



Empowering People, Enriching Communities

Ozarks Area Community Action Corporation

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Non-Profit and Community Partnership Shutdown Impact Collaborative Meeting Minutes

Date: 1/17/19

Time: 9am

Location: Midtown Carnegie Library
397 E. Central St.
Springfield, MO 65802

- **Purpose: Community agencies and non-profits will objectively discuss the current impact of the government shutdown, share relevant and factual information from funding sources, and collectively determine strategies that may need to be implemented to meet needs in the community.**
- After the meeting was called to order introductions were made. Organizations in attendance included: OACAC, United Way, Crosslines, NAMI SWMO, Community Partnership of the Ozarks, Victory Mission, Discovery Center, Springfield Public Schools, Prosper Springfield, Salvation Army, Springfield Dream Center, Lutheran Family and Children's Services, Northwest Project, Foster Adopt Connect, Least of These Inc., Council of Churches, Springfield Greene County Health Department (WIC), Central Assembly, City of Springfield, the Drew Lewis Foundation, Ozarks Food Harvest, Boys and Girls Club, Diaper Bank of the Ozarks, and a federal worker was present as well.
- Most agencies shared that they were having issues getting correct information to give to people they work with, as well an underlying fear of crisis in the community.
- **Regarding SNAP:**
 - Missouri SNAP recipients will be/are receiving both their January benefits and their February benefits this month. This means that they will have to make those benefits last through the end of February. It is now known that there is no promise of SNAP money for March should the shutdown continue. It is extremely important to share this information with clients, and to help people understand the need to budget their benefits to make sure they last as long as possible.
 - SNAP applications are still being processed, but people who are newly approved will not receive benefits until the shutdown ends.
 - There are around 35,000-36,000 SNAP users in the surrounding area.

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- It was discussed that if no money is available for March it would mean a great loss for the community's economy, and will impact grocery stores as well.
- Due to the large number of organizations involved the next section will lay out any news or changes shared by each organization. Not all organizations had specific news, or changes. **Please read carefully for full details and important contact information/links.**
 - **Council of Churches:**
 - They are interested in setting up a meeting during the first two weeks of February between the faith based community and the people at this meeting. It can open conversation for more resources and support. Keep watch for future information about this.
 - **Crosslines:**
 - They have decided that they will lift their normal guidelines on how often families can visit the food pantry. Families can now visit the pantry at Crosslines up to two times a month until the shutdown ends.
 - They serve around 100 families a day currently.
 - They also have a senior food box program (for 60+) that delivers food. That program will need volunteers as that program will also increase.
 - They will also increase the number of diapers they can give.
 - They are doing their best to provide formula when possible.
 - **Diaper Bank of the Ozarks:**
 - They will continue to order more diapers to meet any needs that arise with partner agencies.
 - They are open to new people applying to be a partner agency; even if it is just temporarily (diaperbankoftheozarks@gmail.com).
 - They are looking into formula help, but they are unsure at this time if that's possible.
 - They operate a cloth diaper program, and anyone can sign up to do that; even just temporarily to save costs.
 - **Discovery Center:**
 - They are currently offering not only free admission to federal employees and their children, but also a free birthday party any children of federal workers.

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- They really want to help provide normalcy during this stressful time. This can help both workers and children.
 - It is possible they can provide free admission with the donation of formula.
- **Kylas Kloset @ the Connecting Grounds:**
 - This is a brand new clothing and food pantry that just opened. They are located at 1115 E. Commercial St., next to Save-A-Lot. They don't require proof of income, residency, etc. Hours are Sunday: 11:30am-12pm, Tuesday: 2-5pm and then 8-8:30pm, and Wednesday 4-7pm.
 - They are currently seeking donations to further stock their pantry.
 - For more information go to <https://www.theconnectinggrounds.com/kylaskloset>
- **NAMI of Southwest Missouri:**
 - They want to remind everyone that they offer free mental health services and are located on the 4th floor of the medical towers.
- **OACAC Housing:**
 - Their subsidized housing program ten counties outside of the city of Springfield.
 - There is money to cover January and February's section 8 housing, but not for March.
 - Any vouchers out at that time may then become invalid.
 - You can still apply and get on the waiting list, but the list will not be moving if money runs out.
 - They have to hope that landlords can get by and cover cost until money is able to be used if things continue.
- **Ozarks Food Harvest:**
 - New agencies are still able to apply to be a pantry partner. This could provide some potential help for an increase in pantry usage.
 - They are operating a food pantry just for federal workers. The only thing they need to provide is their work identification.
- **Prosper Springfield:**
 - They are willing to share information on their website.

- They also write an article every other week for the News-Leader and would be willing to put any important information regarding everything into an article if needed.
- **Salvation Army:**
 - They are now opening their pantry up for use once a month by people who qualify thru February 28th. They will then reevaluate and decide if it needs to continue.
 - They have also opened up a pantry for furloughed workers to come in at any time.
 - They sometimes have formula, but rely on donations.
- **Springfield Public Schools:**
 - They are doing their best to make sure teachers are aware of what stressors families may be experiencing, and how it may be affecting the children they teach.
 - They are also willing to share information as best they can. They just cannot do “backpack mail” or fliers.
- **United Way of the Ozarks/211:**
 - They have been receiving an increase in number of calls.
 - They have been sharing information and links with call center agents to ensure that anyone who calls is receiving up to date information.
 - If your organization has any information to share about changes in services during the shutdown please let Colleen Neill know (cneill@uwozarks.com).
 - For more information and updated resources visit <http://211.org/services/govshutdown>
- **United Way of the Ozarks/AFL-CIO Labor Liaison:**
 - Organizations need to realize that federal workers are not typically used to needing extra help, and it may be difficult for them to reach out for help.
 - Rennie Diekemper estimates that 30% of new federal workers are already feeling crisis.
 - It was discussed that new federal workers who have not dealt with a shutdown are experiencing more to begin with, but it will hit everyone soon.

- The number of around 3,000 federal workers in the area was discussed, but no one is certain on that number.
 - There are 57 TSA workers in the area.
 - If you feel like you or your organization would like to help workers in some way you can contact Rennie Diekemper at rdiekemper@uwozarks.com.
 - **A furloughed worker was present with Rennie as well.**
 - They shared their personal experience of how they are being affected, and how they know some other workers are being affected. Everyone is doing their best to appreciate each other and keep up moral. They do their best to help each other and keep each other going.
 - A big cost that people don't think about is the continued cost of childcare for those still working.
- **Victory Mission:**
 - They want people to be aware that they do run a pantry on Monday, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9am-12pm. There are no official documents required.
- **WIC Office:**
 - WIC is funded through February. If the shutdown continues then any March vouchers that have been given out will no longer be valid.
 - If WIC runs out of funding they will not be able to work.
 - Starting in February, furloughed workers may be able to receive WIC. They would need to apply and meet guidelines.
 - There is talk of going to workers, or setting up a space outside of the office if needed for more privacy.
 - Please encourage people you know on WIC to use all of their benefits for February; even if it just gets put in the pantry for later.
- **A few important key takeaways from all the discussion:**
 - Everyone was very confident that in terms of food and diapers the outlook is looking good. All agencies that supply these things will be keeping a close eye on these resources to make sure they have what is needed.

- You may notice that there is mention of baby formula by several organizations. This is because there is not a great pipeline of money to help people with formula besides WIC, but if WIC runs out of money this could become an issue. It was agreed this needs to be kept in mind, and if things continue it needs to be a major focus. This would include finding out from WIC and from federal workers what kind and how much is needed so the community can help fill that need.
- Communication is ongoing in terms of setting up a meeting in February if needed. If your organization was present, and you know others that were not then please make them aware of what is going on. Feel free to email Cassie Melvin at cmelvin@oac.ac, or to have them email to be added to the distribution list. The more people involved the better we can help prepare the community for whatever happens.
- OACAC shared a community action handout with information regarding what programs have been effective. The current one is here http://web-extract.constantcontact.com/v1/social_annotation?permalink_uri=2FpAmBe&image_url=https%3A%2F%2Fmlsvc01-prod.s3.amazonaws.com%2Fd1b76d8c201%2F445323bd-2b8a-4edb-8e70-562975c404d8.png%3Fver%3D1547162099000&fbclid=IwAR2KpHF_aJozzeokNLvY0fYa_nfi5yVKG_sLDV3iGE2TwxEVINS211_qnKk
- It was suggested that the community use this as a template to be ready for this if it were to happen in the future. Just like we need to be prepared for natural disasters it is good to have a response to this kind of obstacle.
- Thank you to everyone who was able to participate. The meeting was very dynamic and just shows what a wonderful community Springfield has!

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