

**Joint  
Senior Services Advisory Council (SSAC)  
and  
Disability Services Advisory Council (DSAC)  
Meeting  
MEETING MINUTES  
Tuesday, February 7, 2023**

**SSAC Members Present:** Mitzi Naucler, Chair; Robynn Pease, Vice Chair and Care Planning Committee (CPC) Chair; Suzanne Lazaro, Issues and Advocacy (IAC) Chair; Richard Montgomery, SSAC Membership and Nominating Committee (MNC) Chair; Bill Turner; Terri Fackrell; and Lee Strandberg.

**DSAC Members Present:** Jan Molnar-Fitzgerald, Chair; Allison Hobgood, Vice Chair; Joanne Cvar; and Michelle Giammona.

**Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) Members Present:** Dawn Rustrum and Sandy Potter.

**Guests:** Dennis Epstein; Peggy McGuire, Community Services Consortium (CSC); Holly Bollman, Lumina Hospice and Palliative Care; Nery Mortimer; Shelia Stiley, NW Coastal Housing; Dina Eldridge, CSC; and Anna Dvorak, Linn-Benton Housing Authority (LBHA).

**Members Absent:** Kay McDonald

**Staff:** Randi Moore, Senior and Disability Services (SDS) Director; Alicia Lucke, Community Services Program (CSP) Manager; Kim Cooper, SDS Executive Assistant; and Terri Sharpe, SDS Administrative Assistant.

**1. Welcome, Introductions, and Additions to the Agenda (SSAC Chair Mitzi Naucler):**

SSAC Chair Naucler called the meeting to order at 10:04 am. Introductions were made, including guests.

**2. Approval of Minutes:**

**ACTION:** Motion to approve the December 6, 2022 Joint SSAC/DSAC meeting minutes made by Bill Turner, seconded by Jan Molnar-Fitzgerald. Motion passed unanimously.

With a need for more DSAC members, SSAC members Susanne Lazaro and Richard Montgomery offered to change their membership from SSAC to DSAC since they work with both aging adults and people with disabilities.

**ACTION:** SDS Director Randi Moore and SDS Administrative Assistant Terri Sharpe will meet to discuss Suzanne Lazaro and Richard Montgomery switching from SSAC to DSAC.

**3. Approval of Dennis Epstein's SSAC Membership Application (SSAC Membership and Nominating Committee (MNC) Chair Richard Montgomery)**

**ACTION:** Motion to approve the SSAC membership application of Dennis Epstein and send it to Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments (OCWCOG) Board of Directors for their approval made by SSAC MNC Chair Richard Montgomery, seconded by Lee Strandberg. Motion passed unanimously.

**4. How to Partner to Support Housing for Older Adults and People with Disabilities (Linn-Benton Housing Authority (LBHA) Section 8 Occupancy Supervisory Anna Dvorak and Community Services Consortium (CSC) Housing Manager Dina Eldridge):**

LBHA Section 8 Occupancy Supervisor Anna Dvorak went over the different types of vouchers that are available through LBHA and some of the difficulties older adults and people with disabilities have using LBHA's programs.

- Section 8 voucher – There are about 2,500 of these vouchers between Linn and Benton Counties. To qualify for the program a person must be income eligible and if they are, they are then placed on the waiting list. If a household has an elderly, disabled, or minor in the house they will be given preference and placed above someone who doesn't. The waiting list for this preferred group is about two to three years out. LBHA has never reached those individuals that do not have a preference, such as young female without children who have low income.

When people are pulled off the waiting list they are pulled off in batches. LBHA pulls around 150 – 350 off at one time. If someone is terminally ill (life expectancy is two years or less) they will be given a higher preference.

- LBHA partners with Community Services Consortium (CSC) where CSC can give up to 60 referrals a year for households with disability or homelessness issues. CSC does the verification on these.
- Emergency Housing vouchers – HUD issued vouchers during COVID to get immediate assistance to someone who is homeless. LBHA received 178 of these vouchers which have all been filled. Once a person goes off the program LBHA can fill that slot again. These are available through a referral from CSC. Come September 30th, when people come off the program those vouchers will no longer be available for reuse.
- VASH vouchers – This is a VA supported Section 8 voucher that comes from the VA. They work just like a Section 8 voucher, but they have supported services attached through the VA. LBHA have received 20 more of these vouchers so they currently have 95 VASH vouchers available.

**ACTION:** Ms. Dvorak will forward the VA contact information for interested veterans to SDS Director Moore.

When a person is issued a Section 8 voucher, they are given a dollar amount from HUD (initially, they cannot pay more than 30 – 40 percent of their income for rent and utilities), along with LBHA's dollar amount (the amount LBHA pays for that household). The combined dollar amount from HUD and LBHA is the budget they have in finding their own unit. LBHA recertifies them annually so this number can change.

The number of units of housing available within the voucher fee schedule are few and hard to find. LBHA does partner with landlords to reduce rents but as of late it is difficult to find landlords willing to do this.

CSC Executive Director Peggy McGuire said the Emergency Housing vouchers come with extra funding to help with some of the unexpected costs that give landlords incentives to participate. This extra funding cannot be used toward rent. The ability to use these vouchers in Benton County and the work of the Housing Navigator have been successful partnerships.

LBHA Supervisor Dvorak clarified that this is only for the 178 Emergency Housing voucher and not for the Section 8 vouchers which are the most common vouchers and the ones that SDS would be referring consumers to.

Joanne Cvar inquired about Lincoln County.

CSC Housing Manager Dina Eldridge said Lincoln County has their own Housing Authority and they received 24 vouchers which are all currently filled.

One of the biggest concerns with the Section 8 voucher is the lack of resources to help seniors and people with disabilities look for a place to live.

ACTION: LBHA Supervisor Dvorak will look into how many seniors and people with disabilities are on the program.

Richard Montgomery reminded everyone that in Oregon, source of income is a protected class and landlords should not be discriminating against people with vouchers if they qualify. If they are discriminated against, then they should seek Legal Aid.

Nery Mortimore pointed out that in Lebanon, Farmworker Housing Development Corporation (FHDC) is building low-income apartments and would like to know if there is communication with them and other developers to build more apartments. Because of the college, rents are increasing far higher than the vouchers being given out. They are seeing a lot of seniors and people with disabilities becoming homeless.

CSC Executive Director McGuire said FHDC owns and is developing Colonia Paz in Lebanon. The first phase was opened to agriculture workers, and the second and third phase will be open to the general population. It is affordable housing in which the funding comes with certain requirements to keep the rates for rent low. There are other opportunities for developers to develop around the tri-county region, but they all have to compete in highly competitive processes to get the funding to be able to afford to do that.

SDS Director Moore asked how often LBHA pulls the batches of names off the waiting list and why there is a large section of Section 8 vouchers that go unused.

LBHA Supervisor Dvorak said they pull batches about four times per year. When they send a batch out (about 200) their response is a little less than 50 percent. They are sent a letter letting them know they were at the top of the list along with a packet to fill out. The packets are then processed with some not qualifying due to over income, sex offender status, currently engaged in drug activity, or they do not get the paperwork back in time. Out of the 200, 80 – 90 people will be given a voucher with 120 days to find a place. Only about half end up doing so, thus, only about 30% of the 200 end up using the voucher.

SDS Director Moore asked if LBHA would be losing their Housing Navigator when the Emergency Housing vouchers end. OCWCOG has a Housing Navigator position, and she would like to partner with LBHA in having the OCWCOG's Housing Navigator help SDS's Medicaid consumers in locating a housing unit.

Allison Hobgood suggested the Corvallis Daytime Drop-in Center's Needs Navigators could also assist with this.

CSC Housing Service Manager Dina Eldridge shared that CSC partners with both Housing Authorities. CSC offers programs to help people with security deposits who are either homeless, couch surfing, or need to move due to eviction.

Ms. Eldridge clarified that they use HUD's definition of homelessness which is to be either in a homeless shelter or living in a place where one is not meant to be living. If someone is couch surfing, they are not considered homeless by HUD's definition, but CSC does have programs for them.

For CSC to help someone with a deposit, they must be houseless or at the risk of being houseless.

CSC has a large program called Supported Services for Veteran's Families (SSVF) for veterans who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of losing their housing.

CSC offers both long-term and short-term programs that can help anybody who is unhoused. Short-term programs can help people who need to catch up on their rent to prevent becoming unhoused along with utility assistance. There is a program for elders (58 or older) as well.

SDS Director Moore asked if in the application packet that LBHA sends out if there is a question that asks if they could use some assistance in navigating the system because they are an older adult or a person with disability. If not, then is this something they could include and then OCWCOG's Housing Navigator could help them.

LBHA Supervisor Dvorak said they have a general question asking if they need help processing the application. She said it is something they could add but she is worried whether OCWCOG will have the capacity to help with all the applicants that she foresees needing assistance.

SDS Director Moore asked if LBHA ever follows through to those who do not use their voucher to find out why and what the barriers were. She thinks it would be interesting to find out if there is a barrier with seniors and people with disabilities, and if there is, that would be how to utilize OCWCOG and LBHA's partnership.

Robynn Pease asked either LBHA Supervisor Dvorak or CSC Housing Manager Eldridge if they could give a national context to the housing shortage and homelessness we are seeing in our area compared to other areas across the country. Are there parts of the United States where the voucher program is accessible and usable?

LBHA Supervisor Dvorak said it is a national issue, however, Albany and Corvallis rank higher than other cities nationwide in terms of high rents.

CSC Housing Manager Eldridge said homelessness and the housing shortage is rising in most areas of the country, but the west coast is the extreme of that. California, Oregon, and Washington have the worst shortages and highest increases in rents on affordability.

ACTION: SDS Director Moore would like to help with a survey to help identify the barriers of older adults and people with disabilities who are not using their vouchers. SDS Director Moore, CSC Housing Manager Eldridge, and LBHA Section 8 Occupancy Supervisor Dvorak will discuss ways SDS can help CSC and LBHA. In six months Ms. Eldridge and Ms. Dvorak will return to update the Councils on their progress.

## **5. Care Planning Committee (CPC) Report (CPC Chair Robynn Pease):**

The CPC met on January 10th where they reviewed the Area Plan's goals and purpose. The CPC brainstormed on how to monitor the progress that is being made in reaching these goals to ensure that they are staying on top of the strategic plan in reaching the goals for the duration of the Area Plan.

SDS Director Moore gave the CPC an update on Meals on Wheels where they are trying to revamp and upgrade the program.

SDS Director Moore also updated the CPC on the Housing Navigator position that SDS is looking to fill.

The next CPC meeting is scheduled for March 7, 2023.

## 6. Community Services Program (CSP) Report (CPS Manager Alicia Lucke):

There are many programs that fall under CSP but for time's sake, CPS Manager Lucke went over a select few programs. Anyone that is 55 years of age or older is eligible to be an AmeriCorps volunteer who help folks out in the community, but mainly they help seniors age in place.

- Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance (SHIBA) program – Volunteers help people navigate through the A, B, C, and Ds of Medicare. There are around 33 volunteers in the three counties.
- Senior Companion program – Offers service to older adults and people with disabilities who do not qualify for Ride Line services as well as giving assistance and friendship to older adults who have difficulty with daily living tasks. This is direct one-on-one service. Volunteers are 55 or older and are at 200% of the federal poverty level. They receive a stipend that will be going up to \$4.00 per hour on April 1st. They also receive mileage reimbursement at 40 cents per mile. There are openings for about 10 more volunteers with a need in south Lincoln County and Monroe.

Because this is a direct federal grant to OCWCOG, volunteers will go through an FBI check, sex offender check, and State crime check in addition to the Area Agency on Aging checks. There are 2 interviews and 20 hours of pre-service orientation along with two different job shadows in the drive along before they are placed with a client.

Joanne Cvar shared that she does a local newsletter that serves Lincoln County and volunteered to put in a notice for Senior Companion volunteers if CSP Manager Lucke will send her a notice.

ACTION: SDS Administrative Assistant Terri Sharpe will send CSP Manager Alicia Lucke Joanne Cvar's email address.

- Stand By Me Oregon program – This is a financial empowerment program that helps provide financial stability to individuals and families through free one-on-one coaching to help people navigate their own goals. There is no income requirement, and they are now in Linn, Benton, Lincoln, and Marion Counties. There are 18 coaches with four of them bilingual. The program is successful, but CSP Manager Lucke would like to serve more seniors and people with disabilities.

Contact information:

- Email: [standbymeorgon@ocwcog.org](mailto:standbymeorgon@ocwcog.org)
- CSP Manager Alicia Lucke phone number: 541-924-8440

Stand By Me Videos:

<https://vimeo.com/766699892> For Clients

<https://vimeo.com/767082993> For volunteers interested in serving.



AmeriCorp  
Programs in Review

For more detailed information on these three programs double click here:

- Meals on Wheels (MOW) is also part of CSP with SDS Director Moore currently supervising the program as it goes under a revamp.

Nery Mortimore questioned who provides the meals and if there is a nutritionist involved. She has a neighbor who is receiving very small meals and some without protein.

SDS Director Moore said TRIO is the MOW food contractor and they have a registered dietician that puts together the menus and meals. She suggested Ms. Mortimore come to the Meals on Wheels Advisory Committee meeting next week to share her input.

ACTION: – SDS Administrative Assistant Terri Sharpe will send Nery Mortimore the invite to the MOWAC meeting.

## **7. Issues and Advocacy Committee (IAC) Report (IAC Chair Suzanne Lazaro):**

The Mental Health Improvement Act was approved on the federal level which will go into effect January 1, 2024. This will improve mental health access throughout the country by providing Medicare reimbursement to Marriage and Family Counselors.

Governor Kotek's priority is housing, so the IAC is hoping to integrate more mental health initiatives to advocate for more housing.

Oregon Association of Area Agencies on Aging and Disabilities (O4AD), SDS's advocacy group, has been providing legislative updates.

- There is a legislative concept being developed by the Department of Health Services (DHS) to improve the LGBTQ rights of individuals in long-term care facilities. The DHS has done a lot of outreach to support this initiative.
- There is also a look at mental health services gaps for entitled Medicaid long-term care services.
- O4AD is monitoring the Medicaid matching grants for Oregon Project Independence (OPI) which allows people whose income is too high to qualify for Medicaid to receive similar support services.
- There is a strong push for SB576 that allows Oregonians with disabilities to work while maintaining their long-term support services.

They are looking for written testimony by February 9th for this.

The IAC met on December 6, 2022, where it was decided the IAC would address the needs of rural and relatively poor seniors and people with disabilities who are less likely to apply for SDS benefits. IAC's strategy for advocating for this will be to gather information and create a white paper with facts and personalize it with case studies of either fictional or real people.

Nery Mortimore asked how SDS is helping our Latin community in the disability and mental health situations find the resources they need.

IAC Chair Lazaro said there are a lot of people out in the community who have needs but not the resources. There are not enough mental health specialists to help all, especially those on Medicare which is why the passing of the Mental Health Improvement Act is so important.

SDS Director Moore said that in the Area Plan there are sections addressing underserved individuals, including Latino communities, and would like Ms. Mortimore's input.

## **8. Other Business and Announcements:**

N/A

**9. Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:36 am.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, April 4, 2023.

*Meeting Minutes were recorded by Terri Sharpe.*