

WCCA BOARD MEETING
January 16, 2024

The West Central Community Action Board of Directors meeting was held January 16, 2024 at the WCCA Executive Office, Harlan, IA. President, Charles Parkhurst called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. Staff attending were: Wendy Mueller, Angela Blatt, Brittany Schoof, and Danni Segebart.

ROLL CALL

Wendy Richter, Cass- Zoom	Tom Brouillette, Monona- Zoom
Dustin Sheldon, Fremont-Zoom	Brent Watkins, Monona- Zoom
Craig Dozark, Crawford-Zoom	Donna Maddocks, Mills- Zoom
Donna Childress, Crawford- Zoom	Charla Schmid, Montgomery- Zoom
Connie McGee, Crawford- Zoom	Jeannine Liljedahl, Page- Zoom
Brian Rife, Harrison- Zoom	Molly Cummings, Pottawattamie- Zoom
Trista McLaughlin, Harrison- Zoom	Charles Parkhurst, Shelby
Evert Colunga-Harrison- Zoom	Kris Olson Harmon, Shelby- Zoom

A quorum was declared.

Excused Absences:

Justin Williams, Cass	Todd Maher, Page
Cynthia Williams, Fremont	Lisa Connell, Page
Carol Vinton, Mills	Jeff Jorgensen, Pottawattamie
Pat Berendes, Montgomery	Bryan Swain, Shelby

ADDITIONS OR AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions or amendments to the agenda. Wendy Richter made the motion to approve the agenda, Charla Schmid seconded. Motion was carried.

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER MINUTES

Craig Dozark made the motion to approve the November minutes, Charla Schmid seconded. Motion was carried.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

WCCA RISK ASSESSMENT

Wendy stated the Risk Assessment needs completed every two years in order to be in compliance with CSBG Organizational Standard 4.6 and it was last completed in January 2022. We used the risk assessment tool from the National Community Action Partnership that is designed specifically for Community Action agencies through a partnership with the NonProfit Risk Management Center. There were 14 modules completed on the following areas: Risk Management Basics, Governance Risk, Facility and Building Security, Human Resources and Employment Practices, Financial Reporting and

Internal Controls, Contracts, Client and Participant Safety, Transportation, Technology and Privacy Risk Management, Special Events, Crisis Management and Business Continuity Planning, Volunteer Risk Management, Fundraising and Resource Development, and Service Delivery Risk. The assessment was completed on December 28 with Brittany, Keith, and Angela's assistance and reviewed by the management team on January 11. Wendy presented the Risk Assessment and the recommendations that were identified for further review: 1- Ensure programs and services support the mission of WCCA. 2- Employee Conduct and Work Rules policy needs to include statement regarding possible employee prosecution of unlawful acts. 3- Provide instruction for leaders concerning the appropriate steps in emergency situations such as medical emergencies, automobile collisions, or injuries. 4- Basic screening process for regularly scheduled volunteers. 5- Complete Motor Vehicle Records (MVR) check on all employees. 6- Conduct phishing tests or other exercises to gauge level of awareness of staff with respect to scams. Wendy and the program directors will address the recommended areas and make the necessary changes required. Angela Bladt will present the proposed changes to personnel policies relating to a few of these recommendations. Since the last assessment was completed in 2022, we implemented new procedures and updated numerous policies to reduce risk for staff and the agency.

PERSONNEL POLICY UPDATES APPROVAL

Everyone received copies of Personnel Policies #020 Mission, Vision, and Beliefs and Values, #030 Organization Description, #108 Conflicts of Interest, Ethics, The Hatch Act, & Religious Activities, #109 Client/Contractor/Volunteer Complaint Resolution and Appeal Procedure, #701 Employee Conduct and Work Rules, and #715 Whistleblower. 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 approval all proposed changes and the entire the WCCA Personnel Policy Manual. Wendy Richter made the motion to approve changes to #020 Mission, Vision, and Beliefs and Values, #030 Organization Description, #108 Conflicts of Interest, Ethics, The Hatch Act, & Religious Activities, #109 Client/Contractor/Volunteer Complaint Resolution and Appeal Procedure, #701 Employee Conduct and Work Rules, and #715 Whistleblower and the entire WCCA Personnel Policy Manual. Kris Olson Harmon seconded. Motion carried.

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 8 openings in Head Start and Early Head Start. We continue to advertise and interview potential candidates. We have hired several new staff this month. We did hire a new Early Head Start Home Base Teacher that is scheduled to start at the end of the month. Once she is fully trained she will be able to recruit eligible children into the program allowing us to hopefully reach our 97% enrollment target.
- Our Early Head Start classroom in Red Oak was closed from January 4-16, due to limited staffing.
- The end of December enrollment numbers for Head Start and Early Head Start are improving. Our current enrollment numbers are: 241 in Head Start with 4 accepts, funded enrollment is 249 (97%). 81 in Early Head Start with 5 accepts, funded enrollment is 92 (88%) and 55 children on the Head Start waitlist and 14 children on the EHST waitlist are over income.

- Starting this month the Office of Head Start will be fully implementing the 97% full enrollment initiative. Any programs not meeting the threshold will be sent a letter, just like the letter we received for our Early Head Start program and put on a 12 month enrollment plan.
- Danni along with Wendy, Angela, and management staff met last week to go over the EHS under-enrollment plan. They are focusing on staffing and trying new recruitment strategies. The quarterly report was submitted to OHS last week. Our program specialist, Beth Cox, was very pleased with the report. They will meet again in April and will be focusing on recruitment for the new school year.
- We should be receiving a Notice of Award for the Head Start and Early Head Start programs this month as our new grant starts February 1.
- Program Instruction PI-OHS-24-01– Federal Reporting of Standard Forms 425 and 428 was included in the board packet. The program instruction updates reporting submissions for the Head Start grant and provides a schedule for specific budget periods.
- We will start holding meetings with our current school partners in February to discuss the upcoming 24-25 school year. We will not be renewing our Hamburg School District contract of 4 slots for the upcoming school year due to the difficulty in recruiting eligible children in the district and for not meeting our required hours per year (1020 hrs) as they only offer 4 half days of programming. Those slots will be reallocated to other counties based on need. Wendy would like to have all contracts in place by April/May.
- We will have our Head Start CACFP compliance review January 30-31, at the Head Start Administrative building. The state consultant will be reviewing a variety of documents for the entire program as well as specific information for Denison Early Head Start.
- December board packet included program instruction 23-04 regarding the Notice of Rule Making (NPRM) on Supporting the Head Start Workforce and Consistent Quality Programming. The NPRM proposes changes in three main areas: workforce supports, mental health, and other quality improvements.
- The NPRM is filled with additional requirements and increased regulations that would hinder operations of the Head Start/Early Head Start program for our Agency. The intent behind the proposed changes is one of good intentions, but without additional funding the changes would be detrimental to programs. We are supposed to be serving children with the greatest need not reducing the availability of services. The reduction of slots within our own program and across the nation would be significant if many of the changes are not revised or eliminated. The proposed one-size-fits all policy makes it extremely difficult for most programs to implement and eliminates our ability to meet the needs of our community.
- There is currently a comment period and all comments must be submitted by January 19. Danni and Wendy both submitted comments on the proposed changes. We hope OHS considers all comments and significant changes are made before the final ruling is implemented. We are concerned OHS is trying to rush the implementation of changes due to the election in November.
- Danni stated the disability numbers are currently at 4% for Head Start with 11 open referrals to AEA and 23.9% for Early Head Start with 1 open referral to AEA. We will meet the disability requirement and will not need to submit a disability waiver this year.
- In addition to Red Oak closing for staffing, we did have to close our Denison EHS classroom in December due to COVID.
- Beth Cox will be here March 6 & 7 to travel with Danni to additional sites she did not visit last year as well as attend the leadership meeting and Policy Council meeting on March 7th.

FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING

Wendy recommended that we do not have a February meeting and that March 19th will be the next meeting. Craig Dozark made the motion to not have a February Board of Directors meeting, Trista McLaughlin 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

- Deb Martens, CCR&R Director, submitted the CCR&R RFP on January 5 to HHS. The notice of intent to award will be announced on March 13, and the contract will start July 1. Wendy thanked Deb for her hard work on completing the proposal and Keith for completing the budget and narrative portion.
- We received notification from HHS on the second quarter of CSBG funds being released to agencies. Brittany emailed the letter to the board notifying us we were allotted an additional \$112,129 bringing our total 2024 contract to over \$181,000.
- WCCA continues to see a steady increase in LIHEAP applications with approximately 100 applications ahead of this time last year. We did receive an amendment for an additional \$250,000 on January 5, in regular assistance but it will be exhausted by the end of the month. 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 should be receiving our HEAP contract for Weatherization anytime. The contract started January 1, and we will be receiving a slight increase of \$3,000 for a total of \$486,944. We ended last year with \$826,889 in HEAP funding. (includes knob/tube funding and carryover funds). We are also waiting on our Alliant, Black Hills, and Mid-American contracts for the Weatherization program, which started January 1st and runs through December 31st. We are anticipating similar contract amounts as last year.
- FaDSS Day on the Hill is January 25 at the State Capital. Mindy Williamson, FaDSS Director and two of her staff will be attending the event. This meeting allows us to highlight the accomplishments of the FaDSS program to our state representatives. We are currently meeting the contracted capacity goal of 95%. We have 92 families enrolled with a contracted enrollment number of 95. We are still looking for a new FaDSS Specialist.
- Gronewold, Bell, Kyhnn and Company were here December 12-13 to conduct our annual agency audit. They conducted the exit interview with Keith and Wendy today. The major programs audited were LIHEAP and CACFP. There were no compliance issues. Everything looked good for fiscal year 2023 and Wendy thanked Keith and his staff for all of their hard work. The audit will be presented at the March board meeting.
- Wendy sent out an email to the board with the HHS Service Delivery Alignment Assessment Report, which was released on January 5. It is 193 pages with a lot of information. Overall, the report seems very complimentary of Community Action Agencies. Besides a weakness noted that since we design our programs to community needs, not all Iowans can access all programs in all locations. But in the next paragraph, it indicates that could be a strength since we do look for community needs and provide programming to meet those needs. There was nothing else at all that seemed negative and

we are trusted by our communities. It's very clear our agencies work hard to serve the needs of families in Iowa. FaDSS is not categorized with CAAs; it's viewed as separate and, in the report, is referenced with the other Collaborative Service Area programs like WIC, Family Planning, MCAH, 1st Five, etc. They recommend developing a catchment structure of putting several Collaborative Service Area (CSA) programs into a single contracting structure including FaDSS and assigning a lead agency. Since we don't offer the other programs listed we would not be the lead agency. The report did say subcontracting would be allowed so hopefully we would be able to subcontract the FaDSS program. These changes must have legislative approval. For now, we will continue to watch and see how things unfold.

- HHS is currently working on a new system for LIHEAP and Weatherization applications and CSBG reporting for the start of FY 2025. Starting in October we will no longer be able to use our current NIFCAP database which tracks all of our services and programs. All 10 NIFCAP agencies across the state will be required to find a new software to track all services and programs as the state system will not incorporate everything we need. We hope to find one that the state will approve so it can transfer information, so staff will not have to do double entry on every service provided. We have looked at three different software's and hope to make a decision soon. Reporting for 2025 will be challenging as it will be a transition year for everyone. We are also unsure of the cost for the new software system mandated by the state and the one for the agency.
- Wendy finished her last County Board of Supervisor meeting last week with Montgomery County. The meetings went well and Wendy thanked all the counties for their continued support.
- There is an updated acronym listing included in your board packet. We hope this helps to decode some of our unique language.

Craig Dozark made a motion to adjourn at 6:19 p.m. Brian Rife seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kris Olson Harmon
WCCA Board Secretary

WCCA BOARD MEETING
March 19, 2024

The West Central Community Action Board of Directors meeting was held March 19, 2024 at the WCCA Executive Office, Harlan, IA. President, Charles Parkhurst called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. Staff attending were: Wendy Mueller, Keith Bruck, Angela Bladt, Brittany Schoof, and Danni Segebart.

ROLL CALL

Wendy Richter, Cass- Zoom	Charla Schmid, Montgomery- Zoom
Justin Williams, Cass- Zoom	Pat Berendes, Montgomery- Zoom
Craig Dozark, Crawford- Zoom	Todd Maher, Page- Zoom
Donna Childress, Crawford- Zoom	Lisa Connell, Page- Zoom
Connie McGee, Crawford- Zoom	Molly Cummings, Pottawattamie- Zoom
Brian Rife, Harrison- Zoom	Charles Parkhurst, Shelby
Trista McLaughlin, Harrison- Zoom	Bryan Swain, Shelby
Donna Maddocks, Mills- Zoom	Kris Olson Harmon, Shelby- Zoom

A quorum was declared.

Excused Absences:

Dustin Sheldon, Fremont	Tom Brouillette, Monona
Cynthia Williams, Fremont	Brent Watkins, Monona
Evert Colunga, Harrison	Jeannine Liljedahl, Page
Carol Vinton, Mills- Zoom	Jeff Jorgensen, Pottawattamie

ADDITIONS OR AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions or amendments to the agenda. Charla Schmid made the motion to approve the agenda, Kris Olson Harmon seconded. Motion was carried.

APPROVAL OF JANUARY MINUTES

Brian Rife made the motion to approve the January minutes, Lisa Connell seconded. Motion was carried.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

FY 2023 AUDIT PRESENTATION BY DAVID GINTHER OF GRONEWOLD, BELL, KYHNN & COMPANY P.C.

Board of Directors were emailed a copy of the FY 2023 Audit prior to the board meeting. A hard copy of the audit was also mailed to them. Dave Ginther and Faith Hinrichs of Gronewold, Bell, Kyhnn and Company P.C. presented the FY 2023 Audit in detail. Dave stated the auditor's report issued an unmodified opinion. There were no instances of non-compliance, findings or questioned costs related to the financial statements, internal controls or that pertain to costs for federal awards. West Central Community Action remains a low-risk auditee. Dave commended Keith and his staff on their great work in the Fiscal Department.

FY 2023 AUDIT APPROVAL

Lisa Connell made the motion to accept the FY 2023 Audit, Justin Williams seconded. Motion was carried. Wendy thanked Dave, Faith, and Keith and his staff on their great work and stated Keith does an outstanding job as the Chief Financial Officer.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

The Executive Board Committee was asked on February 14, to vote on a proposed CSBG contract budget amendment. The budget amendment was needed to adjust the space allocation line item for an increase in office space costs. We proposed to move \$800 from co-funded programs into space costs. The adjustment was needed mainly due to the significant cost of snow removal during January. Since we didn't have a regularly scheduled board meeting in February, I requested the Executive Board to vote on the amendment as we needed to submit the change in February. The Executive Board Committee approved the CSBG contract budget amendment to be submitted to the state and the state approved the budget amendment.

PLANNING AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE REPORT

CSBG FY 2024 NPI REPORTS

Brittany Schoof presented the 6-month FY 2024 NPI reports that will be submitted to HHS at the end of the month. The reports are used to present a uniform and coherent national picture of community action outcomes. Overall, we are right on track and have adjusted a few targets to better reflect more accurate and achievable outcomes. A copy of the reports were included in the board packet.

FY2025 CSBG COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN AND APPLICATION APPROVAL

The Planning and Evaluation Committee met prior to the Board Meeting. Brittany Schoof stated the Planning Committee discussed the FY2025 CSBG Community Action Plan and Application which are aligned with WCCA's mission, vision, beliefs and values. It is an abbreviated application this year and is due June 3rd. She discussed and explained the three parts of the application: narrative, National Performance Indicators Report (NPI), and the budget. The grant narrative describes how our agency follows the ROMA cycle of assessment, planning, implementation, achievement of results and evaluation. Using the ROMA cycle ensures that CSBG funds are used on programs that are anti-poverty based, anti-poverty focused, and tie directly to the community needs assessments. The narrative describes our process of how our Board of Directors, Administrative Management Team, and various sub-committees are involved in all stages of the ROMA cycle. It also defines how our agency meets the CSBG assurances in assisting low-income families and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency, secure employment, obtain emergency assistance, and make better use of available income. The CSBG Budget Summary illustrates how CSBG funds will be used during FY 2025. The majority of the funds will be used to operate the outreach offices in our ten counties. Funds can also be used to co-fund CACFP and a few other programs if needed in order to enhance services. The NPI Report identifies and captures the outcomes our agency plans to achieve through our programs and services during FY 2025. The targets for the NPI report will be made in the fall. Copies of the CSBG Community Action Plan and Application are available to those who would like one. Pat Berendes made the motion to approve the FY 2025 CSBG Community Action Plan and Application and that it is aligned with WCCA's mission, vision, beliefs and values. Craig Dozark seconded. Motion was carried. Wendy thanked Brittany for her hard work on the CSBG NPI's and preparing the FY 2025 CSBG Grant Application and Keith for completing the budget.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT FY2024 STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

Wendy Mueller stated the Strategic Planning Committee met March 15, 2024 to review the FY 2024 6 month NPI reports, FY 2025 CSBG Grant Application and 2023-2024 Strategic Plan. Everyone received a copy of the updated FY 2024 Strategic Plan in their board packet. Wendy highlighted progress so far this year: We have had 423 households apply for LIHEAP online this year. Our goal is to have 550 households apply online. 437 unduplicated households have received a food pantry during the current fiscal year. 23 households have received Weatherization services. Currently have 65% of registered childcare homes enrolled in CACFP. 100% of identified staff have attended local meetings or community-based events. 74% of employees completed the employee satisfaction survey. Agency Risk Assessment has been completed and presented to the board. 5,557 households have received assistance during the current fiscal year, which is an increase of 110 households from this time last year. By-laws and Personnel policies have been reviewed by our attorney. Currently have 93% of all Agency job positions filled. The committee will meet again in October to view the finalized FY 2024 plan and create the new FY 2025 Strategic Plan. A thank you goes to Brittany and all the staff for working hard on the specified goals.

WCCA'S MISSION, VISION, BELIEFS & VALUES STATEMENTS APPROVAL

Every five years we have to review the agency's mission statement, vision, belief and values statements and it must be approved by the Board of Directors to be in compliance with CSBG Organizational Standard 4.1. Wendy presented ROMA training on mission statements to the Strategic Planning Committee. The committee reviewed the mission statement and decided to keep the same mission statement we currently have which is "Empowering families and individuals to achieve their highest potential." The committee then reviewed the vision statement and beliefs and values statements and decided those statements will also remain the same. We feel all statements represent what WCCA does and who we are. The Strategic Planning Committee is requesting board approval to accept the agency's mission, vision and beliefs and value statements and that all Agency programs and services are aligned with our mission and addresses poverty. Brian Rife made the motion to approve that the Agencies programs and services are aligned with the mission statement and addresses poverty, Craig Dozark seconded. Motion was carried.

FY 2025 ECI AREAS RFP APPROVAL

Everyone received the SFY 2025 Early Childhood Iowa Areas Request for Proposals. Last year we received \$204,850.00 and we are applying for \$204,850.00 for SFY 2025. CCR&R will be writing grants for Corner Counties (Fremont and Page Counties), Boost4Families (Cass, Mills and Montgomery Counties), HMS – (Harrison, Monona and Shelby Counties) and Thriving Families Alliance (Pottawattamie County). The funds will be used for Quality Incentive Projects for registered child care centers and homes which includes reimbursement for professional development classes, child care items, and facility improvements. Thriving Families Alliance funding also pays for a full-time Child Care Consultant position in Pottawattamie County. Charla Schmid made the motion to approve submitting the FY 2025 ECI Areas RFP's as they are received. Todd Maher seconded. Motion was carried.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START TRANSPORTATION WAIVER

Danni Segebart presented the Head Start Transportation Wavier. We are requesting a transportation waiver for both the child safety restraint system, Standard 1303.71 and bus monitoring requirement, Standard 1303.72. Charla Schmid made the motion to approve the Head Start Transportation Wavier. Pat Berendes seconded. Motion carried.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START POLICY UPDATES APPROVAL

Danni explained the proposed changes to the CACFP Monitoring and Household Contacts (CACFP) due to a Correction Action from our CACFP Center Audit. The policy changes have already been approved by the Iowa Department of Education and Head Start Policy Council. Craig Dozark made a motion to approve the Head Start/Early Head Start Policy changes, Lisa Connell seconded. Motion carried.

GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND OVERSITE CAPACITY SCREENER

Danni reviewed the Governance, Leadership and Oversight Capacity Screener that is required for our year one Head Start Grant. The screener was approved at the Head Start Policy Council meeting on March 7th. Lisa Connell made a motion to approve the Governance, Leadership and Oversight Capacity Screener, Pat Berendes seconded. Motion carried.

OFFICE OF HEAD START HEALTH AND SAFETY SCREENER

Danni reviewed the Office of Head Start Health and Safety Screener that is required for our year one Head Start Grant. Any Corrective Action findings are addressed and changes are made. The screener was approved at the Head Start Policy Council meeting on March 7th. Craig Dozark made a motion to approve the Office of Head Start Health and Safety Screener, Pat Berendes seconded. Motion carried.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM UPDATE

- We currently only have 5 openings in Head Start and Early Head Start: Council Bluffs Early Head Start Teacher Floater, Council Bluffs Family Advocate, Glenwood Food Service, Education Support Specialist – Red Oak, Nutrition Coordinator – Harlan
- The end of February enrollment numbers for Head Start and Early Head Start are holding steady. Our current enrollment numbers are: 245 in Head Start, funded enrollment is 249, which is 98%. 72 in Early Head Start with 5 accepts, funded enrollment is 92, which is 78%. 53 children on the Head Start waitlist and 12 children on the EHST waitlist are over income.
- We received notification of our Head Start COVID grant funding ending on March 31. All final reports must be submitted by June and July.
- We have received three school contracts back for the 2024-2025 school year from Council Bluffs, Essex and West Monona. We should be receiving the other three very soon.
- Head Start CACFP Monitoring Visit: A copy of the Head Start CACFP compliance review is in the board packet. The review was completed on January 30. Overall, the evaluation went very well, and the State reviewer gave our program many compliments. We did have a few insignificant findings such as training records were not up to date, didn't complete the required media release, and need to create a new household contact policy that required corrective action. All responses were submitted to the Iowa Department of Education personnel on March 4 and all corrections were accepted by the state. Wendy thanked Danni Segebart, Keith Bruck, and Beka Paul for doing an excellent job of preparing for the audit review.
- Denison Early Head Start: Danni Segebart and Wendy Mueller were notified by Craig Dozark on February 15, that WESCO was working with Peterson Manufacturing (our current landlord) to rent our current space that houses our Early Head Start Classrooms. WCCA has had a contract with Peterson Manufacturing since 2011. WCCA paid \$115,000 to renovate the building in 2011, to provide Early Head Start services to Crawford County. In November Mike Siemer (Peterson Manufacturing) notified Wendy that our rent would be increasing from \$850 to \$2,000/month starting May 1, 2024. Wendy tried to negotiate a lower rate and was unsuccessful, so we agreed to the \$2,000/month rental cost as there were no other options for Early Head Start classrooms in Denison. WCCA was sent a new lease a few weeks ago, however it left off the defunding and termination clause that has been in the contract for 12 years. Wendy asked that it be added back to the contract as it is a requirement for all our contracts to have this clause due to state and federal funding. Our attorney will not let us sign any contract without this clause. Mike stated their attorney advised them it was not in their best interest. Wendy told Mike he could speak with our attorney if he had questions, and our attorney sent an email. They did not respond to our attorney.
Wendy received a phone call February 16 from Mike Siemer stating he would be ending our lease agreement on April 30. He stated the board of Peterson Manufacturing would not add the clause back into the lease agreement as it was not in their best interest. We have since discovered he was showing the property to prospective renters since last summer.

This has significant consequences for both staff and families. We have 6 classroom staff, 3 administrative staff, and 16 children and families that will be affected. Unfortunately, we have no other location options to provide center-based services at this time. Long term we may be looking at renovating or building a space to suit our program needs but those options take time and money.

Danni, Keith, Angela, and Wendy met on February 20 to develop a plan to move forward. After a lot of thought and discussion it was decided to transition the two Early Head Start classrooms into home based for the immediate future with 16 slots. Our goal is to transition back into a center-based program however we have no specific timetable at this point. This option also provided us with the best opportunity to retain 4 of the 6-classroom staff. It was very important that staff be notified personally by Wendy before they found out through others in the community.

Danni, Angela, and Wendy went to Denison and met with the staff on February 20 to explain the situation and detail the plans on how we move forward. All families were given a letter explaining the situation and the transition to a home-based program. The last day for children will be April 17 and the last day for classroom staff in their current roles will be April 30.

Staff changes include: We will have two home based teachers positions available in Denison. Adding one Early Head Start Teacher Floater position based in Harlan. Adding one Food Service Floater position based in Harlan. We are currently looking for office space for three administrative staff and two home based teachers. All classroom staff could apply for any of the 4 open positions and interviews were conducted yesterday. If staff were not interested in any of the positions, we highly encouraged them to stay on as a substitute as we always need people to fill in.

- Beth Cox from Head Start Region VII was here earlier this month and visited our classrooms in Mapleton, Denison, Harlan and Missouri Valley and also attended the March 7th Policy Council Meeting. Beth was very complimentary of our program.
- Danni stated we will not need a Disability Waiver this year as we are at 11.4% and the requirement is 10%.
- Iowa Head Start Association awarded Paula Nagel, Family Advocate of Year and Kyanna Hansen, a Staff Education Scholarship. Congratulations to Paula and Kyanna.
- Danni will be working on the HS/EHS Self-Assessment this month and will share the results in May.
- There was discussion on the impacts of the proposed changes to AEA. Danni and Wendy stated AEA is the first place we refer children too and it will have a great impact on our Head Start and Early Head Start Programs. Danni is unsure how we will fill in the gaps if they are no longer around to complete those services for us. Wendy added we are continuing to advocate for the importance of those services in Iowa.

APRIL BOARD MEETING

Wendy stated she does not feel we will have anything needing approval in April. The Executive Committee meeting can always be scheduled if needed. Lisa Connell made the motion to not have an April Board of Directors meeting. Craig Dozark seconded. Motion was carried.

AGENCY DATABASE APPROVAL

HHS is currently working on a new system for LIHEAP and Weatherization applications and CSBG reporting for the start of FY 2025. Starting in October we will no longer be able to use our current NIFCAP database which tracks all of our services and programs. All 10 NIFCAP agencies across the state will be required to find a new software to track all services and programs as the state system will not incorporate everything we need. Wendy, along with Ivy Nielsen, Dena Briones and Brittany Schoof have been sitting on various meetings and presentations since November with three different software companies to hopefully choose a system that would meet our needs and hopefully API into the state system at some point in the future, to eliminate the need for double entry. The price range for implementation and annual costs vary widely by software company. The prices range from \$18,000 to \$42,000 depending upon the number of users, training packages, implementation costs, custom reports, texting, etc. Wendy has made a decision to go with one of the three systems called Nexus. It is being developed by Impact, which is another Community Action Agency in Iowa. This system can be used as a universal intake system and can track our services and programs. The estimated cost for implementation,

unlimited training, and annual user fees is \$25,350. In order for us to utilize this system a few other Community Action Agencies must agree to use the system in order to make it cost effective for Impact. The Agency would like to pay for half of the cost from county funds which are unrestricted funds. We are unable to use CSBG funding as our budget for outreach is extremely tight and our FY 25 funding will see a decrease as part of the three-year phase in. Wendy would like to use \$13,000 in unrestricted funding to pay for half of the new system but would like to get approval to use up to \$20,000 of unrestricted funds if needed because at this point everything is an estimate. This overall system cost does not include the price for connecting to the state system in the future, as none of the software companies have provided an estimated cost at this time. We may need to request more in the future when that time arrives. If there are not enough agencies that join with Impact we will sit out a year and track services on our own and evaluate the other two options. Reporting for FY 2025 will be a difficult as we will be implementing two new systems. Wendy is asking for board approval to use up to \$20,000 in unrestricted funds. Brian Rife made the motion to approve using \$20,000.00 of unrestricted funding for the new Agency Database. Justin Williams 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

- US Congressman Nunn visited our Red Oak Office on February 23. The visit provided us with the opportunity to highlight our Head Start program and outreach services. Wendy stressed the importance of federal funding. The visit was also highlighted in the National Head Start Association Newsletter, which Wendy sent out to everyone in an email.
- The Iowa Department of Education is now allowing some CACFP monitoring visits to be conducted virtually. We were approved to provide one offsite monitoring review for all childcare homes and childcare homes that reside 50 miles or more away from our office can have a second virtual visit. All childcare homes are required to have 3 monitoring visits per year. The monitoring flexibility will save a lot of traveling time.
- We received a Notice of Intent to Award letter on March 13, regarding our CCR&R RFP proposal. We will continue to serve Region 3 for another 6 years. This is great news and Wendy thanked Deb Martens and Keith for preparing the grant proposal.
- A letter from the Department of Health and Human Services dated March 1, is included in the board packet. The letter allocates the remainder of the second quarter CSBG funds for a total amount of \$266,976. CSBG funds are used primarily to fund the outreach offices and staff. We requested a contract extension until June to expend CSBG FY 23 funds. It was approved by the State.
- The DOE Weatherization Home Inspection audit was conducted on March 5 & 6. Chris Bracy inspected 4 homes in Shenandoah and Council Bluffs. Everything went well and we are waiting on the final report. We did receive half of our funding for two of our utility contracts for Weatherization. We received \$41,262 for Mid-American and \$6,607 for Alliant. We did see a significant decrease in Alliant funding as we don't have as many Alliant customers in our service territory.
- WCCA requested an extension for our FY 2024 FaDSS contract and it was approved by the State. The FaDSS contract ends June 30 and an extension will allow us to expend funds until September 30. We are anticipating a carryover of \$211,000. We continue to be one staff member down which means we will have difficulty in expending all our FaDSS funding for FY 2024. The State also informed us that Third Party Funds (funds used to help families with items such as hygiene products, rent deposits, utility bills, furniture, bedding, clothing, etc.) will no longer be allowed at the end of the contract period. There was no explanation given as to why they were discontinuing the program. We currently have 91 families participating in the program which is 94%

- LIHEAP will be ending April 30. Most all of the agencies across the state are either out of funding or having to move crisis funds to Regular funds to pay approved applications. This means there will not be as much crisis funding available this summer.

Craig Dozark made a motion to adjourn at 6:46 p.m. Lisa Connell seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kris Olson Harmon
WCCA Board Secretary

WCCA BOARD MEETING
May 21, 2024

The 58th Annual Meeting of the West Central Community Action Board of Directors meeting was held May 21, 2024 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, Keith Bruck, Angela Bladt, Brittany Schoof, and Danni Segebart.

ROLL CALL

Craig Dozark, Crawford- Zoom	Lisa Connell, Page- Zoom
Connie McGee, Crawford- Zoom	Jeannine Liljedahl, Page- Zoom
Brian Rife, Harrison- Zoom	Molly Cummings, Pottawattamie- Zoom
Carol Vinton, Mills- Zoom	Charles Parkhurst, Shelby
Charla Schmid, Montgomery- Zoom	Bryan Swain, Shelby
Pat Berendes, Montgomery- Zoom	Kris Olson Harmon, Shelby- Zoom
Todd Maher, Page- Zoom	

A quorum was declared.

Excused Absences:

Wendy Richter, Cass	Evert Colunga, Harrison
Justin Williams, Cass	Donna Maddocks, Mills
Donna Childress, Crawford	Tom Brouillette, Monona
Dustin Sheldon, Fremont	Brent Watkins, Monona
Cynthia Williams, Fremont	Jeff Jorgensen, Pottawattamie
Trista McLaughlin, Harrison	

ADDITIONS OR AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions or amendments to the agenda. Carol Vinton made the motion to approve the agenda, Kris Olson Harmon seconded. Motion was carried.

APPROVAL OF MARCH MINUTES

Carol Vinton made the motion to approve the March minutes. Brian Rife seconded. Motion was carried.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

FY 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Everyone received a copy of the FY 2023 Annual Report in their board packet. The report highlights all programs, services, number of clients served, demographic information, and our audit. We served a total of 14,793 unduplicated individuals and 6,597 unduplicated households. A big thank you goes to Brittany for all of her hard work in completing the annual report.

2024 COMMUNITY NEEDS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY APPROVAL

Brittany Schoof, CSBG/CACFP Director, presented the 2024 Community Needs Executive Summary that was included in the board packet. This is required for CSBG and is valid for 3 years. This was last updated in January 2023 and the only update was the newest Iowa Community Action Agencies Client Needs Assessment Results and WCCA's FY 2023 Client Characteristics. Brittany went through the surveys and assessments that were used to compile the data and explained the results. The Executive Summary helps show us where the biggest needs are for assistance in our 10 county area and what CSBG funds should be used for as well as agency resources. The Executive Summary showed we have lost overall population in 9 of our 10 counties and have seen an increase in the rate of people living in poverty. The main causes of poverty include: lack of higher education, lack of living wage or employment opportunities, lack of dependable transportation, lack of child care homes/centers, lack of affordable and safe housing, and lack of access to mental health/substance treatment options. West Central Community Action is committed to operating programs and collaborating with other organizations in order to assure the best possible support and outcomes for clients. While WCCA does not meet every need identified in the survey, the agency has services and referrals\ options in place to combat many of the issues. The Community Needs Assessment Executive Summary is used along with our agency's mission and vision to determine what CSBG funding should be used for along with other agency resources. Pat Berendes made the motion to approve the 2024 Executive Summary. Carol Vinton seconded. Motion was carried.

FY 2025 ORGANIZATIONAL BUDGET APPROVAL

2024-2025 Organizational Budget was provided to all Board of Directors in their board packet. Keith stated this is a requirement for CSBG but provides a great overview of the Agency. Keith explained the budget in detail and stated there is a decrease from the previous year as the additional COVID-19 funding has been expended. Charla Schmid made the motion to approve the Annual Agency Wide Organizational Budget for 2024-2025, Kris Olson Harmon seconded. Motion was carried.

PERSONNEL POLICY UPDATES APPROVAL

Everyone received copies of Personnel Policies #040 Introductory Statement, #103 Equal Employment and Program Services Opportunity, #110 Outside Employment, #181 Employee Grievance Procedure, #303 Vacation Benefits, #305 Holidays, #307 Sick Leave/Sick Leave Conversion, #316 Weekly Disability Income Insurance, #401 Timekeeping, #405 Employment Termination, #510 Emergency Closings, and #707 Electronic Use. Angela Bladt, HR Director, explained all proposed changes to the board. A majority of the changes were suggestions from our attorney as the policies need to be reviewed every 5 years for CSBG Organizational Standard compliance. All proposed changes were also approved by Head Start Policy Council. We are requesting board approval to approve all proposed changes and the entire WCCA Personnel Policy Manual. Carol Vinton made the motion to approve changes to #040 Introductory Statement, #103 Equal Employment and Program Services Opportunity, #110 Outside Employment, #181 Employee Grievance Procedure, #303 Vacation Benefits, #305 Holidays, #307 Sick Leave/Sick Leave Conversion, #316 Weekly Disability Income Insurance, #401 Timekeeping, #405 Employment Termination, #510 Emergency Closings, #707 Electronic Use and the entire WCCA Personnel Policy Manual. Lisa Connell seconded. Motion carried.

CCR&R FY 2025 FUNDING REQUEST APPROVAL

On May 10, Deb Martens, CCR&R Director, Keith, and Wendy had a contract negotiation conference call with the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services concerning our award to provide CCR&R

services for Iowa Region 3 for the period July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2030. We had proposed a CCR&R State budget of \$777,664, which is based on actual projections. The state is wanting us to increase our budget and hire a full-time Behavioral Health Specialist, as we had it as a combined position with a data specialist. We will be combining the part-time data specialist with a part-time consultant position. We submitted a new budget for their review of \$838,986 and it was accepted on May 21st. There are also three performance-based incentives in our new contract: 1) 95% of all completed Registered Child Development Home and Child Care Assistance applications are submitted without any additional follow-up. 2) 70% of all IQ4K applications are submitted without follow-up. 3) The last one is to be determined later. If measures are met, we would receive additional funds. For the current program year, we have met all three of the following pay for performance measures and will be receiving additional funds. 1) 100% of all completed Registered Child Development Home and Child Care Assistance applications were submitted without any additional follow-up. 2) 100% of registered, licensed, and Child Care Assistance Providers within the region were contacted. 3) We increased the percentage of IQ4K providers within the region. At the anticipated funding level, we plan to employ 9 full-time CCR&R positions to provide resources, education, and advocacy to support quality child care in 17 counties in Southwest and West Central Iowa. We are requesting board approval to have the Board President and Executive Director sign the FY 2025 CCR&R Contract when it is available and submit to the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. Brian Rife made the motion to approve signing and submitting the FY 2025 CCR&R Contract. Todd Maher seconded. Motion was carried.

HEAD START SELF-ASSESSMENT APPROVAL

Danni Segebart presented the Head Start Self-Assessment in detail and a handout was provided to all Board of Directors in their board packet. She discussed the process of the self-assessment, design and team members responsible, timeframe, program strengths, systemic issues, the progress of the program goals and objectives and recommendations. The two areas they want to explore more are teacher child interactions and onboarding process. This assessment will also be used to write the Head Start/Early Head Start grant that will be due November 1st. Pat Berendes made the motion to approve the Head Start Self-Assessment. Carol Vinton seconded. Motion was carried.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM UPDATE

- Program Instruction 24-02 was included in the board packet. The instruction details the Cost of Living Increase for FY 2024. Programs will receive 2.35% of the FY 2023 base funding level.
- We received our Notice of Award on April 27, specifying the COLA funding amount of \$133,501. The funding will be added to our FY 2024 base award. Funds will be used to offset the raises given in February. A copy of the NOA was included in the board packet.
- We received our Notice of Award on May 7. This action awards the balance of funds for the Head Start and Early Head Start program operations for the budget period of 2/1/24-1/31/25. The total award is over \$7.2 million with \$5.7 million in funding and a non-federal share requirement of \$1.4 million.
- Information Memorandum 24-01 is included in the board packet. The memorandum highlights the Head Start Program Performance Standards and related strategies for integrating mental health supports across all Head Start programs. Our program already contracts with a Mental Health Consultant who meets regularly with staff and families if needed. We also have a Wellness Committee which focuses on a variety of areas including Mental Health. The agency also has an EAP program for staff which includes access to Mental Health professionals.

- Program Instructions 24-03 and 24-04 were both emailed to you. Neither one pertains to our program but we are required to inform the board of all program instructions and information memorandums. 24-03 discusses new eligibility provisions for American Indian and Alaska Native programs and 24-04 talks about new eligibility provisions for Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs. Both programs can now enroll children in Head Start services regardless of income.
- A letter dated April 19, from the Administration for Children and Families was in the board packet approving our waiver requests for child restraint systems and bus monitors.
- We currently have 5 openings in Head Start and Early Head Start: Council Bluffs Early Head Start Teacher Floater, Council Bluffs Family Advocate, Glenwood Teacher and Glenwood Assistant Teacher, and Harlan Nutrition Coordinator.
- The end of April enrollment numbers for Head Start and Early Head Start currently are: 244 in Head Start, funded enrollment is 249, which is 98%. 86 in Early Head Start with 14 accepts, funded enrollment is 92, which is 93% as of today. This is extremely good news. 39 children on the Head Start waitlist and 14 children on the EHST waitlist are over income. Danni added that we have had continued growth with our Early Head Start numbers.
- We have fully executed school contracts for the 24-25 school year from all our school partners, which include Clarinda, Council Bluffs, Essex, Harlan, Red Oak and West Monona.
- Head Start/Early Head Start staff are actively recruiting for the 2024/2025 school year. If you know of any families that would be interested, please refer them to WCCA's Facebook page or call the Head Start office at 712-755-7537. The last day of school for Head Start children is May 22.
- We officially moved out of our Denison Early Head Start location on April 24. We started home based services in Crawford County on May 1. Our new office location in Denison is located at 1231 Broadway Suite 101. It is the same place where we provided WIC services. We will continue to look for space in hopes of transitioning back to a center-based option in the future.
- Our lease with the Glenwood Resource Center for our Head Start classroom in Glenwood ends in June. We finalized our new contract with SWITCH/East Mills Community School District on a new classroom location. We are extremely pleased we were able to find space in Mills County.
- We are still waiting to hear about the federal proposed changes to the Head Start program and the impact it will have on our program.
- Danni had two staff members receive awards at the 2024 IHSA Spring Conference. Kyanna Hansen, Red Oak Head Start Teacher, received the Iowa Head Start Staff Higher Education Scholarship. Paula Nagel, Harrison/Monona County Family Advocate, received Family Advocate of the Year.
- There are two classroom incidents this past month that needed reported to the Office of Head Start. One incident involved a child being left in the bathroom unsupervised. Staff have been put on action plans and will receive additional TA. The other incident involved a child having a medical emergency while at school. EMS was called and staff followed protocol and handled it very well. The child was safe.

JUNE AND JULY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

Wendy stated she does not feel we will have anything needing approval in June or July. The Executive Committee can always schedule a meeting if needed. Brian Rife made the motion to not have a June or July Board of Directors meeting. Craig Dozark seconded. Motion was carried.

STAFF REPORTS

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

FISCAL REPORT

Keith had nothing new to add to his report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

- Governor Reynolds issued a disaster proclamation for Cass County on April 17, in response to the severe weather that occurred on April 16. The proclamation activates the Iowa Individual Assistance Grant Program and Disaster Case Advocacy Program. The individual Assistance Grant provides grants up to \$5,000 for households with incomes up to 200%. Funds can be used for home or car repairs, replacement of clothing and food and temporary housing expenses. Clients have until June 3 to apply for disaster assistance and October 14 to receive Disaster Case Advocacy services.
- Disaster proclamations were also issued for Crawford, Harrison, Mills, Pottawattamie, and Shelby Counties for the April 26 tornados. Families in Crawford County have until June 13 to apply for Individual Assistance and October 26 for Disaster Case Advocacy. Harrison, Mills, Pottawattamie and Shelby Counties received a FEMA declaration on May 14, which ends the State Individual Disaster Assistance program but we continue with the Disaster Case Advocacy program.
- They are setting up Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC's) in both Pottawattamie and Shelby Counties later this week. Wendy heard FEMA is setting up a mobile unit in Pott County and Shelby County may have theirs at the Chamber office in Harlan. We will have staff attend a few of the days to answer any questions about DCA.
- Wendy thanked all the staff who have been helping out in a variety of ways. We have all been extremely busy working with families while still trying to maintain normal business operations. This program is very disruptive and does not serve our mission. Homeland Security places a lot of undue stress on our agency and the expectations they set are not realistic. When you have significant disasters in several counties at once it causes disruption in agency operations, plus it doesn't cover our costs. We are pulling staff from other locations to help assist as we simply don't have the capacity. We cannot get out of the state contract until June 30, 2025. Wendy has expressed concerns at the state level and they are aware we will not renew our contract after it is completed.
- LIHEAP officially ended on April 30th. We saw a slight decrease in applications from last year of 3%, which equates to a decline of 149 applications. This year we approved 5,368 applications for almost \$2.7 million dollars. A big thank you goes to the LIHEAP staff and outreach for their hard work.
- We have also paid out over \$416,000 in ECIP crisis funding since October. All of our ECIP funding has been exhausted. Over the past few years we have received additional federal crisis funding due to COVID. We are now resuming more normal funding levels and we are not able to assist everyone. Crisis funding was provided on a first come first serve basis with a \$700 limit. We are hoping to receive a few more dollars this summer but are unsure at this time. We are still able to assist clients with other utility funds such as Black Hills Cares, Alliant Hometown Cares and Mid-American ICARE funds, but the money is going fast.
- A letter dated April 24, from the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services is in the board packet regarding our FY 23 LIHEAP program audit. Ivy and Wendy compiled all of the documents that were requested and they were sent to the state on May 1. The state reviewed our documentation and only had one question and no findings. They stated the household files were in good order, eligibility, benefit determination and benefit disbursements were in accordance with the FY23 LIHEAP Policy and Procedures Manual. Additionally, the files reviewed showed agency staff had a solid understanding of the LIHEAP program and our approach working with households is professional and respectful. Great job by Ivy and the outreach staff.

- There are two letters regarding our Weatherization field inspection audit completed March 5-6 in the board packet. The April 29, letter was our response submitted to the state with our corrective action completed on one of the homes. The May 1, letter from the state accepting our corrective work and closing our audit. We were informed today the Department of Energy (DOE) will be releasing Iowa's funding. Which is great news since the contract was supposed to start April 1.
- The Commission on Community Action Agencies and the FaDSS Council were both eliminated in SF2385. We were very hopeful the two commissions would remain but unfortunately, they did not.
- A letter is included in your board packet dated May 6, which provides notice of our final award amount of CSBG funding for FY 2024. Our final allocation total is \$533,951. The federal government exercised their option to retain 1% of total funding. We received notice that our 6-month CSBG NPI report was accepted and approved by the state. A big thank you goes to Brittany for completing the report.
- Our CSBG funding will receive another cut starting FY 2025. With the decrease in funding compiled with the fact we no longer have ECIP money for the rest of the summer we are reducing the outreach offices hours. Offices in Fremont and Mills will permanently be reduced to 32 hours per week. Fremont hours switched on April 29, and the Mills County office will start June 10. Cass, Crawford, Monona, Montgomery, Pottawattamie, and Shelby will temporarily be reduced to 32 hours starting June 10-September 13. Page County is already at 32 hours per week. The outreach staff member in Harrison County requested that her hours be reduced in the summer from 30 hours per week to 16 hours. The Harrison County office will be open Monday-Thursday 12:30-4:30. All offices will be open Monday-Thursday. After reviewing the budgets, we needed to do something in order to continue to maintain operations in every county. This was set into place before we had all the disaster declarations. Some staff may be working 40 hours per week as they assist with the disaster program.
- We have 86 families enrolled with a contracted enrollment number of 95, which is 91%. Staff are currently contacting families on the waiting list to see if they are still interested in participating in the program. We are happy to announce we hired a new FaDSS Specialist and she started May 13. She will spend several months training with Mindy and her staff.
- The FaDSS Council voted to have a renewal grant for the next grant cycle (FY 2026-FY 2028), which is great news. All grantees will remain the same for the next three years. We will have to submit our grant renewal application this fall. The current FaDSS grant contract will end June 30, 2024, however we have an extension until September to expend all our funding. Due to a staff vacancy most of the fiscal year we anticipated having unexpended funds at the end of September. The state is requiring any grantee with projected unexpended funds to submit a plan on how the remaining funds will be spent and what if any will be remaining. Keith projected our FaDSS program will have approximately \$32,000 left at the end of the grant year. Keith completed a budget amendment and plan to reduce our overall FaDSS award by \$32,000 and it was approved by the state.
- Our offices will be closed on May 27, for Memorial Day, June 19, for the Juneteenth Holiday and July 4th.

Lisa Connell made a motion to adjourn at 6:47 p.m. Pat Berendes seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kris Olson Harmon
WCCA Board Secretary

WCCA BOARD MEETING
August 20, 2024

The West Central Community Action Board of Directors meeting was held August 20, 2024 at the WCCA Executive Office, Harlan, IA. President, Charles Parkhurst called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. Staff attending were: Wendy Mueller, Keith Bruck, Ivy Nielsen, and Danni Segebart.

ROLL CALL

Wendy Richter, Cass- Zoom	Donna Maddocks, Mills-Zoom
Craig Dozark, Crawford- Zoom	Charla Schmid, Montgomery- Zoom
Connie McGee, Crawford- Zoom	Lisa Connell, Page- Zoom
Donna Childress, Crawford- Zoom	Molly Cummings, Pottawattamie- Zoom
Cynthia Williams, Fremont- Zoom	Charles Parkhurst, Shelby
Brian Rife, Harrison- Zoom	Bryan Swain, Shelby
Trista McLaughlin, Harrison- Zoom	Kris Olson Harmon, Shelby- Zoom
Carol Vinton, Mills-Zoom	

A quorum was declared.

Excused Absences:

Justin Williams, Cass	Pat Berendes, Montgomery
Dustin Sheldon, Fremont	Todd Maher, Page
Evert Colunga, Harrison	Jeannine Liljedahl, Page
Tom Brouillette, Monona	Jeff Jorgensen, Pottawattamie
Brent Watkins, Monona	

ADDITIONS OR AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions or amendments to the agenda. Craig Dozark made the motion to approve the agenda, Kris Olson Harmon seconded. Motion was carried.

APPROVAL OF MAY MINUTES

Wendy Richter made the motion to approve the May minutes. Kris Olson Harmon seconded. Motion was carried.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

FY 2023 IRS FORM 990 PRESENTATION BY DAVID GINTHER OF GRONEWOLD, BELL, KYHNN AND CO.

David Ginther from Gronewold, Bell, Kyhnn and Co. P.C. presented the FY 2023 IRS Form 990 in detail to the Board of Directors via Zoom. IRS Form 990 was emailed to all Board of Directors prior to the board meeting. Brian Rife made the motion to approve accepting the FY 2023 Form 990, Wendy Richter seconded. Motion was carried.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

WCCA ACCOUNTING MANUAL UPDATES AND APPROVAL

The Finance Committee met prior to the board meeting. They discussed the manual. Keith stated there are no changes at this time and is requesting board approval of the current manual. Craig Dozark made the motion to approve WCCA's Accounting Manual without any additional changes, Lisa Connell seconded. Motion was carried.

AGENCY AUDIT RFP APPROVAL

Keith explained the FY 10/01/24-9/30/28 Audit RFP. This is a requirement that needs completed every five years for the CSBG Organizational Standards. The RFP was advertised on our website and emailed to auditing firms. Keith presented the bid proposal from Bell, Kyhnn and Co. P.C., and WIPFLi LLP. Keith stated the Finance Committee recommends retaining Gronewold, Bell, Kyhnn and Co. P.C. as WCCA's Auditor for FY 10/01/24-9/30/28. Charla Schmid made the motion to approve Gronewold, Bell, Kyhnn and Co. P.C. as WCCA's Auditor for FY 10/01/24-9/30/28, Donna Childress seconded. Motion was carried.

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT 2024-2025 BUDGET APPROVAL

Keith reviewed the board handout USDA Statement of Budget, Income and Equity for the Shelby County Early Childhood Center for the period of October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025. Keith explained this is a requirement for USDA and the building houses Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Trista McLaughlin made the motion to approve the USDA Rural Development 2024-2025 Budget. Carol Vinton seconded. Motion was carried

FY 2025 LIHEAP CONTRACT APPROVAL

We have not received the FY 25 LIHEAP contract yet, however we are expecting to receive a similar start-up budget to FY 2024 of \$178,098. Amendments will be forth coming throughout the program year. We will end FY 2024 with a budget of \$3,013,756 for LIHEAP and \$60,024 for LIHEAP IIJA. We are requesting Board approval to accept and have the Board President and Executive Director sign the FY 2025 LIHEAP start-up contract once it is received from the State. Brian Rife made the motion to approve the Board President and Executive Director to sign the FY 2025 start-up contract, Craig Dozark seconded. Motion was carried.

FY 2025 CSBG, FaDSS, LIHEAP, AND WEATHERIZATION CONTRACT DESIGNEE APPROVAL

The Chairperson of the Board of Directors is the official authorized to execute any amendments related to the FY 2025 CSBG, FaDSS, LIHEAP, and Weatherization contracts. We are requesting board approval to allow Charles Parkhurst as Board President to designate the Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer to execute amendments on behalf of the Chairperson of the Board of Directors. Wendy Richter made the motion to approve the Board President to designate the Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer to execute amendments on behalf of the Chairperson of the Board of Directors, Kris Olson Harmon seconded. Motion was carried.

HEAD START COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT APPROVAL

Danni stated the Head Start Community Needs Assessment is a program requirement that needs completed every 5 years and updated annually. Danni presented the information and explained they will use the recommendations to write the Head Start grant. The assessment goes through changes in the service area, population, poverty level update, employment, housing. There was a decrease in

households receiving SNAP benefits and there are very few dental providers accepting Medicaid insurance that families are on. There continues to be an increased need for Early Childhood Education. We are requesting board approval of the Head Start Community Needs Assessment. Carol Vinton made the motion to approve the Head Start Community Needs Assessment, Charla Schmid seconded. Motion was carried. Wendy commended Danni on her hard work for completing the assessment.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START POLICY UPDATES APPROVAL

Danni explained the changes to the following policies: Eligibility for Head Start Services, Growth Assessments, and Playground Inspection Form. Eligibility procedures- Definitions were added that define the age of the child by program. Growth Assessments-They used to do two growth assessments a year but they have decided since only one is required per year they are going to do just the one assessment. Playground Inspection Form-DHS has made some revisions on the form so a new inspection form has been sent out. Inspections must be completed monthly and after inclement weather. The policy changes have already been approved by the Head Start Policy Council. Carol Vinton made a motion to approve the Head Start/Early Head Start Policy changes, Lisa Connell seconded. Motion carried.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM GOALS UPDATE

Danni explained the self-assessment report. The following goals have been established: Goal 1: WCCA Head Start will empower families and maintain strong community connections that will enable future success for children and families. Goal 2: WCCA Head Start will effectively and efficiently utilize data and database systems to streamline services for continuous improvement. Goal 3: WCCA Head Start will cultivate high quality staff to promote and ensure safe, secure, and supportive environments. Goal 4: WCCA Head Start will promote a culture that fosters and supports high quality relationships. Danni and her staff are continuing to work on the objectives on their strategic plans. They are working towards having two parents attend the Health Services Advisory Committee meetings. They are working on effectively using data to streamline services. The program will be ready to go fully digital with enrollments starting in October and have also switched to an online version of Child Plus this summer and are working on developing a manual to navigate the system. Monitoring tools for completing education plans will be implemented this month. They are working on the IQ4K applications and hope to wrap that up in 60 days. Danni and her management team are having their teaching staff complete a self-assessment on themselves right now and will also have teaching staff complete a self-assessment on relationships with children in their classrooms.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM UPDATE

- There was a letter from the Administration for Children and Families included in the board packet dated August 6. It announces our Head Start grant is due November 1. This is year 2 in our 5-year grant cycle. The total funding award is over \$5.8 million dollars, for 249 Head slots and 92 Early Head Start slots. The funding period is for February 1, 2025-January 31, 2026. Danni and Keith will present the renewal grant application at the October board meeting for board approval.
- We received notification from the Office of Head Start on the new program rule changes that were proposed earlier this year. The final rule changes will be published on August 21. The changes will have a significant impact on all programs nationwide as we are not projected to receive the federal funding required to maintain our current number of slots. The changes will force most programs to reduce enrollment in order to comply with the new wage and reporting requirements. The changes have varying timeframes for implementation from 30 days, 60 days, 90 days to 7 years for wages. The changes to the Performance Standards can be summarized in three categories: Better

compensation for Head Start staff. Integrating mental health services. Effectively and equitably meeting the evolving needs of the communities.

- A few of the Workforce Supports changes include: Programs must pay annual salaries to staff that are at least the same as preschool teachers in public school settings taking into account qualifications, experience and responsibilities. Programs must pay all staff a wage that is at least sufficient to meet basic cost of living in the local area (ranges \$15-\$17/hour). Programs must provide each staff member with regular breaks during their work shifts. Which would mean having three staff in every classroom.
- The Office of Head Start and NHTSA are holding a lot of meetings to clarify the changes and how grantees are to implement the new program standards. There will be more information to come as our agency decides how we will move forward in the coming months and years.
- On the federal level both the House and Senate Appropriations Committee have varying increases (\$25 Million House, \$700 Million Senate) for Head Start for FY 2025, which is great news as no cut was proposed on either side. Federal fiscal year 2024 ends September 30. The Senate and House will have to agree on a final number or a Continuing Resolution (CR) by the end of September to keep Head Start and the entire federal government operating.
- For the month of July we were at 96% of funded enrollment for Early Head Start with 88 children with a funded enrollment of 92 slots. We are so close to meeting the 97% full enrollment initiative.
- The new Mills County Head Start classroom located in Hastings is moving along. Danni did a great radio interview for the Mills County station promoting the new classroom. The move was completed last month and we are actively trying to recruit staff. If you know of anyone who is qualified and interested in becoming a Head Start Teacher please send them our way. At this time we are going to have to delay our opening until we can hire a teacher and finish all required building inspections.
- We currently have 6 open positions in the program. Angela and the Head Start staff have been very busy recruiting, interviewing, and conducting new employee orientations.
- All Head Start staff will start back this week for pre-service and will be getting ready for the new school year. The first day of school is September 3 for our stand-alone classrooms.
- Wendy thanked Keith and our contractor who installed outside cameras at our Council Bluffs campus as we were having several vandalism incidents. Hopefully the cameras will help detour further damage. We will be installing more outside cameras at a few more of our locations.

SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING

Wendy stated she does not feel we will have anything needing approval in September. The Executive Committee meeting can always be scheduled if needed. Wendy recommended that we do not have a September meeting and October 15, 2024 will be the next meeting. Wendy requested the board move the meeting from starting at 5:30 to 5:00 as she has a scheduling conflict. Board of Directors present had no issues starting the meeting at 5:00. Brian Rife made the motion to not have a September Board of Directors meeting, Carol Vinton seconded. Motion was carried.

STAFF REPORTS

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

FISCAL REPORT

Keith had nothing new to add to his report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

- It has been an extremely busy summer with 22 active disaster declarations in 9 of our counties: Cass County - 3, Crawford County - 1, Harrison County - 4, Mills County - 4, Monona - 1, Montgomery County - 1, Page County - 1, Pottawattamie County - 5 and Shelby - 2. We also have 6 FEMA declarations: Harrison - 1, Mills - 1, Monona - 1, Montgomery - 1, Pottawattamie - 2 and Shelby - 1. Staff are working hard to assist families while still trying to maintain normal business operations. No agency has ever had this number of declarations occur at the same time. We are trying our best to serve everyone, but it is becoming increasingly more difficult with each added declaration plus LIHEAP season is just around the corner.
- So many staff have stepped up since April and Wendy cannot thank them enough, from the Outreach staff working in different counties, attending numerous meetings and events, Brittany and Ivy shopping for the Harlan Outreach food pantry, Keith for doing 22 extra budgets and reports for the program, Kelly Mahlberg and Wendy have been taking turns working at the Harlan Outreach office to assist clients, while Dena coordinates all the disaster programming. It has been a team effort, and we are doing everything we can to assist and inform every one of the resources available.
- CCR&R finished FY 2024 on June 30, and started their new 6-year grant on July 1. The program had a very successful year and met all three pay for performance measures for 2024. 100% of the childcare applications submitted to the state did not require any follow-up. 100% of childcare providers were contacted throughout the program year. At least a 90% satisfaction rating on surveys completed by childcare providers. The program received an additional \$60,000 for meeting the measures. Our program also had the highest percentage of eligible providers rated on the IQ4K scale in the state at 24%. We currently have 375 registered providers in our service territory. There continues to be a loss of registered child development homes and the growth of capacity (slots) for childcare centers in the region. The good news is we are fully staffed in the program which allows us to maintain high quality services.
- A copy of the CSBG FY 2025 application approval letter was emailed to everyone last week. The state has accepted our FY 2025 CSBG plan for the upcoming year. The funds are primarily used for the outreach offices and staff. A big thank you goes to Brittany and Keith for completing the grant application.
- We are in the process of completing the FY 2025 Child and Adult Care Food Program Center Based and Home-Based renewal funding applications. The applications are due to the state by August 30. We typically ask for an extension for the Center Based application as it takes our approved food vendor additional time to have the contract reviewed by their legal team. For center based we receive cash reimbursements for meals and snacks at 13 Head Start and Early Head Start Classrooms and are included on 7 school district's CACFP reimbursements.
- The Home Based CACFP provides reimbursement to licensed home childcare providers that serve approved CACFP meals to income eligible children. We are projecting to work with 65 homes per month and will employ 2 staff.
- We have our administrative review of the Home Sponsorship of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) coming up on August 27-29 at the Harlan Administrative Office. The purpose of the review is to ensure WCCA is complying with Federal CACFP regulations and Iowa guidance. Brittany Schoof, Beka Paul, and Keith Bruck have been busy preparing all the required documents for their onsite monitoring visit. We anticipate a good overall review of the program.
- The new FaDSS contract started July 1, with the same contracted capacity number of 95 families. We currently have 78 families enrolled. We once again are looking for another FaDSS Specialist.

We have experienced a high turnover rate in this position for various reasons. We are hopeful to find the right employee so we can serve families who are needing our services.

- LIHEAP season is right around the corner. Elderly and disabled clients can start applying October 1, and all households can start applying November 1. We have sent out Automatic Eligible Applications to clients who qualify and will start entering those applications in October. Staff will be attending training this month and in September on the new state database system for LIHEAP. This season will be an adjustment as we all learn new processes from application to payment for LIHEAP. We are expecting it to be a little bit of a rough year for everyone as we navigate and learn the new system.
- Angela Bladt (HR Director) and Wendy attended the ICAA (Iowa Community Action Association) Conference in Des Moines July 24-25. It was a great opportunity to visit with Community Action Professionals from across the state.
- We are looking for a new part time Outreach Assistant in the Harlan Outreach office. If you know of anyone that would be a good fit please send them our way.

Carol Vinton made a motion to adjourn at 6:41 p.m. Craig Dozark seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kris Olson Harmon
WCCA Board Secretary

WCCA BOARD MEETING
October 15, 2024

The West Central Community Action Board of Directors meeting was held October 15, 2024 at the WCCA Executive Office, Harlan, IA. President, Charles Parkhurst called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. Staff attending were: Wendy Mueller, Keith Bruck, Angela Bladt, Brittany Schoof, and Danni Segebart.

ROLL CALL

Wendy Richter, Cass- Zoom	Donna Maddocks, Mills- Zoom
Justin Williams, Cass- Zoom,	Pat Berendes, Montgomery- Zoom
Craig Dozark, Crawford- Zoom	Todd Maher, Page- Zoom
Connie McGee, Crawford- Zoom	Molly Cummings, Pottawattamie- Zoom
Brian Rife, Harrison- Zoom	Charles Parkhurst, Shelby
Trista McLaughlin, Harrison- Zoom	Bryan Swain, Shelby
Carol Vinton, Mills- Zoom	Kris Olson Harmon, Shelby- Zoom

A quorum was declared.

Excused Absences:

Donna Childress, Crawford	Brent Watkins, Monona
Dustin Sheldon, Fremont	Charla Schmid, Montgomery
Cynthia Williams, Fremont	Lisa Connell, Page
Evert Colunga, Harrison	Jeannine Liljedahl, Page
Tom Brouillette, Monona	Jeff Jorgensen, Pottawattamie

ADDITIONS OR AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions or amendments to the agenda. Pat Berendes made the motion to approve the agenda, Kris Olson Harmon seconded. Motion was carried.

APPROVAL OF AUGUST MINUTES

Trista McLaughlin made the motion to approve the August minutes, Wendy Richter seconded. Motion was carried.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT AND APPROVAL

Everyone received a copy of the 2023-2024 Strategic Plan. Wendy stated the Strategic Planning Committee met on October 11 and reviewed the 2023-2024 Strategic Plan. A few goals are a number three and in red, this means they were completed but the targets were not met. If they are in green, it was completed, and the goal was met. Overall, many of the goals have been accomplished this year. A few highlights include: more FaDSS participants obtained employment, 1,578 food pantries were distributed, 49 households received Weatherization, 92% of children met school readiness goals, all programs increased partnerships and attended community events, Agency Risk Assessment and Agency Audit RFP were completed, 96% of all Agency jobs were filled and our by-laws and personnel policies were all reviewed by an attorney. The goals for parents attending family nights, board members attending training, LIHEAP online applications,

registered child care homes participating in CACFP and the total number of households WCCA assisted during FY 2024 were lower than projected.

Everyone also received a copy of the 2024-2025 Strategic Plan. When we start to set goals for the new fiscal year we need to look at information from our Community Needs Assessment, Risk Assessment, and Customer Satisfaction data. We also have to structure the plan around the Three National Goals and use the Results Oriented Management and Accountability Cycle (ROMA). Goals that are included in the Strategic Plan for FaDSS, Outreach and CACFP are also part of the FY'25 CSBG Grant Application. New goals for the FY2024-2025 Strategic Plan include: implementing the new LIHEAP/WX database and CSBG database, Board of Directors completing policies updates for CSBG Organizational Standards compliance, evaluate WCCA wage and salary structure, review and update Employee Grievance policy, update volunteer handbook, and reduce workplace injuries. Goals for child care providers participating in CACFP, Weatherization, staff attending community events, increasing community partnerships, filling agency positions, parents attending family nights and children meeting school readiness levels will remain on the 2024-2025 Strategic Plan. The board agreed all goals align with WCCA's mission statement. Justin Williams made the motion to approve the 2024-2025 Strategic Plan, Trista McLaughlin seconded. Motion was carried.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START 2025-2026 GRANT SUBMISSION APPROVAL

Keith presented the 2025-2026 Head Start/Early Head Start Grant Budget and information that is due November 1st. Keith explained each category in detail. This grant application is the second year of a five year grant cycle. Carol Vinton made the motion to approve submitting the Head Start 2025-2026 Grant. Kris Olson Harmon seconded. Motion carried. Wendy thanked Keith and Danni on their hard work to complete the grant application.

FY 2024 CSBG BUDGET AMENDMENT APPROVAL

Keith Bruck stated we received notification that Community Action Agencies of Iowa received additional FY 2024 CSBG funding and are increasing WCCA's original budget by \$1,196 for a total award of \$535,147. This amount has been added to Co-Funded Programs and will be used to operate our outreach offices. We need board approval to submit the CSBG budget amendment. Carol Vinton made the motion to approve the FY2024 CSBG Budget Amendment, Craig Dozark seconded. Motion was carried.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM UPDATE

- Information Memorandum ACF-OHS-IM-24-03 was included in the board packet. This memo does not pertain to our program but the memo emphasizes the importance of Indigenous Knowledge, language and culture in designing American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start programs.
- October is Head Start Awareness month so it is a great time to honor leaders and staff who provide vital early childhood education to children and families.
- We currently have 4 openings in Head Start and Early Head Start. Red Oak Early Head Start Teacher, Council Bluffs Head Start Assistant Teacher, Health and Nutrition Coordinator and Education Support Coordinator Red Oak/Mills County.
- The end of September enrollment numbers for Head Start and Early Head Start are improving. Staff are continuing to recruit and get children enrolled. Our current enrollment numbers are: 226 in Head Start with 20 accepts, funded enrollment is 249 (91%), 82 in Early Head Start with 8 accepts, funded enrollment is 92 (89%), and 52 children on the Head Start waitlist and 15 on the EHST waitlist are over income.
- Danni stated they hope to have the Hastings classroom open in November. They are waiting on the final fire marshal report. It has been a long process. They currently have 5 children enrolled and 12 on a waitlist for the Hastings classroom.

- There was an incident in Council Bluffs where a child was left unattended less than two minutes. It was reported to DHS and OHS. Staff are receiving additional training and monitoring.
- There will be procedure and policy updates presented at the November board meeting. These updates relate to the Final Rule and changes that have been made to the Head Start Performance Standards and are effective October 21st.

STAFF REPORTS

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

FISCAL REPORT

Keith had nothing new to add the fiscal report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

- Included in the board packet is the FY 2024 CCR&R report. Our CCR&R program serves 17 counties in Southwest Iowa. Deb Martens and her staff provided numerous trainings to providers and countless hours of consultation and technical assistance. They remain committed to helping providers meet state regulations and improve quality of care.
- We are continuing to work with the state FaDSS Program Specialist and the FaDSS Director from New Opportunities. They have done a tremendous job of guiding our program and training our new FaDSS Specialist located in Denison. The state does not want us to enroll any new families at this time, instead they will be put on our waiting list until we have the new FaDSS Director and another FaDSS Specialist in place. The main goal at this time is to continue to provide services to families to the best of our ability. Wendy appreciates the work being done by our current FaDSS staff and their dedication to the program. We currently have 67 families enrolled with a capacity of 95.
- Wendy, Angela, and Keith interviewed 5 candidates for the FaDSS Director position. We had several good candidates and offered the position to Mary Wisnieski from Bellevue, NE. She has a Bachelors Degree in Social Work and a Masters Degree in Human Services. She has spent the last five years working with Lutheran Family Services as a Foster Care Supervisor and has a lot of knowledge and experience in case management services and working with families. She will be starting November 13.
- The first day of LIHEAP was October 1, for disabled and elderly (60+) clients. All clients can apply beginning November 1st. As of today we have taken 537 applications, which is 1,000 less where we should be sitting in a normal year. Outreach offices are taking applications by mail, email, phone, or in person by appointment. The entire state is working with a brand-new statewide database system for LIHEAP called LEWIS. The system is not fully operational and it is taking longer to process and review applications. Staff are adjusting to the new way of completing applications, however we are not scheduling as many appointments per day or processing as many as normal due to the new format. It is taking staff three times as long to complete a LIHEAP application. Clients are having to wait longer than usual to get an appointment if they want to be seen in person. Outreach offices are closed in the afternoons and on Fridays so staff can have uninterrupted time to process automatic eligible applications. The payment process has also changed so once we receive federal funding sometime in November or December it will be another new learning process. All the agencies statewide have been voicing their concerns over the new database as all parts of the system are not complete and it is making it extremely difficult to do our job effectively.
- We did receive our start up amendment as part of our FY 2024 LIHEAP contract in the amount of \$146,336. Of that amount \$50,000 is allocated to crisis utility funding (ECIP). A copy of the contract amendment is included in the board packet. We will receive our FY 2025 funding once the federal government releases the money, which typically isn't until late November or early December.
- There are two LIHEAP program notices included in the board packet that highlight changes for FY 2025. The one dated 9/13 changes ECIP maximum award amounts. Crisis services now have a shared maximum

- of \$800 per household, instead of each service having a maximum of \$800. Limiting the award amount will allow us to distribute ECIP funding to more households in crisis. The notice dated 10/7 extends the deadline for processing all applications from 30 days to 60 days, added the statement that Agency's "may" be responsible for repayment of ineligible benefits paid to households. The new system does not really allow us to review applications like we have in the past making it more difficult to assess errors in processing and leaving us open to a deficiency in an agency audit. The notice also states that any applications entered as automatically eligible will skip the review process and be automatically approved.
- Outreach offices are extremely busy with LIHEAP applications, distributing food pantries, and continuing to work on disaster cases as needed. All 22 disaster declarations are still open.
 - WCCA was approved for Tetra Tech Case Management services for both Pottawattamie FEMA declarations. They are providing case management services to all Pottawattamie County residents who were affected by either the tornado or flooding. We are still required to provide services to the residents who were impacted by the other three state declarations. Tetra Tech staff are available right now in person in Council Bluffs and they also plan to have someone in Minden. We were notified on 10/15/24 that Tetra Tech case management services were also approved for the FEMA declaration in Montgomery County.
 - The State Weatherization Evaluator is here October 15-17 inspecting 6 of our homes located in Council Bluffs, Tabor, Clarinda, Walnut, and Atlantic. We are anticipating the review to go well.
 - We had our preliminary agency insurance meeting with our broker Assured Partners at the end of September. They have projected significant increases due to the severe storm damage we incurred in Council Bluffs, Harlan, and Onawa. We had 8 vehicles with hail damage and 2 of the 8 were totaled. Our admin office building, Head Start admin building, and our Head Start/Early Head Start buildings in Council Bluffs all sustained hail damage. Unfortunately, the weather is out of our control and we have to pay the price with higher deductibles and premiums.
 - Our fiscal year ended September 30 and we have now embarked on FY 2025.
 - We will be having a November board meeting on November 19 at 5:30, both in person and zoom. There will also be a personnel committee meeting before the board meeting starting at 4:00. Brittany will include additional information in your board packet if you are on that committee.
 - Brittany will be scheduling Wendy to attend County Board of Supervisors visits, which will start in November. Wendy appreciates your continued financial support in advance.

Carol Vinton made a motion to adjourn at 5:41 p.m. Craig Dozark seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kris Olson Harmon
WCCA Board Secretary

WCCA BOARD MEETING
November 19, 2024

The West Central Community Action Board of Directors meeting was held November 19, 2024 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, and Danni Segebart.

ROLL CALL

Wendy Richter, Cass- Zoom	Tom Brouillette, Monona- Zoom
Justin Williams, Cass- Zoom	Charla Schmid, Montgomery- Zoom
Craig Dozark, Crawford- Zoom	Todd Maher, Page- Zoom
Donna Childress, Crawford- Zoom	Lisa Connell, Page- Zoom
Connie McGee, Crawford- Zoom	Jeannine Liljedahl, Page- Zoom
Brian Rife, Harrison- Zoom	Jeff Jorgensen, Pottawattamie
Trista McLaughlin, Harrison- Zoom	Molly Cummings, Pottawattamie- Zoom
Carol Vinton, Mills- Zoom	Charles Parkhurst, Shelby
Donna Maddocks, Mills - Zoom	Kris Olson Harmon, Shelby- Zoom

A quorum was declared.

Excused Absences:

Dustin Sheldon, Fremont	Brent Watkins, Monona
Cynthia Williams, Fremont	Pat Berendes, Montgomery
Evert Colunga, Harrison	Bryan Swain, Shelby

ADDITIONS OR AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions or amendments to the agenda. Charlie stated the Executive Directors Performance Evaluation will be moved to the end of the meeting. Brian Rife made the motion to approve agenda, Charla Schmid seconded. Motion was carried.

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER MINUTES

Kris Olson Harmon made the motion to approve the October minutes, Todd Maher seconded. Motion was carried.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT

2025 EMPLOYEE HOURLY RATE INCREASE APPROVAL

Wendy stated the Personnel Committee discussed the 2025 Employee Hourly Rate Increase options prior to the board meeting. Keith had already budgeted annual raises into all the program budgets. The Personnel Committee recommended to the board a 5% + \$0.10 raise effective February 1, 2025 for all employees. Justin Williams made the motion to approve the 2025 Employee Hourly Rate Increase of 5% + \$0.10. Lisa Connell seconded. Motion carried.

FY 2024 CSBG FINAL PROGRAM REPORTS

Brittany presented the FY 2024 CSBG Final Program Reports that were emailed to all board members. If you would like a paper copy, please let her know and she will mail you one. She reviewed the following four reports: Year-End Report (YE), Agency Resources Report (ARR), 2024 National Performance Indicators (NPI) and 2025 National Performance Indicators (NPI) Report. She stated the annual CSBG report collects information about the

entire Agency. It is a comprehensive look at the Agency's accomplishments over the past year. WCCA served 13,747 individuals and 6,233 households during FY 2024. The reports were submitted on November 5th. She thanked all the program directors for providing her with the required documentation to complete the reports. Wendy thanked Brittany for completing the reports and Keith for completing the funding portion of the report.

PERSONNEL POLICY UPDATES APPROVAL

Everyone received a copy of the proposed changes to Personnel Policies #405 Employment Termination, #525 Training & Travel and #601 Family and Medical Leave. Angela explained the proposed changes in detail. The proposed policy changes have also been approved by Policy Council. We are requesting board approval to approve Personnel Policies #405 Employment Termination, #525 Training & Travel, #601 Family and Medical Leave Use and the entire WCCA Personnel Policy Manual. Wendy Richter made the motion to approve Personnel Policies #405 Employment Termination, #525 Training & Travel, #601 Family and Medical Leave Use and the entire WCCA Personnel Policy Manual. Lisa Connell seconded. Motion carried.

HS/EHS 2025-26 ELIGIBILITY, RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, ENROLLMENT & ATTENDANCE

Danni explained the proposed changes to the criteria and eligibility points. The changes were taken to Policy Council on November 14, 2024 and approved. Lisa Connell made the motion to approve the changes to the HS/EHS 2025-26 Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment & Attendance Criteria. Justin Williams seconded. Motion was carried.

FY2024-25 HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START NON-FEDERAL SHARE WAIVER APPROVAL

Danni explained we are requesting a waiver for a portion of the Non-Federal Share matching requirements in the amount \$660,000 for the Fiscal Year 02/01/24 thru 01/31/25 Head Start and Early Head Start Programs. Our Non-Federal Share on our full grant award is \$1,273,479 and we are projecting to generate \$613,479 for the program year. Carol Vinton made the motion to approve the FY 2024-2025 Non-Federal Share Waiver Request, Todd Maher seconded. Motion was carried.

PROPOSED CHANGES AND APPROVAL OF THE HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL BY-LAWS

Danni explained the changes to the Head Start Policy Council By-Laws were mostly grammatical changes with the addition of adding mental health services to the Health Advisory Committee. The proposed changes were presented and approved by Policy Council at the November 14, 2024 meeting. Craig Dozark made the motion to approve the Head Start Policy Council By-Laws with the recommended changes. Carol Vinton seconded. Motion was carried.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START POLICY UPDATES APPROVAL

Danni explained the changes to the following policies: Child Care Injury/Incident Report, Children with Disabilities, Health and Mental Health Services Advisory Committee, Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect, Parent Denial Log, and Volunteers & Consultants. A majority of the policy and procedure changes are in regards to the Final Rule changes and then some are relating to Head Start and Early Head Start going paperless. The policy changes have already been approved by the Head Start Policy Council. Lisa Connell made a motion to approve the Head Start/Early Head Start Policy changes, Charla Schmid seconded. Motion carried.

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM UPDATE

- Program Instruction OHS-PI-24-06 corrects a few technical errors or omissions that do not substantially change the policies outlined in the final rule. One of the errors incorrectly listed the final rule effective date as August 21 and it should have been October 21. It also corrects the compliance date for staff benefits as August 1, 2028, which was inadvertently left off the publication.
- Program Instruction OHS-PI-24-07 delays the implementation date for increasing the CLASS competitive threshold from 2.3 to 2.5 to August 1, 2027. CLASS is the classroom assessment scoring system that is used as one of the conditions for renewal. If grantees fail to meet the threshold they could be put into re-competition.

- Information Memorandum OHS-IM-24-04 provides facilities guidance on using Head Start funds to purchase, construct or renovate property to ensure high quality safe indoor and outdoor learning environments. Grantees are required to submit one-time funding applications for facility activities beyond the scope of the programs approved budget.
- Information Memorandum OHS-IM-24-05 does not pertain to our program. The memo addresses the use of federal Early Childhood Program funds to improve access to housing related needs for the Early Childhood workforce in Tribal communities as a strategy to recruit and retain staff.
- Information Memorandum OHS-24-06 clarifies reporting requirements for significant incidences that affect the health and safety of a child that is in a Head Start setting where services are provided. All grantees are required to submit reports if a serious incident occurs to the appropriate HHS official immediately but no later than seven calendar days from the date of the incident. The memo outlines OHS expectations for reportable incidents and provide examples on what is to be reported, who to make the reports too, timeframe and compliance.
- Information Memorandum OHS-24-07 outlines the OHS monitoring process for FY 2025. It describes the various reviews a program may experience. WCCA is up for the Focus Area 1 review in FY 2025, which typically occurs in the first or second year of the grant period. The review focus is on if programs are meeting the requirements of the Head Start Performance Standards.
- The Mills County Head Start classroom in Hastings opened on October 31. We currently have 9 children attending.
- The end of October enrollment numbers for Head Start and Early Head Start continue to improve. Our current enrollment numbers are: 241 in Head Start with 10 accepts, funded enrollment is 249 (97%). 83 in Early Head Start with 5 accepts, funded enrollment is 92 (90%). 48 children are on the Head Start waitlist and 16 on the EHST waitlist that are over income.
- The Head Start/Early Head Start grant was submitted on October 30. Wendy thanked Keith and Danni for getting it completed and submitted.
- Danni was notified on Friday by the Missouri Valley Superintendent that the district will not be renewing our lease for our Head Start classroom for the 25-26 school year. We were told the district plans on serving 3-year-olds in the future and they will need the space back for their use. We will have to find another space to relocate our classroom.
- There are currently five openings in Head Start and Early Head Start located in Council Bluffs, Red Oak, Harlan, Hastings, and MO Valley. We did get a couple new people hired over the past few weeks. Angela and the Head Start staff are working very hard to get people interviewed and offer positions to qualified staff.

DECEMBER BOARD MEETING

Wendy stated in the past the board decides on whether we have a December meeting or not, if anything were to arise that needs addressed, we will have an Executive Committee meeting. Trista McLaughlin made the motion not to have a December board meeting, Lisa Connell seconded. Motion carried.

STAFF REPORTS

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

FISCAL REPORT

Keith had nothing new to add to his report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

- A letter dated October 25, was included in the board packet approving our FY 2024 CSBG self-assessment report. WCCA met all 58 CSBG organizational standards. Wendy thanked Brittany for completing the report and ensuring the agency is meeting all of the standards.
- WCCA had our Weatherization Home Inspection Audit October 15-17. The letter and report were included in the board packet. The purpose of the inspection is to assure the quality of the work completed. The auditors review health and safety measures, attic air sealing, insulation and review the paperwork. Six homes were

inspected in our service area located in: Atlantic, Council Bluffs, Clarinda, Tabor, and Walnut. There were three findings that needed corrective work. All work is being completed and we will be submitting the report to the state for review. The clients also commented on how pleased they were with the services and our staff. The state auditor complimented WCCA on our Weatherization program and stated we received an A+ on our audit and that we have one of the best programs in the state. Wendy thanked Kelly and his staff for a job well done.

- The state is implementing a new change for the Weatherization program starting January 1. Currently, all contractors including electrical, and HVAC bid on the homes that need Weatherization Services. Due to the rising costs in both labor and supplies the program is becoming less cost effective for many homes. The homes are required to have a cost to savings ratio of at least a 1 as determined by the initial audit performed. To combat this issue and help control costs agencies will go back to a flat rate, which is how the program use to operate prior to ARRA funding in 2011. Weatherization contractors will be paid a flat rate for services performed based on last years 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. Kelly Mahlberg, Weatherization Director has already communicated the change to our Weatherization Contractor, and we don't anticipate any disruption in services.
- Our new FaDSS Director Mary Wisnieski started last week, and we are excited to have her on board. She has a Bachelors Degree in Social Work and a Masters Degree in Human Services. She has spent the last five years working with Lutheran Family Services as a Foster Care Supervisor and has a lot of knowledge and experience in case management services and working with families. She will be working and training with Jamie Johnson, FaDSS Director, from New Opportunities for the next few months. We also hired another FaDSS Specialist for Council Bluffs, and she started a few weeks ago. We still need to find one more specialist to be fully staffed in the program.
- FaDSS currently has 59 families enrolled with a capacity of 95. The state does not want us to enroll any new families at this time, instead they will be put on our waiting list until the Director and new specialist are trained further in the program.
- Child Care Resource and Referral was issued the FY'25 Contract for the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (GO NAPSACC) grant again for \$10,000. The grant funding is used to help childcare providers to prioritize, plan, and take action to make healthy changes for the services delivered. Early childhood intervention is the best chance to prevent health problems and to tackle health disparities.
- The Iowa Department of Health and Human services is contracting with WCCA's CCR&R staff to deliver Technical Assistance to coach the childcare provider through the 5 Steps of Go NAPSACC: (Access, Plan, Take Action, Learn More, Keep It Up). Each provider is to create an action plan in one or more physical activity policy or environmental change(s) for a total of two or more changes(s). The provider must have completed two hours of obesity prevention, nutrition, or physical activity. The contract requires a minimum of 12 participants. Stipends are in the amount of \$400 per a home or \$750 per center provider. Providers must be a participant in CACFP in order to be eligible.
- November 1 was the first day for all households to apply for LIHEAP assistance. The new online application is not user friendly, and we are not promoting it until it is working better. If clients inquire about the online application, we are mailing them an application or making an appointment as it is a more efficient method of getting the information. To date we have approved 1,983 LIHEAP applications. WCCA is leading the state in the number of applications taken and reviewed. Wendy is extremely proud of all the staff for their commitment and hard work during this difficult time.
- The new LIHEAP system still has a lot of issues, and we are continuing to work as hard as we can to process and approve applications. Clients are still going to experience delays in making appointments as the time to complete applications is longer and more complicated with the new system. Most offices are now open Monday-Thursday 8-4:30 to take LIHEAP applications. Cass, Harrison, Page, Pott, and Shelby are still closed in the afternoon as they continue to catch up on AE applications. All offices are closed to the public on Fridays so staff can input data into the new system.
- We are still waiting to receive our FY 2025 LIHEAP contract amendment. The first LIHEAP payments will likely not be distributed until the first of January. We were able to process and pay over \$22,000 in ECIP

payments on Friday even though the new system wasn't working properly. Wendy thanked Keith and Brittany for helping to get the crisis payments out.

- Our longtime Mills County Outreach Specialist Tracey Lustgraaf took a new job closer to home and her last day was November 13. With her vacancy combined with CSBG funding constraints, and the number of households served we have decided once again to have one Outreach Staff cover both Fremont and Mills County. Kathlene Sawyer, Fremont County Outreach Specialist has begun working in both offices. She will be working in the Mills County office on Tuesday and Thursday's and the Fremont County office on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday's. This schedule is subject to change due to the holiday schedule. We know this will be a change for clients but it is the best option in sustaining services in both counties long-term.
- We currently own our Mills County Outreach office building in Malvern, which is in bad shape and has been for a long time and we can no longer afford the upkeep it would require to maintain. We have been actively looking for other rental space in various locations with no success until recently. Wendy was presented with the opportunity to rent space in the SWITCH Center in Hastings where our new Head Start classroom is located. Wendy looked at the space and it would be a perfect fit and it located right across the hall from the Head Start classroom. We have already found a buyer for our Malvern building and hope to move in either April/May timeframe as we need to get through LIHEAP season first. The new location will provide a safe and updated space to provide essential services.
- The Harrison County Outreach office has had very limited office hours and the staff member notified us last Thursday she was resigning from her position. We were able to hire the new Shelby County Outreach Assistant for the Harrison County office as she resides in Logan and would be a good fit. She started her training today and will working in the office for 32 hours per week starting November 25. Wendy asked for continued patience as she learns the new LIHEAP system as it takes significant time to process them. All of the Harrison County AE applications have been sent to other offices to be processed and should all be completed by the end of the week. We continue to reroute LIHEAP calls as necessary to other offices to take LIHEAP applications as needed for Harrison County clients.
- Homeland Security was approved for additional Tetra Tech Disaster Case Management services in Harrison, Mills, and Shelby for the tornados in April. Pottawattamie County was already approved. The case managers will help them with their unmet needs.
- Monona and Shelby County Outreach offices are preparing for Christmas adoption programs.
- Keith, Angela, and Wendy had WCCA's insurance renewal meeting with Wellmark Blue Cross/ Blue Shield on October 23. Our rates for the current plan we have were going to increase significantly due to numerous factors. We decided to go with an alternative plans with Wellmark Blue Cross/Blue Shield which was a premium increase but not as significant as our original plans. WCCA increased their contribution to 80% for the premium cost for employee only coverage. We also decided to add spousal coverage again as an option. Our dental premiums remained the same. The new plan will start January 1.
- Our offices will be closed on November 28 and 29 for the Thanksgiving holiday. December 24 and 25 for the Christmas holiday.
- Wendy will be headed to County Board of Supervisor meetings to talk about the services West Central Community Action provided in FY 24 either in person or by zoom the next couple of months and asking for your continued financial support. Wendy met with Cass County today and will meet with Harrison County on Thursday.
- Wendy thanked Carol Vinton for her seven years of service on our board. Carol has been an outstanding member and so supportive of our agency, staff, and programs. She will be missed.
- If there are any changes in the representatives on our board from the County Board of Supervisors please let Brittany know as soon as possible so we can plan for the January board meeting.
- Wendy wished everyone and their families a wonderful Thanksgiving and thanked them for taking the time to serve on our board. Wendy appreciates their dedication to WCCA, our staff, and the many programs that we administer. Have a great holiday.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT

Charles Parkhurst dismissed all staff. Charlie stated the Personnel Committee met prior to the Board of Directors meeting and explained the process and read the performance appraisal and compensation conducted by the Personnel Committee. Wendy's Annual Performance Appraisal was completed with the result of an overall exceptional rating. Charla Schmid made a motion to accept and approve the annual performance appraisal for the Executive Director as presented by the Personnel Committee, Lisa Connell seconded. The Board of Directors reviewed the annual compensation. A motion was made by Wendy Richter to approve compensation for the Executive Director as presented by the Personnel Committee, Kris Olson Harmon seconded. Motion was carried.

Wendy Richter made a motion to adjourn at 6:25 p.m. Kris Olson Harmon seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kris Olson Harmon
WCCA Board Secretary