

2020.07.07 - TF. SNAP & TANF Subcomm. Mtg. Notes

Present: Reena Shah, Ashley Black, Paul Cucuzzella, Carnot Evans, Meena Agarwal, Caterina Quezada

Next Meeting: Undecided

Brief Overviews of both subcommittees:

- **Temporary Food and Cash Assistance:**
 - Identified major issues:
 - Language barriers in applying for assistance
 - Processing delays after applying
 - Internet access
 - Ashley Black will reach out to Michael Wilson, the director of Maryland Hunger Solutions, to add another committee member who has experience with helping people navigate the process.
 - The subcommittee may wish to add another member who is using benefits with a language barrier or disability to help identify additional issues that may be overlooked without perspective.
 - Potential questions/recommendations:
 - What will be done about exemptions from work programs in the future? Currently, work programs have been suspended. However, when they do come back, what will happen to individuals who cannot work because they are at high risk for COVID-19?
 - Working with legislatures to put requests in that may otherwise be overlooked.
- **Unemployment Insurance:**
 - Identified major issues:
 - Language barriers in application process
 - Organizations that would normally help with this are closed due to the pandemic.
 - Locations without internet leave individuals with only one option to apply for unemployment insurance (phone).
 - Phone lines have been backed up and lack response, putting these individuals at a disadvantage.
 - Disabilities
 - Hearing/visually impaired people put at a disadvantage
 - Filing deadlines for appeals should be suspended
 - The Department of Labor communication is currently being done through social media. This can be inaccessible and people may not know where to look for information.

Committee Scope

- What is within the scope of the committee?
 - Identify the issues and make recommendations to agencies that they can implement without legislation.
 - Look into what organizations need CARES Act funding in order to provide people with necessary legal help
 - Look into the legality of the major issues: do these agencies have a legal obligation to provide assistance and are they providing that assistance?

- Short/Long term solutions. Being as specific as possible, provide details to bring to the Civil Legal Aid Committee to make funding recommendations
 - Population: who is not getting assistance that should be? How many people?
 - Current Capacity: what is the current capacity for organizations helping that population? How many people are being turned away?
 - Needed Capacity: how much more capacity do we need so that people are not going hungry? How much money and where does that money need to go?
- Remove the healthcare subcommittee and split those folks up among the two remaining subcommittees
- For now, subcommittees will not meet until the beginning of next week. This is so that they can have more focused goals before meeting as a large group again.
- For Thursday:
 - Paul and Carnot will meet at some point tomorrow (7/8/2020) to discuss the Task Force meeting on Thursday (7/9/2020).
 - Paul will not be at the TF meeting on Thursday.
 - Paul will work on writing up the 3 initiatives for the committee:
 - Advocate for additional funding:
 - Identify which organizations should receive additional funding and how much funding they need
 - Carnot may step out of this conversation to avoid any conflicts of interest.
 - Educational products:
 - Provide users with educational products that are more user friendly than what is on the website.
 - Identify where to distribute these products (which organizations)
 - Products should include information about the process and rights.
 - Direct recommendations for agencies without legislation
 - How can the process be tweaked so that the issues can be rectified?
 - Can it be done without new legislation?