Leah Coffman

**INTRODUCTIONS & CALL TO ORDER:**

Ashley called the meeting to order at 2:00 P.M.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

GA Advisory Committee reviewed the minutes of January 12, 2022. Vicki made the motion to approve and accept minutes as presented. Erin seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**BUDGET & PROGRAM UPDATE**

Ashley presented information regarding budget utilization in FY22. The total expended is at 47% of total budgeted, but the program has not been invoiced for the \$175,000 spent on ERA. \$25,000 has been allocated to Waypoint, and the budgeted amount will be lowered during the spring amendment. The budget utilization breakdown so far has been at 34% on rent, 43% on lot rent, 61% on utilities, and 90% of funeral expenses. The waypoint statistics from 2021 from local providers reflect 1446 referrals with an average of 2 referrals per household. The average income was \$775.50/month. 36% of families had no income. This collaboration noted that this is an area of opportunity to develop stability plans for these families. The majority of referrals were for rent assistance, with 910 referrals, 418 referrals for utilities, and 118 for deposit assistance. Average rent assistance was \$495, \$375 for utilities, and \$525 for deposit. The average rental assistance for households was \$1004.50. Ashley also provided demographic information for those assisted. The intention is to add in the ERA data to better assess needs as well as eviction data to understand how many evictions were prevented or stopped.

Ashley provided a program update. Janet retired after 35 years and hired Nicole as an internal candidate. She shared success stories, such as providing connection and communication after the Geneva Towers fire. She also shared information about a coordinated effort for a single mother to get utilities assistance. Aaron noted that there was an increased effort of landlords to reach out for assistance for tenants.

## **POLICY DISCUSSION**

Ashley shared information about proposed policy changes. In 2019, there was an effort to become more family friendly in assistance levels. Changes have also been made to job termination timelines for eligibility as well as modifying the highly prescriptive standards of how funds could be spent. They also added security deposits for those experiencing category 1 or category 4 homelessness. Aaron noted that they do have some population that might meet this criteria and will follow up with Ashley about this.

Ashley noted that for process updates, food assistance is on hold until a new process is identified. She highlighted the time consuming process for the prior voucher process and the attempts at a different process. Ashley noted that they are looking at a new option such as gift cards to dollar tree or save-a-lot. Randy noted that he recommends focusing on the areas of expertise and asked about the volume of food/non-food vouchers distributed prior to the suspension. Ashley asked if this is a gap, and Aaron noted that he is aware of several agencies that are offering assistance in this area.

Ashley also discussed the challenges around the requirement for social security numbers when documentation is acquired over email. Vicki noted the challenges even within getting individuals IDs such as the expense.

Ashley shared some of the identified priorities moving forward. The biggest area noted was to update the funeral/burial policy. The dollar amount needs to be updated and need to have a more customer centered approach. Ashley noted that she has been working with funeral homes and there is a high demand for burial assistances. Ashley also noted that they need to strike SSDI from ongoing policy. Another area of focus was modifying the eligibility criteria and/or increasing the amount/frequency that is paid. Ashley noted that she is inclined toward increasing the income eligibility to help provide a safety net. Aaron and Vicki shared anecdotal evidence to support this.

Ashley noted that she will have clarity around these policy changes at the July meeting.

## **MEETING SCHEDULE:**

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 13, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned 3:03 p.m.