

Mayor's Council on African American Elders

C/O – Aging and Disability Services, Seattle-King County
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December 17, 2021

Members Present – Dr. Benjamin Abe, Interim Chair, Charlotte Antoine, Paul Mitchell, Claudette Thomas, Pamela Williams, Paula Williams

Members Absent –Dr. Brenda Jackson, Sheila Mary

ADS Staff –Mary Mitchell, ADS Interim Director, Karen Winston, Lenny Orlov

I. Approval of November Meeting Summary

Motion to approve August meeting minutes.

- Dr. Abe: move to modify or accept minutes
- Moved by Claudette
- Seconded by Paul
- Passed unanimously among members

II. Age Friendly Coffee Hour

Age Friendly coordinator, Lenny Orlov, presented information about the January Coffee Hour, scheduled for the 3rd Thursday of each month. He would like a MCAAE member to join a panel about the February Black History Month, but the program will be aired on January 20, at 10:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. Panelists will have an opportunity to talk about their organizations, community groups, etc., and other topics affecting African Americans and African descent communities in Seattle. It will be a virtual event, likely on Zoom. Mary pointed out that the Race and Social Justice Summit scheduled for January 17th to 20th conflicts with the coffee hour if members are planning to participate.

III. ADS & Legislative Updates – Mary provided the following updates.

HSD Updates

- The City Council has adopted the budget for 2022 and it included funding for nurse position for the African American Elders Program (AAEP). The MCAAE has been advocating for the position for several years.

ADS Updates

- The WA. State Adult Protective Services (APS) is asking Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) for assistance with self-neglect referrals. They are proposing that referrals go directly to AAAs, instead of to APS. AAAs are trying to determine if funding is available for the extra work, and address concerns about liability, and what resources are available for self-neglect cases.
- Currently, there are six ADS case manager positions (i.e., Counselors) open for hire. Of the 11 individuals who asked for special consideration for the vaccine

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requirement, only one case manager was terminated for refusing to get the COVID vaccine. A few were promoted to other positions in HSD, and some resigned.

- In November, Case managers started conducting home visits again. The goal is to conduct 600 home visits per month.
- ADS is working to determine if the budget can continue to support six Consumer-Directed Employer positions in the Case Management Program, after the funding ends in March 2022.
- A lot of funding was received during 2020 and 2021 to address pandemic issues, but the department lacks staff capacity to manage effectively. The HSD finance division has hired a consultant to assist with organization.
- The hiring process for the new HSD Deputy Director is almost completed. Hopefully, by January, the new person will be onboard.

State

- A statement was released today by Governor Inslee, who announced today that the WA Cares assessment is now on hold. The delay will allow legislators time to address issues that have arisen around near retirees, non-residents in Washington, and portability. For more information about WA Cares, visit the website at: <https://wacaresfund.wa.gov/wa-cares-benefits>

IV. Digital Equity Learning Network of Seattle and King County

- Charlotte Antoine was volunteered to represent the MCAAE on the Digital Equity Learning Network (DELN) steering committee. The DELN is a collaboration of community-based organizations, public and private institutions, and individuals invested in digital equity in our region.
- She attended her first meeting on November 19. They are looking for more people for the steering committee.
- By 2022, the goal is to have one gigabyte per second, to address the broadband delivery gap.
- There is \$5mill in state and federal grants available to community and faith-based organizations to expand digital inclusion and access for everyone, including the homeless and low-income individuals.
- The next meeting will be held in January and Charlotte will provide a report at the next meeting.

V. Planning for 2022

Members discussed the following issues for consideration in planning the MCAAE advocacy agenda for 2022.

- Educate and promote the WA Cares Act for retirement savings.
- Advocate for affordable (extremely low-income) housing for individuals from communities of color and vulnerable groups, including elders.
- Addressing health disparities.

- Advocate for increased caregiver support.
- Educate professionals to identify and address disparities that may be exacerbated with age.
- Partner with Public Health to collect community-wide data to identify and map health care gaps and high-need areas in King County and advocate for better access and support.
- Conduct outreach activities, such as a health forum, to distribute information and that address critical health issues in later life such as Alzheimer's and dementia.
- Identify organizations to collaborate on community forum on health.
- Continue advocacy and support for the AAEP.
- Advocate for digital equity and access.
- Educate the community about the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) and help identify potential volunteers. In King County, there are 1,400 facilities in with over 2,300 residents, and the program currently has only 20 volunteer ombudsman.
- Connect with immigrant communities in King County and collaborate with them to address issues.
- Collaborate with ADS and other organizations to address social isolation.

Next Steps

- Karen will forward the list above to MCAAE members before the next meeting.
- MCAAE members will review, consider, and identify their top three items for the 2022 Advocacy Agenda.
- Karen will report on the results at the January meeting.

VI. Comments

- Claudette encouraged members to show-up to MCAAE meetings on time!

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for **Friday, January 21, 2022.**