

**COMMISSION ON COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES**  
**Thursday – February 25, 2021 – 8:30 A.M.**  
**Google Meet**

**Commission Members present via Google Meet:** John Murphy (Chair), Mary Whisenand (Vice-Chair), Kelly Busch (Secretary), Kevin Brown, Ajit Kumar

**Commission Members absent:** Anna Brown, Leland Shipley

**Staff Present via Google Meet:** San Wong, Bill Brand, Greg Pieper, Christine Taylor, Gwen Howe, Donna Bura

**Others Present via Google Meet:** Jean Logan, Executive Director Community Action of Siouxland - Roger Pavey, Executive Director Community Action of Eastern Iowa - Danna Buls, Interim Executive Director MATURA Community Action - Cindy Davis, Executive Director North Iowa Community Action, - Myra Thompson, Interim Executive Director ICAA, - Eric Kool, Director Polk County

- I. **Call to order-**John Murphy called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.
- II. **Introductions-** Introductions were made and a quorum was established.
- III. **Approval of the Agenda-** Ajit Kumar moved that the agenda be approved with the changes of the PY21 Weatherization State Plan approval moved up under the approval of the minutes. Kevin Brown seconded the motion. All commission members present voted aye. The motion carried.
- IV. **Approval of the November 13, 2020 Meeting Minutes –** Kelly Busch moved that the minutes be approved and Mary Whisenand seconded the motion. All commission members present voted aye. The motion carried.
- V. **Approval of PY21 Weatherization State Plan-** Gwen Howe shared that there are few changes in the Weatherization State Plan for the program year 2021 from PY20. The agency budgets are comparable to last year. One change is in the past, homes that were weatherized by from September 1994 to the present could not be looked at again. In the new plan, we can re-weatherize homes if it has been 15 years or longer. The other major change is an increase in funding for administrative allowance. The DCAA is also working on updating the Field Guidance Standards and moving the energy auditing process to an online format. A public hearing for PY21 Weatherization State Plan was held on February 1, 2021 virtually with no comments and the plan was submitted to DOE on February 2, 2021. Once the DCAA Commission approves the plan, the DOE will move forward with the application and it should be approved by the end of March. John Murphy asked if there were ramifications for less homes being weatherized due to the pandemic for future

funding. Gwen explained that numbers are down nationwide and Iowa is one of the first to start production again. She doesn't believe that lower numbers will cause a reduction in future funding. Mary Whisenand moved that the PY 21 Weatherization State Plan be approved as presented and Kelly Busch seconded the motion. All commission members present voted aye. The motion carried.

#### **VI. Administrator Report-Bill Brand**

Bill Brand thanked the Commissioners and the agency Executive Directors for attending the Google Meet meeting. Bill introduced San Wong, the Director of the Department of Human Rights. San thanked the Commission for their involvement and commitment to community action and thanked the grantees for their hard work during this pandemic. She thanked Kelly Busch for serving on the Commission for so many years. Bill shared that it is the Department of Human Rights Day which is normally presented with information at the Iowa State Capitol. The department created a video to share with Commissions, Boards, and Legislators demonstrating the important work that the department continues to do. Bill shared that Kelly Busch is stepping down from the Commission. Kelly has served as a dedicated member of the Commission for many years and has contributed and supported the DCAA. Kelly Busch responded that her favorite things to do were looking at the homes that were weatherized, meeting the owners and also traveling to different community action agencies and seeing all the different services they provide.

Bill shared that John Burnquist is retiring from the LIHEAP program and has been working for the state for over 40 years. John has helped thousands of families during the winter and summer months with dignity and respect and will be missed.

Bill also shared that Myra Thompson has taken on the role as Interim Executive Director for ICAA. Myra is a long time community action leader in Iowa. She worked at MICA for many years.

Bill explained that the Governor's request for the DCAA was status quo funding. The division was given Cares Act funding to help people due to the pandemic and many were helped with energy needs and food along with a variety of other activities through LIHEAP and CSBG. Bill thanked the community action agencies for all their hard work to quickly act to help Iowans during this pandemic while dealing with challenges of working remotely and keeping staff safe.

#### **VII. Bureau Chief Reports**

##### **CSBG-Greg Pieper**

Greg Pieper referred to the CSBG Commission report previously sent to the Commission by email. We have not received our final CSBG allotment amount for FY21 from HHS/OCS but we have received one grant award letter with \$1.9 million of funding and expect our next notification for additional funding soon. Iowa's CSBG program was allotted \$10,821,398.00 in CARES Act funding. Iowa's community action agencies have expended over \$4.2 million for a variety of services.

Greg shared that all of the FY20 CSBG Year-end reports were collected from the agencies and reviewed. The data from the reports will be used to complete the federal FY20 CSBG annual report which is due on April 30, 2021. A CSBG CARES Supplemental report and CSBG Disaster report are due May 31, 2021.

Greg explained that the FY2022 CSBG Community Action Plans and Applications are due on June 4, 2021 and information about that was presented to the ROMA subgroup who met on February 18<sup>th</sup>.

The FY21 Program desk reviews will be scheduled for: New Opportunities, HACAP, MATURA, Northeast Iowa, SCICAP and Upper Des Moines Community Action. Other desk reviews include a disaster funding review at Eastern Iowa and a disaster funding and CARES funding review for West Central Community Action. CARES funding reviews will also be completed for IMPACT and Sieda Community Action Agencies.

The FY2022-2023 CSBG State Plan will be prepared this spring and summer. HHS/OCS will start to survey the community action agencies to collect data for the ACSI Report. The CSBG program was audited by the State Auditor's Office in January and we have not received a response to their review.

#### **Weatherization-Gwen Howe**

Gwen Howe referred to the Weatherization report that was previously emailed to the Commission. The Weatherization Program is currently operating, with the use of PPE and health protocols.

Administrative Monitoring continues to be done remotely. Technical Monitoring was delayed as there are not as many homes to monitor due to the pandemic. Any findings are being addressed.

John Murphy asked when the program will be back to full production. Gwen replied that it depends on the agencies and how comfortable they feel with the Covid-19 infection rates in their areas and also how the families feel about allowing people into their homes. Ajit Kumar asked if there was some kind of prioritization in place for Weatherization Program workers that go into people's home to get the vaccine so they are protected. San Wong replied that the State of Iowa does have a Covid-19 vaccination plan and in home state workers will be categorized as essential workers as soon as the first phases of the vaccine groups are completed. Roger Pavey also replied that Scott County has prioritized its field home workers as Tier 4 for getting the vaccine and they are currently in Tier 1. Bill Brand wants to discuss this with ICAA to see if there is any way the DCAA can help the agencies with the priority of vaccines.

#### **LIHEAP-Christine Taylor**

Christine Taylor referred to the report that was previously emailed to the

Commission. The FY 2021 LIHEAP Program began October 1, 2020 for those 60 and over or those who have a disabled member in the household. It began November 1<sup>st</sup> for all other households. Iowa's LIHEAP appropriation to date is: \$49,790, 628 and we are waiting for the final 10%. The CARES Act appropriation was \$4,221,430 and we have spent 77% of those funds. There may be more funding coming with the approval of \$4.5 billion supplemental for LIHEAP that would be available through September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022 and would be separate from FY21 and FY22 funding.

Congress approved a water and utility assistance program in December and HHS is still in the process of determining who will be distributing that funding. DCAA is being considered and may start a water assistance program. Bill Brand shared that the Rental and Utility Assistance Program is going through the Iowa Finance Authority and ICAA and local agencies helped them develop strategies to implement that program.

Applications continue to be taken remotely in various ways and households who are approved for LIHEAP and Weatherization are protected under the winter moratorium and cannot have their service disconnected due to non-payment through April 1, 2021. The number of households that have applied this year is down 6% from the same time last year and there are a number of reasons why the numbers are down nationwide including extension of local moratoriums and other Covid-19 funding sources. Christine also shared that the Iowa State Auditor's office is currently reviewing the LIHEAP Program.

#### **FADSS-Lorie Easter**

Lorie Easter shared that the FaDSS Program is still operating virtually and not allowing in person visits at this time. The home visits are being completed in various virtual ways. We continue to offer extended FaDSS transitions that was approved by HHS which extends the duration for clients to stay in the FaDSS program until 60 days after the end of the Governor's state health declaration. Mathematica is helping us to research the effectiveness of virtual visits and how they may be included in our program after the pandemic is over. The FaDSS Council is working on recommendations for a funding formula to serve areas based on need which would begin in FY23. The Equity Committee has developed a cohort focusing on equity activities to put an equity lense on the FaDSS Program. The Mathematic coaching evaluation is at the end of the study and the findings should be available at the FaDSS Council meeting on March 25<sup>th</sup>. The study focuses on implementation and outcomes of the FaDSS Program. We continue to do Program Reviews remotely.

#### **VIII. ICCA Activities Report-Myra Thompson**

Myra Thompson shared ICAA's involvement with the Iowa Finance Authority to bring \$195 million dollars to Iowans to assist with Rent and Utilities. She shared that

for the first time, the internet is being considered as a utility and that would bring equity to the families that cannot afford those bills. The money comes through the Department of Treasury and there are a couple of issues that need to be resolved before the contract is issued. ICAA anticipates the program will start on March 12<sup>th</sup> and the community action agencies are ready. ICAA ran the Embrace Iowa Program over the holidays and in the past have raised around \$275,000. This year, we raised \$407,000 to provide assistance to families. Community Action Agencies continue to respond to the Derecho in 18 counties. The ICAA Board postponed the ICAA conference until 2022 due to Covid-19. ICAA contracted with Matt Eide and Kate Walton to do the legislative work this year and they are putting their weekly legislative updates on the ICAA website. ICAA's agenda includes support for a rate increase for the FaDSS Program and continues to support programs that provide funding for children. Matt Eide provided an advocacy presentation to agencies and that is also available on under advocacy on the ICAA website. John Murphy thanked Myra for helping the association. Myra had retired after 25 years working in community action.

IX. **Next meeting:** May 14, 2021 8:30 a.m.

X. **Adjournment-** John Murphy adjourned the meeting at 10:51 a.m.

Respectfully submitted  
Donna Bura