



CARES Act Task Force Committee to Assist the Most Vulnerable Meeting
Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, July 29, 2020
4:00 p.m. Virtual Zoom Webinar

Attendance:

Committee Members Present: Chairperson Senator Elizabeth Lockman, Co-Chair Marcus Henry, Carrie Casey, Judge Aida Wasserstein, Reverend Clifford Johnson, Chuck McCausland, Valerie George, Marihelen Barrett

Committee Members Absent: State Representative Nnamdi Chukwuocha, Renee Beaman, Ian McConnel, Ashley Christopher

Others in Attendance: New Castle County Attorney Mary Jacobson, County Director of Community Resources Jane Rattenni, County Community Services Secretary Rachel Burton and eleven members of the public

Proceedings:

- Meeting called to order at 4:03 p.m. by Chairperson Senator Lockman
- Roll call.
- July 22nd, 2020 minutes approved.
- Co-Chair Marcus Henry spoke on the overarching services that other CARES Act Task Force Committees are working towards, including the Non-Profits Committee that will aid organizations with their operational costs. Marcus mentioned that not all recommendations will be grant-funded, they will also include partnerships. Marcus also spoke on the possibility of funding and guidelines changing through congressional decisions.
- Chairperson Senator Lockman presented the CARES Act Task Force Assist the Most Vulnerable Committee Recommendations to County Executive Matt Meyer PowerPoint. The recommendations that Chairperson Senator Lockman presented included:
 - Overarching recommendations: fund access to food – fund access to transportation – fund access to technology (equipment and internet)
 - Housing Access recommendations: fund homeless outreach demonstration project – fund a homeless youth day center – fund a housing surge with rapid rehousing, landlord mitigation fund and an arrears program – fund acquisition and predevelopment work of low-income housing/permanent supportive housing for the homeless – purchase a hotel and or building currently for sale and complete predevelopment work – fund rental and utility assistance – fund legal services for households facing eviction due to Covid-19 job loss – funding housing counseling agencies to provide counseling to households facing difficulty paying mortgages due to Covid-19 related job loss – fund owner occupied home repair to families affected by job loss, and to keep families safely housed during pandemic
 - Special Populations (Youth): fund safe activities for youth

- Behavioral Health: fund staffing – fund PPE/cleaning (operations) – fund technology – fund direct assistance to clients (medication, transportation, food vouchers)
- Marihelen Barrett expressed concern for funding being reimbursement-based; programs that cannot afford to start or expand services before receiving funds. Co-Chair Marcus Henry mentioned that the Non-Profits Committee is working on this process.
- Judge Aida Waserstein made recommendation for youth services to include staff trained in guidance to recognize Covid-19 related psychological effects and to then make proper referrals.
- Chuck McCausland expressed concern for smaller organizations having access to the CARES Act funds; that these funds are not restricted to larger and/or parent organizations only.
- Marihelen Barrett asked where support for schools fit within the scope of the committee, especially relating to mental health. Co-Chair Marcus Henry stated that the context of support would determine this and that there will be a collaboration with the Department of Education for assistance. County Attorney Mary Jacobson stated that a separate fund was created by the CARES Act to address education support.
- Judge Aida Waserstein asked if progress and success feedback surveys will be made available in multiple languages. Co-Chair Marcus Henry stated that New Castle County has the ability to provide this service.
- Co-Chair Marcus Henry outlined the next steps to include presentation revisions, sharing of the final draft with committee members and presenting the PowerPoint to County Executive Matthew Meyer.
- Chairperson Senator Lockman called for public comment.

Public Comment:

- Verna Hensley with Easterseals Delaware, asked has there been a discussion on how these new initiatives will be continued once the Covid-19 relief dollars are spent? – Carrie Casey answered that many recommendations are one-time assistance funds, but that the demonstration project could provide necessary data to continue this program state-wide through other federal funding.
- John Whitelaw, Advocacy Director of Community Legal Aid Society, made recommendation of negotiating payment amounts with landlords, assuming the funding is not enough to help everyone; this would allow the funding to go further and to help more people in need. – Judge Aida Waserstein mentioned using language that prevents evictions if funds are accepted. – Carrie Casey mentioned that this initiative will be working directly with the state. – John Whitelaw also extended thanks and praise to the committee for their work.
- TNi'Que Traylor asked for Housing Access clarification between the five-million-dollar and seven-million-dollar recommendations. – Carrie Casey explained the difference between these recommendations. – TNi'Que Traylor asked how the individuals would maintain the costs once placed into housing. – Carrie Casey explained that this would involve case management for continued stability and/or fully funded services.

Adjournment:

- Chairperson Senator Lockman adjourned the meeting at 5:09 p.m.