



Annual Report - 2021

Board, Commission, Agency, Authority, or Committee Name: Monticello Area Community Action Agency (MACAA)

Committee Members: Juliana Arsali, Chair, represents Albemarle County. A full list of MACAA's Board of Directors for FY21 is attached.

Meeting Frequency:

Provide the committee's meeting times and the number of meetings the committee has had in the past year.

MACAA's Board of Directors meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at 5:30pm. All meetings are open to the public and comply with the Freedom of Information Act and are held via Zoom.

MACAA's Board of Directors met nine times during FY21; this includes regular and special meetings.

Meeting Attendance:

List each committee members attendance at each meeting.

Mrs. Arsali was appointed to MACAA's Board of Directors in November 2020 and has attended six of seven meetings held during prior to June 30, 2021; she requested an excused absence for the missed meeting in advance (June 2020).

Summary:

Provide a summary of the committee activities of the past year to include committee milestones, accomplishments, and challenges.

Programs & Services

MACAA's Board of Directors has taken on a number of challenges and opportunities during FY21 in service to Albemarle County residents. Most notably was the operation four virtual/hybrid **Head Start** classrooms during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although class sizes were reduced to comply with the Virginia Department of Social Services Licensing Division COVID-19 response and mitigation strategies, virtual learning proved to empower parents with resources and supports to

encourage engaged play and foundational skills for positive, developmentally beneficial activities within the home.

MACAA welcomed a new resident to the **Hope House** property within the County and provided intensive coaching for the family. Family goals and community-based resources and referrals have been established to provide the family with an extended network and enhanced social capital. The Hope House residents will continue building skills and financial resilience as they strive toward securing safe, stable housing during the coming years.

Project Discovery continued to provide eligible high school students with virtual workshops, career cafes, and college preparatory resources throughout the academic year. Fifteen students actively set goals and developed the skills and tools necessary to ensure on-time graduation from high school and a plan for post-secondary education or workforce advancement.

Accomplishments

MACAA applied and was awarded a \$1.4M federal grant by the Office of Head Start, a Division of the Office of Health and Human Services, to support the development and implementation of Early Head Start programming for eligible families with children ages birth to three.

About Early Head Start: Early Head Start programs provide family-centered services for low-income families with very young children. These programs are designed to promote the development of the children, and to enable their parents to fulfill their roles as parents and to move toward self-sufficiency.

Early Head Start programs provide similar services as preschool Head Start programs, but they are tailored for the unique needs of infants and toddlers. Early Head Start programs promote the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of infants and toddlers through safe and developmentally enriching caregiving. This prepares these children for continued growth and development and eventual success in school and life.

Following the general Head Start model, Early Head Start programs support parents, both mothers and fathers, in their role as primary caregivers and teachers of their children. Programs assist families in meeting their own personal goals and achieving self-sufficiency across a wide variety of domains, such as housing stability, continued education, and financial security.

Early Head Start programs also mobilize the local community to provide the resources and environment necessary to ensure a comprehensive, integrated array of services and support for children and families. MACAA's Early Head Start program will include health and developmental screenings, referring students and their families for services as needed.

MACAA Early Head Start will offer 48 center-based placements for very young children in Albemarle and Charlottesville, and 12 home-based placements for families within our region who prefer to serve as their child's teacher in the home. In addition to meeting a critical

childcare need, this program will generate more than 20 full-time, living wage jobs in our community.

In addition to providing an evidence-based curriculum for enrolled children, MACAA will also provide comprehensive family support services to promote parent and family engagement. This year-round program will include wrap-around childcare, ensuring parents are able to maintain employment and support families as they strive for financial resilience. MACAA Early Head Start will also engage ReadyKids and Child Health Partnership to provide prenatal services for expectant mothers. This partnership will ensure programs and services are not duplicated, and that families have agency as they select and engage with community partners. Collectively, this approach provides a continuum of care as they advance from Early Head Start to Head Start with the support of cognitive, social, emotional and physical developmental opportunities that prepare them to be ready for school and ready for life.

Enrollment criteria for MACAA's Early Head Start program will include categorial eligibility for students in foster care and those who are homeless; additional eligibility criteria will be established by program administrators and Policy Council to ensure equitable access for the most vulnerable children. The program is anticipated to open in 2022.

Opportunities

MACAA is seeking opportunities to pilot programs in Albemarle County that bring best-practices in reducing and eliminating barriers for families experiencing low income. The agency is seeking additional data and community partnerships to confirm next steps in creating new programs and services that have a lasting, positive impact for families in our community.