

Providers Meeting Follow-up

The goals of the meeting were outlined to the group:

1. Provide an update on PPA and the role of the service providers.
2. Follow-up from last meeting and begin developing specific recommendations.
3. Begin discussing an organizational framework that could support the development of a long-term commitment to the goals of PPA.
4. Develop ideas for Community Change Papers and Community Conversations as they relate to Service Providers.
5. Specific areas for follow-up during the next month.
6. Network and have fun.

Tim gave an update on the Volunteer Fair. Most of the people who were at the meeting indicated that it was a very positive activity. It appears that approximately 500 volunteers signed up with the 60 agencies who attended. It was suggested that perhaps a joint volunteer training might be useful.

Delene explained that the next phase of PPA was developing recommendations and that we hoped the providers would also provide some recommendations during this process. We hoped to use this meeting to help continue the process that had been started earlier, but to focus more on developing some ideas for specific recommendations. It was mentioned that many of the service providers were attending the PPA meetings, but that perhaps there were some specific recommendations that were not coming out of the committees that the service providers could bring forward.

This lead into the next item on the agenda which involved looking at the issues that had been brought up at the last meeting to determine whether or not there were some specific recommendations in those discussions.

I. Identify service providers who would attend each of the six subcommittee meetings and report back to this group.

The importance of the service providers working with the various committees is great. The service providers' input into these committees has been very helpful and important. It was also emphasized that service providers are already doing extensive collaboration among themselves and other resources in the community.

Members from the group reported on the various issues coming out of the various committees:

- A. Education—The primary focus has been on early learning, new models for K-12, expanding vo-tech opportunities, and mentoring.
- B. Transportation and Housing—Affordability and access to housing and transportation have been key areas of discussion in this committee.

- C. Workforce-Has focused on the need for more opportunities, focus on soft skills, people not accessing the services, (What else?)
- D. Dependent Care-The primary issues in the committee have included affordable child care, special needs care, and support for caregivers. Zoning issues have also been discussed.
- E. Healthcare-There have been many issues discussed in healthcare including affordability and availability of services, getting the word out about services, regionalism in healthcare, There was a concern that more focus needed to be addressed toward mental health services. The problem of sharing data was also mentioned as a major issue. It was also mentioned that the system needed to become more friendly.
- F. Economy – (What?)

The major additional recommendations made by members of the service providers during this discussion included:

1. Discuss Healthcare as a regional issue.
2. Clarify that healthcare addresses both physical and mental health.
3. Develop more friendly systems as they relate to the poor.
4. Develop ways to share necessary personal information with other agencies so that clients can be best served.

II. Identify effective networking strategies among ministers, employers, and service providers. Identify effective networking strategies to discuss child care services with employers, and to identify networking opportunities to support education and employment.

Initial Recommendations included:

1. To strategically coordinate service providers and faith-based organizations to achieve the most effective and efficient delivery of services.
2. To work with the Chamber to bring child care providers and employers together to discuss potential win-win childcare opportunities for workers and employees.
3. To develop “out of the box” strategies to help families working two jobs find ways to improve their employment opportunities.
4. To develop new paradigm strategies to support positive parenting.

It was also suggested that we look at two kinds of recommendations:

1. Recommendations to address the ongoing needs of the poor.
2. Recommendations focused on prevention of poverty.

III. Get 211 data base online.

It was mentioned that Community Connections was working on this, and it should be taken care of.

IV. Look into a different type of school model to address character, family, and educational issues.

Initial Recommendations included:

1. Look at the possibility of a charter school model.
2. Contact Patty Goodwin with ACC School System who is working on a school-wide character education program.
3. Recommend that Life Skills become a formal part of the education system.
4. To focus on developing promotional and prevention paradigms in developing educational and communication strategies.
5. It was recommended that we focus on positive outcomes (behavior you want) rather than simply treating symptoms.
6. It was recommended that each committee come up with a strategy beyond community conversations to obtain priorities and recommendations from the communities most effected by these recommendations.

V. Follow-up with the concept of Community Foundation to help funding, coordination and support.

1. It was recommended that a Community Foundation be developed to serve the Athens region.

VI. Some additional recommendations that were made:

1. Develop an overarching collaborative that would oversee the ongoing implementation of the PPA recommendations.
2. Develop overarching funding strategies to help assure the continuation of existing effective programs, as well as developing new paradigms to decrease poverty in Athens.
3. Develop strategies to reduce teen pregnancies in Athens.

The meeting adjourned at about 10:38. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, October 13 at 9:00 at DFCS. We will continue working on the goals that were outlined at the beginning of the meeting.