

SCMCAA Analysis

The entirety of the gathered information, surveys, material from the Community Commons Toolkit data, and meeting reports, was reviewed by SCMCAA's Leadership Team. Ann Smith, Executive Director, presented information and reviewed the information and challenged the team to look at the findings, and decide whether SCMCAA could make possible impacts regarding specific conditions, or if the agency was already making impacts.

Use of Income:

It was determined that secondary data and meeting reports were generally in agreement. Needs identified included topics such as "How to save money", "Money Management" and "Budgeting". It was determined that SCMCAA could work toward making an increased impact by researching enhanced "LIFT type" classes, and by working toward bundled services and offerings to our Head Start families. Another strategy, would increase our use of Social Media to promote events and opportunities, as well as "newsletters" to families, partners and news outlets.

Employment:

It was determined that all three top survey choices were fully supported by secondary data and meeting responses. Needs identified included topics such as "Lack of good paying jobs", "unable to find jobs in area", "cost of child care". SCMCAA has embarked on a path of expansion regarding child care, by working to expand Early Head Start. We also refer clients to employment opportunities, Career Centers, as well as to job opportunities within the agency. SCMCAA offers WIOA Services in six of our seven county area. Discussion regarding bundled services to Head Start would be a method to ensure that these families receive all that they are eligible for, including WIOA. Expanded funding opportunities will be sought out and discussed with the Leadership Team.

Education:

All three top survey choices were supported by statistical data as well as focus group information. Topics such as: "No High School Diploma", "Lack of Vocational Skills or College", "No dropout intervention or expanded opportunities for youth" were identified. SCMCAA will work to ensure that the REALL Simulation, coupled with Job Readiness Training be made available to every county in our services area. SCMCAA can continue to make impacts to families by hosting or partnering to provide services at our School Readiness Events. We can also increase the number of referrals to existing services by increasing referrals and bundling services for Head Start Families. SCMCAA can also offer increased learning opportunities to staff, and cross training regarding Case Management services.

Housing:

It was determined that all three survey choices were supported. Topics included: "Cost of rent/house payments", "Cost of utilities/deposits", "Housing needs ie: repairs, roof, etc.". Another topic that has recently emerged in our service area was reduced access to available housing. SCMCAA is making an impact in this area by applying for funding for these types of needs. SCMCAA also offers Weatherization, although "wait lists of applications" is a concern. It was determined that bundled services to our Head Start Families would be beneficial. SCMCAA has the capacity to apply for and administer programs as they become available (such as Disaster Flood Relief).

Nutrition:

It was determined that all three survey choices were supported. Topics at the forefront of this category included: "Lack of Education in how to prepare meals", "Not enough income when making use of

resources”, “not eligible for food stamps and or eligibility unknown”. SCMCAA makes impacts in this area, but all agreed that we can do more. SCMCAA is a strong partner with area food pantries, and has committed to supporting efforts already underway. SCMCAA will host a “Feed the Funnel” event to benefit area food pantries. Increased knowledge of what is available, coupled with a more robust effort to use other area referral clearing houses (such as United Way 211) would be beneficial.

Emergencies:

It was determined that the topic of “emergencies” is a fluid subject. Immediate needs such as assistance needed during the recent flood were discussed. The top three categories identified were “Alcohol and drug abuse”, “Lack of income for basic needs”, and “Lack of Shelters for various needs”. Alcohol and Substance abuse were topics identified throughout the service area, with much discussion devoted to these topics during our focus groups. SCMCAA already makes impacts in some of these areas with programs such as LIHEAP, but has very little involvement with substance abuse. Court associated poverty (unpaid fines, SATOP Classes, SR22 Insurance Cost) was also identified . SCMCAA has pledged to impact a limited number of clients as part of a pilot program for the Reynolds County Area. SCMCAA also has plans to offer a “Car Care Clinic” to single mothers and elderly clients in the Shannon County area.

Various:

In researching the data contained in our focus group notes, several instances were noted regarding the lack of available volunteers (especially of non-low income citizens). SCMCAA has offered Poverty Simulations in the past, and it has been suggested by some of our community partners that this is needed again. SCMCAA will pledge to offer at least two simulations in our service area. It is hoped that we can find a willing partner (such as Chamber of Commerce, or Ministerial Alliance) to work with us in this effort.

SCMCAA’s service area offers many challenges, but also opportunity. Our focus group activities were well attended, staff was energetic, and we received good response to our survey efforts. The overwhelming responses to our Customer Satisfaction Surveys were positive! SCMCAA will maintain “open” collecting status on these surveys so that we can continuously monitor the needs and concerns of the citizens in our area.