

Healthy Mendocino Project
POVERTY ACTION TEAM MEETING MINUTES
April 12, 2017, NCO

Present: Susan Baird, Healthy Mendocino; Rachel Ebel Elliott, HHSA; Cynthia King, Catholic Charities; Lydia Lopez, FIRST5/ARRC/FRC; Jennifer O'Donnell, United Way/WC; Melissa Reece, Catholic Charities/Lake County; Sheilah Rogers, WEST Co.; Mary Zigler, HHSA

1. Review of our purpose, introductions, status report

The Action Team's purposes include enhancing existing programs for low-income individuals and families (e.g., tax prep); informing others in the community about these programs, especially those working with low-income clients; strengthening the connections among such programs; and advocating for specific public policies related to poverty in Mendocino County.

Sheilah Rogers reported on what she had learned so far about the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Mendocino and Sonoma Counties. They have approved projects in four goal areas, these projects will be eligible for funding when/if it is available. Sheilah will report further on this initiative at the June Action Team meeting.

2. Catholic Charities programs—Cynthia King

Cynthia King briefed team members on several Catholic Charities programs and services for low-income people in Northern California communities, including Mendocino County. Its programs address housing and shelter, immigration, small loans to establish credit, senior services, transportation, and other areas. The organization makes an effort to integrate its programs and services into those already going on in a community; locally, it works closely with United Way of the Wine Country and NCO.

Cynthia described several programs Catholic Charities offers to help people build financial security and capabilities (e.g., EarnIt/KeepIt/SaveIt). It integrates benefits and services so they are not in silos but instead are in comprehensive bundles, organized around the person. It uses both paid staff and volunteers.

Cynthia said that Catholic Charities has relatively few connections and programs in Mendocino County, and it wants to do more here. The Action Team could help with this.

Lydia and Cynthia talked about building a connection between Catholic Charities and the Family Resource Center network, to inform the FRCs about available programs.

3. Discussion: Possible roles for the Poverty Action Team in this work

We brainstormed about what the Action Team might do in the aforementioned areas to help “move the dial” on poverty. The following activities were mentioned:

1. Educate ourselves on the programs so we can be ambassadors to the community.
2. Build community awareness of available programs and services.
3. Create a resource bank, possibly an enhancement to 211.
4. Facilitate connections between organizations doing this kind of work.
5. Hold events with speakers on specific topics/programs and invite those working with low-income clients to attend.
6. Create short, targeted “blended learning” opportunities (combination of social media, meetings, print resources, etc.) for clients.
7. Find out what the FRCs need and how we can support their work.

NEXT POVERTY ACTION TEAM MEETINGS (2-3:30 p.m., NCO large conference room)

- **May 10:** Working session on goals and objectives for our logic model
- **June 14:** Presentation on the CEDS (see above) plus other topics TBD

Minutes by Susan Baird