

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

MEETING MINUTES
2025-2029 Consolidated Plan Steering Committee
Non-Homeless Special Needs

Tuesday, February 27, 2024 at 7:30 AM
Virtual

Agencies Represented:

Alejandra Lopez	Stateline Literacy Council	Cindy Browning	Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)
Elizabeth Knapp-Spooner	Community Action, Inc.	Kelsey Hood-Christensen	Family Services of N. IL and S. WI
Kitty Rounds	Community Action, Inc.	Hal Hoy	Resident
Shari Faber	Rock County Public Health Strategist	Steve Howland	Beloit League of Women’s Voters, Board of FPGB, BATFoH leadership team
Jennifer Thompson	Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Rock County	Jacqueline Revels	Rock County Human Service
Megan McBride	City of Beloit	Brian Gile	City of Beloit
Teri Downing	City of Beloit		

1. Purpose of the Consolidated Plan

a. Entitlement community “application” for CDBG. This document is what makes the City eligible for Block Grant funding.

Megan McBride explained that since Beloit is an entitlement community, CDBG funding is received annual based on a formula. In order to receive the City’s allocated funding, the City is required to prepare and submit three plans. The Consolidated Plan must be prepared and submitted every 5 years to identify community needs and summarize how CDBG funds will be used to address those needs. Each year the City must prepare and submit an Annual Plan which gives a greater level of detail on how CDBG funds will be spent, and also must be tied back to the 5-year Consolidated Plan. Finally, each year the City is required to submit a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) which details accomplishments and residents assisted with CDBG funding the prior year.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

b. City of Beloit completed a 5-year plan in 2019 which expires at the end of 2024.

Megan McBride explained that the City is in the final year of its current Consolidated Plan, which was prepared in 2019. In 2024, the City will prepare its 2025- 2029 Consolidated Plan. She explained that the City's Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas (NRSA) Plan will also be updated in 2024 for the same 2025- 2029 timeframe. Beloit's NRSA neighborhoods are the Merrill and Hackett neighborhoods, and having an up-to-date NRSA Plan connected to the City's Consolidated Plan allows Beloit to invest additional federal funds into public service activities which specifically benefit residents of the NRSA neighborhoods.

c. This committee will help identify the needs in the Beloit community to be addressed over the next five years.

Megan McBride explained that input received from the steering committee meetings, along with input received from residents, will inform the needs and priorities included in the City's Consolidated Plan. This will guide how federal CDBG dollars are allocated over the next five years.

2. Needs Assessment

a. How Well Are We Currently Meeting Needs

i. Elderly and Frail Elderly

- Rock County Health Department supports Beloit Meals on Wheels, which provides free meals and welfare checks for homebound seniors.
- RSVP providers the following services for seniors:
 - Free transportation for seniors for necessary appointments as well as basic needs such as grocery shopping
 - Provides volunteer experiences for older adults which keeps them engaged in the community and allows them to age successfully and independently.
- ADRC of Rock County provides the following services for seniors:
 - Transportation for seniors and disabled elderly adults in Rock County for a small fee (\$5 one way for trips within the city, \$6 one way between Rock County communities). They have small busses with wheelchair lifts to transport residents to appointments and other places they need to access (example: grocery shopping).
 - A staff person specializes in dementia care and assists seniors with dementia to remain safely in their homes, and also provides training to the community on caregiving and other supports for individuals with dementia.
 - Elderly Benefits Specialist at ADRC helps seniors in Beloit with insurance and benefits from the government. They had almost 500 participants in Rock

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

County they helped with Medicare over the past year. This allows them to more easily navigate retirement and benefits that they are allowed.

- Developing a “Find Your Own Driver” program to provide mileage reimbursement to residents who provide transportation to seniors and disabled adults in Rock County. This allows elderly and disabled adults to find their own rides from family, friends, or other people they trust and those people can be reimbursed for mileage at the federal mileage reimbursement rate. This also allows them to be reimbursed for rides for trips outside of Rock County, such as the VA hospitals in Madison or Milwaukee. ADRC is not currently able to provide transportation outside of Rock County, so this will help fill a current gap in service.

- Grinnell Hall is excellent and is a top resource for seniors in Rock County. They provide a number of programs around finances, benefits, socializing, and providing meals.

ii. Persons with mental, physical and development disabilities

- ADRC provides transportation for ACTIVE and Kandu programs for special needs populations including mental health needs.
- Mercy had a program that provided job training and work opportunities for young people with disabilities.
- Family Services has a program that works with mental health issues and helps with navigation in the Hackett and Merrill Neighborhoods.
- ADRC does not provide direct mental health services, but helps to get people into programs that can help them.

iii. AODA

- 2 sober living facilities in Rock County, but both in Janesville. New grant to expand to 5 facilities in the near future. Rock County Health Department identified AODA as the top need in Rock County.
- \$800,000 of new grants have been awarded recently for start-up funds for new sober living homes which provide up to two years of high-level treatment. Funds will also be for direct services.

iv. Veterans

- RSVP offers the “Vets Helping Vets” program to have volunteer drivers provide free transportation services to other veterans. Many of these rides require transporting clients to the closest VA hospitals which are in Madison and Milwaukee.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

- The Rock County Veterans Services programs help with job placement and financial support services for veterans.
- ADRC does not offer programs specific to veterans, but serve individuals who have military history and also redirect to a veterans' services specialist to help meet unique needs of veterans.
- Rock County Health Department also has a veteran specialist who provides information specific to veterans.

v. Victims of Domestic Violence

- Defy Domestic Abuse Beloit through Family Services provides case management and 10 room shelter for victims of domestic violence.
- Family Promise serves homeless families, and often encounters challenges serving families involved in active DV cases with providing appropriate case management and also ensuring safety and security of all residents at their current facility. Kelsey Hood-Christensen with Family Services offered that Defy could provide trainings to Family Promise staff to assist with the case management component.

vi. Residents with limited English proficiency

- Family Services has four (4) full time bilingual advocates providing case management and advocacy. They have limited funding to support immigration needs and a Spanish support group. They also contract to provide Spanish mental health providers.
- Stateline Literacy Council provides services to individuals who have limited English proficiency. Majority of students are Hispanic, but have some from other areas. Communication is difficult when working with citizenship, transportation, and finding other services.

b. Identify Gaps in Service

i. Elderly and Frail Elderly

- Demand for services is greater than the capacity of service providers to meet the needs
 - On average RSVP is able to fill about 10 out of every 12 requests for transportation daily. They are booked two weeks into the future.
 - ADRC Transit has to turn away clients and has to prioritize dialysis and other urgent health services. They ask for 2 days' notice for rides.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

- Shortage of qualified workers is a huge challenge for service providers, as well as difficulty recruiting and retaining volunteers
 - Many funding sources can only be used for direct expenses, but cannot be used for staff time or other indirect costs which are needed to run programs.
- Shortage of caregivers for elderly residents is a gap in services. The wage that is paid is very low and is slowly being increased. State programs struggle to provide services in their own homes and are resorting to not providing these services.
- Caregiver gap for the elderly is a priority especially for in-home care. More volunteers and caregivers are greatly needed.
- Rock County is also seeing a lack of transportation for doctor's appointment. Medicaid should be used for transportation, but is very difficult to use. This is especially challenging if providers are late or do not show up for appointments and need to be rescheduled.
- ADRC sees many gaps in service for home bound residents, particularly related to socialization programs. There used to be a program where volunteers would call and talk with elderly for social interactions. RSVP provides this service, but it is not being used very often.
- People who have a dementia crisis are unable to go home for safety concerns. There is no community housing in the area, so these individuals are often placed in inappropriate facilities to meet their needs.
- Most transportation services are focused on essential services such as medical care due to the limited program capacity. Therefore, transportation assistance for additional services such as grocery shopping, hair appointments, etc. which impact the wellbeing of elderly residents have been greatly reduced in order to meet most urgent client needs.
- ADRC started in 2013, but has started doing more marketing in the past year including radio, billboards, word of mouth, etc. Getting word out is difficult because it is not something that people think about until it is something that they need.

ii. **Persons with Physical, Mental and Development Disabilities**

- Mental Health is a major problem and we do not have enough mental health providers who serve youth.
- Family Services sees a huge increase in mental health needs both in terms of the number of needs as well as the severity of needs in the community. This has been above the level of need that they can accommodate. There are far too long of wait times for referrals especially for younger children.
- Family Services sees an increase in housing needs for those with mental health disabilities.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

- We need more work opportunities for those with mental and physical disabilities.
- Not enough mental health providers who are not overworked and have a long waitlist.
- ADRC cannot leave Rock County, but is looking into creating a program which could pay mileage to friends and family to drive outside of that area. This is helpful for veterans going to Madison and Milwaukee VA clinics for appointments and other medical needs.

iii. AODA

- Lower-level treatment facilities are available in Rock County now, but most people need to leave the community to get higher level treatment.
- Long waitlists for services, but they seem to be going down. Mental Health along with AODA is a large need, but frequently unavailable. Programs are losing participants because services cannot be provided in a timely manner due to demand consistently outpacing the capacity for services.
- Many participants lose access to services because of setbacks such as missing an appointment. There should be more forgiveness built into the recovery support services system.

iv. Veterans

- Transportation to Madison and Milwaukee VA is a challenge. RSVP has challenges to get volunteers to drive to Madison because they need to wait in town while the individual is in the appointment.

v. Domestic Violence Survivors

- Family Promise struggles with domestic violence services and monitoring for safety challenges. Family Services has offered to provide training and help with case management to Family Promise for victims of domestic violence who are homeless.
- Longer term housing is in need for victims of domestic violence.
- Emergency funds for individuals are needed for things such as vehicle repair and legal representation.
- Legal Action is not always willing to take cases in family law due to the time concern.
- Defy has had difficulties with the application process to get DV survivors into Public Housing in the past several months, with push back on the documentation of status as a victim of domestic violence. Since Defy serves self-

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

identified survivors, there have been issues with the Housing Authority accepting documentation provided by Defy of the individual's participation in Defy's programs. Since there is already a lack of affordable housing, this adds additional challenges when trying to find safe, stable housing for survivors.

vi. Residents with limited English proficiency

- Gaps in services for individuals with limited English proficiency are increasing. More navigation is needed for these individuals. Funding is limited for staff who are certified in these services as well as who run the programs.
- Culturally reflective services are needed in the community especially when it comes to English language learners.

3. Prioritize Needs and Objectives

i. Elderly and Frail Elderly

- Transportation
- Dementia services – Services to support residents with dementia as well as caregivers (including in-home caregivers)
- Meaningful volunteer experiences
- Social isolation for homebound seniors

ii. Persons with Physical, Mental and Development Disabilities

- Mental healthcare access
- More intensive and higher level services

iii. AODA

- Access to more intensive treatment options
- Sober living homes

iv. Veterans

- Transportation to access services not located in the Beloit area (VA hospitals in Madison and Milwaukee)

v. Domestic Violence Survivors

- Housing

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

- Legal resources
- Transportation

vi. **Residents with Limited English Proficiency**

- Capacity of services – Not enough translators, Spanish-speaking providers, and services specifically targeted towards the unique needs and challenges of residents with limited English proficiency
- Culturally reflective mental health services

4. **Strategies**

Strategies to help address the identified gaps in services and priority needs which were identified include:

- Create meaningful volunteer opportunities, and connect residents to these volunteer opportunities -- Service similar to what Volunteer Action Center used to provide to connect residents with volunteer experiences could help expand program capacities
- Incentives to help recruit and retain volunteers and staff
- Help getting the word out about services available
- Facilitate partnerships between existing service providers and private sector businesses to help meet gaps in services and make most efficient use of funding – There is a need for coordination so that each agency is not attempting to do outreach and relationship-building on their own.