

WCCA BOARD MEETING
January 21, 2025

The West Central Community Action Board of Directors meeting was held January 21, 2025 at the WCCA Executive Office, Harlan, IA. President, Charles Parkhurst called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Staff attending were: Wendy Mueller, Angela Bladt, Brittany Schoof, Danni Segebart and Keith Bruck

ROLL CALL

Wendy Richter, Cass- Zoom	Angie Winquist, Mills- Zoom
Justin Williams, Cass- Zoom	Donna Maddocks, Mills- Zoom
Donna Childress, Crawford- Zoom	Todd Maher, Page- Zoom
Connie McGee, Crawford- Zoom	Jeannine Liljedahl, Page- Zoom
Cynthia Williams, Fremont- Zoom	Molly Cummings, Pottawattamie- Zoom
Brian Rife, Harrison- Zoom	Charles Parkhurst, Shelby
Trista McLaughlin, Harrison- Zoom	Kris Olson Harmon, Shelby- Zoom

A quorum was declared.

Excused Absences:

Jean Heiden, Crawford	Charla Schmid, Montgomery
Dustin Sheldon, Fremont	Pat Berendes, Montgomery
Evert Colunga- Harrison	Lisa Connell, Page
Tom Brouillette, Monona	Jeff Jorgensen, Pottawattamie
Brent Watkins, Monona	Bryan Swain, Shelby

SEATING OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Wendy Mueller introduced the following new Board Members: Jean Heiden, Crawford County Board of Supervisor, will serve as the Public Representative for Crawford County. Angie Winquist, Glenwood, Iowa Mayor, will serve as the Public Representative for Mills County. Todd Maher made a motion to seat Jean Heiden, Public Representative for Crawford County and Angie Winquist, Public Representative for Mills County to the West Central Community Action Board of Directors, Brian Rife seconded. Motion was carried.

ADDITIONS OR AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions or amendments to the agenda. Trista McLaughlin made the motion to approve the agenda, Justin Williams seconded. Motion was carried.

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER MINUTES

Molly Cummings made the motion to approve the November minutes, Justin Williams seconded. Motion was carried.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Every two years we need to elect officers to form a nominating committee. The committee has to be comprised of a board member from each of the three sectors. The committee will then need to meet to form the slate of officers. The following Board of Directors volunteered to be on the Nominating Committee: Charla Schmid, Public, Montgomery County, Lisa Connell, Private, Page County, and Molly Cummings, Low-Income, Pottawattamie

County. The committee will present the slate of officers at the March board meeting and the election will be held at the Annual meeting in May.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS POLICY UPDATES

Wendy explained every two years for CSBG Organizational Standards, Board of Directors need to complete a new Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, and Nepotism policies. All Board of Directors received the policies in the January board packet to complete and return. Please return the completed forms as soon as possible so WCCA is in compliance with CSBG Organizational Standard 5.6.

PERSONNEL POLICY UPDATES APPROVAL

Everyone received copies of Personnel Policies #181 Employee Grievance Procedure, #510 Emergency Closings, #701 Employee Conduct and Work Rules, and #713 Confidentiality. Angela Bladt, HR Director, explained all proposed changes to the board and the proposed changes were also approved by Policy Council. We are requesting board approval to approve all proposed changes and the entire the WCCA Personnel Policy Manual. Brain Rife made the motion to approve changes to #181 Employee Grievance Procedure, #510 Emergency Closings, #701 Employee Conduct and Work Rules, and #713 Confidentiality and the entire WCCA Personnel Policy Manual. Connie McGee seconded. Motion carried.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PARENTING CURRICULUM APPROVAL

Danni Segebart presented the Learning Genie Curriculum Proposal for the Head Start program. Currently, Head Start uses Ready Rosie for parent curriculum. Danni stated this curriculum has more features, is more user friendly than what's currently being used, easier for parents to implement at home, and lower in cost. Donna Maddox made the motion to change the Head Start parent curriculum to Learning Genie, Todd Maher seconded. Motion was carried.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START TRAINING

Danni Segebart presented the Board of Directors with an overview of the Head Start/Early Head Start programs. Brittany will also be emailing the presentation to the Board of Directors and will get with Danni to get anyone who completed it, a certificate.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START ELIGIBILITY TRAINING

Danni provided eligibility training to the Board of Directors. She explained the factors that are needed to help determine eligibility for applicants for Head Start/Early Head Start, how it is verified, required records, violating policies and procedures, and meeting with potential clients to complete applications.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM UPDATE

- Currently we have 12 openings in Head Start and Early Head Start. We continue to advertise and interview potential candidates.
- The end of December enrollment numbers for Head Start and Early Head Start are looking great. Current enrollment numbers are: 246 in Head Start with 1 accepted, funded enrollment is 249 (99%). 88 in Early Head Start with 5 accepts, funded enrollment is 92 (96%). 52 children on the Head Start waitlist and 14 children on the EHST waitlist are over income.
- ACF-OHS-PI-25-01- The notice explains the procedures for Tribal and American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start grantees using Head Start funds for construction or major renovation of Early Childhood facilities.
- ACF-OHS-IM-25-01- The memo explains how funds may be used to connect young children and families with traditional indigenous foods and food practices..
- ACF-OHS-IM-25-02-This memo outlines the OHS monitoring process for FY 2025. It describes the types of monitoring reviews that recipients may experience.

- We are still waiting on our official Notice of Award for budget period of 2/1/25-1/31/26. They just reviewed our grant application which was submitted November 1, 2024 and had a few questions Keith had to answer. We are hoping to receive our Notice of Award prior to February 1.
- We notified the Essex Community School District earlier this month that we will not be renewing our Head Start partnership agreement for the 2025-2026 school year. The decision was made due to the difficulty in recruiting eligible children and the district was not meeting some of the required Head Start program requirements.
- We received our 45-day notification of our Focus Area 1 Review. The review will be conducted the week of March 3 and will be virtual. The FA 1 Review will determine if grant recipients are meeting the requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards, the Uniform Guidance, and the Head Start Act. It allows us the opportunity to share our processes and systems that are in place to provide high quality services to children and families. They will review the quality of education services, family and community engagement, fiscal operations, health and safety practices, requirement and selection criteria and program structure. Danni and her team along with the WCCA admin staff will be preparing for the review.
- We are still looking for space in Harrison County to move our Head Start classroom to for the next school year. As Wendy mentioned in the last meeting, Missouri Valley notified us they will be needing the space we currently occupy next year. If we are unable to secure a location rather quickly we will be looking at moving the slots to Council Bluffs where we have a large waiting list.

FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING

Wendy recommended that we do not have a February meeting and that March 18th will be the next meeting. Molly Cummings made the motion to not have a February Board of Directors meeting, Brian Rife seconded. Motion was carried.

STAFF REPORTS

The Directors present had nothing new to add to their reports.

FISCAL REPORT

There was nothing new to add to the fiscal report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

- We continue to see a steady increase in LIHEAP applications and requested an amendment to move \$217,000 in ECIP funding to Regular LIHEAP assistance to pay LIHEAP approved households. We are waiting for the feds to release the additional 9-10% of funds to the states. We are hopeful we will be able to provide a LIHEAP benefit to all households that apply. We continue to work with the new LIHEAP system and some improvements have been made. We were able to make our first payment of over \$1.4 million dollars to vendors. It was a long and tedious process with the new system. Wendy, Keith, Ivy, and Brittany worked together to complete payments last week. Wendy thanked them for their help.
- WCCA should be receiving the HEAP contract amendment for Weatherization anytime. We ended last year with \$811,149 in HEAP funding. We did receive amendments to our Alliant, Black Hills, and Mid-American contracts for the Weatherization program. Black Hills was \$73,381, Alliant was \$13,374 and Mid-American was \$77,664. The amounts are all similar to last year's contracts.
- A Weatherization Program Notice was included in the board packet. It describes the new Flat Rate method, which Wendy has talked about the past few months. In order to help control costs Weatherization contractors will be paid a flat rate for services performed based on last year's average costs. Agencies will simply award contractors the homes instead of contractors bidding on the project. HVAC and Electrical contractors will still bid for jobs. Agencies had to implement the new process by January 17.
- FaDSS Day on the Hill is February 4 at the State Capital. Mary Wisnieski, FaDSS Director, one of her staff and Wendy will be attending the event. This meeting allows us to highlight the accomplishments of the FaDSS program to our state representatives.

- WCCA will have our FaDSS Fidelity Audit the month of February conducted by the State FaDSS staff. They will review client files, conduct home visits with staff, have interviews with staff and Wendy, review staff personnel files and a few other items. It will be a great way to showcase what we do and correct any items we need to improve upon in the future.
- The FaDSS renewal grant application is due on February 25. It is a renewal grant application for FY26-FY28. Mary, Keith, and Wendy have been working on the application to get it completed.
- FaDSS has 56 families enrolled with a contracted enrollment number of 95. We are now looking for 2 FaDSS Specialists as we had one of our new specialists take a job elsewhere. We have an interview scheduled this week with a potential candidate and are hoping it will be a good fit.
- Gronewold, Bell, Kyhnn and Company were here December 12-13 and January 8-10 to conduct our annual agency audit. The major programs audited were Weatherization and Head Start. We do not anticipate any compliance issues, and everything is looking good for fiscal year 2024. Wendy thanked Keith and his staff for all their hard work. The audit will be presented at the March board meeting.
- Keith and Wendy had our annual agency insurance renewal meeting in December. Due to the significant storms last year we will be seeing an increase of 30% in our premiums for coverage.
- On December 20, 2024, the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate passed another Continuing Resolution (CR) to extend federal spending and avert a government shutdown. The CR extends all federal funding—including for Head Start—at Fiscal Year 2024 levels until March 14, 2025.

Todd Maher made a motion to adjourn at 6.04 p.m. Brian Rife seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kris Olson Harmon
WCCA Board Secretary