

Village of Downers Grove Staff Report to the Human Service Ad Hoc Committee
September 22, 2020
Submitted by David Fieldman, Village Manager

Background

At the [December 18, 2018](#) Village Council meeting, the Village Council created and appointed seven members to the Human Service Ad Hoc Committee (HSAHC). The committee met four times in 2019 from January through May. At the conclusion of the four meetings, the committee was tasked with creating a report answering two questions posed by the Village Council:

1. What role shall an appointed Human Service Commission serve in the Village?
2. What can and should an appointed standing Human Service Commission do to assist the Village Council in promoting the function and mission of the Village on an on-going basis?

The final report, which can be found [here](#), was presented to the Village Council on [August 6](#) and [September 17, 2019](#). Village Council discussed the presented report in conjunction with the preparation of the 2019-2021 Long Range Plan. Two options were presented:

- Option 1: Accept the Human Service Ad Hoc Committee Report as presented.
- Option 2: Reconstitute the Human Service Ad Hoc Committee and direct them to:
 - Develop more specific recommendations on actions, and to prioritize the recommended actions
 - Consider presentations by Village of Downers Grove departments, Downers Grove Township, DuPage County, and Not-For-Profit organizations about the human services currently being provided in and around the community
 - Commence work in January and complete work by June 30, 2020.

Village Council directed staff to proceed with Option 2 and the Human Service Ad Hoc Committee was officially re-established at the [December 17, 2019](#) Village Council meeting. The reconstituted HSAHC has the following Committee Powers and Duties:

- Hold regular meetings to discuss and develop more specific recommendations on actions, and to prioritize the recommended actions;
- Consider presentations by the Village of Downers Grove departments, Downers Grove Township, DuPage County, and Not-For-Profit organizations about the human services currently being provided in and around the Village;
- Submit a report to the Village Council, addressing the issues identified herein for consideration no later than June 30, 2020;
- Perform any additional duties and tasks as the Village Council may from time to time direct.

On July 7, the [Village Council extended the deadline](#) for the completion of the HSAHC work to October 31, 2020.

Updated Meeting Schedule

The HSAHC meeting schedule and topics are as follows:

Date	Topic
Tuesday, January 28	Presentations by the Village Police and Fire Departments
Tuesday, February 25	Presentations by the Downers Grove Public Library, School Districts 58 and 99
Tuesday, July 28	Presentations by Downers Grove Township and DuPage County
Tuesday, August 25	Presentation by NAMI DuPage Review of 2019 Report Discussion of 2020 Report
Tuesday, September 22	Presentation by Youth Outlook Committee discussion and draft of recommendations
Tuesday, October 27	Committee final discussion and recommendations

As noted in the table, the HSAHC received presentations from:

- The Village of Downers Grove
- Community High School District 99
- Downers Grove Grade School District 58
- Downers Grove Public Library
- Downers Grove Township
- DuPage County
- NAMI DuPage
- Youth Outlook

Each of these entities summarized the social services they provide and the challenges they face in providing these services (for additional information about the services provided, please see the attached Summary of Services).

Key Findings & Recommendations Discussed at August 25 Meeting

Upon review and evaluation of the presentations, the HSHAC made the following key findings at the August 25, 2020 meeting:

Social Services are Available - Many social services are available to Downers Grove residents. These services are provided by government agencies and not-for-profit organizations.

Lack of Awareness of Available Services - There appears to be a general lack of awareness by the general public and individuals in need of services that social services are available to them.

Based on the key findings, the HSHAC developed the following recommendations at the August 25, 2020 meeting:

Increase Awareness of Available Social Services - The Village of Downers Grove should take steps to increase awareness about the social services that are available. The Village should consider working with social service providers to develop a public information campaign with the general public as the primary audience. The Village should play a lead role in this effort. Participating agencies should have the ability to use the public information campaign.

Connect Individuals in Need of Service with Service Providers - The Village of Downers Grove should take steps to connect individuals in need of service with the agencies that provide the services. The Village should consider developing multiple methods for individuals to contact the Village including in-person, by phone and on-line. This service could be viewed as a *social service concierge*. Under this approach, individuals could contact the Village and receive personal referrals to specific social service providers. Further, the Village should actively seek to identify and contact individuals who may be in need of services.

Provide Qualified Staff to Provide the Services - The Village of Downers Grove should hire qualified individuals to provide the social service referral services described above. Licensed social workers have the professional training and skills to provide these services. The Village should consider enhancing their staff with one or more social workers.

Further Discussion

At the September 22, 2020 meeting, the HSAHC should work to draft the report to the Village Council by discussing and developing more specific recommendations on actions, and prioritizing the recommended actions. The following key discussion questions should be considered:

- Of the original recommendations, which ones should be categorized as High, Medium and Low priorities? Why?
- Which of the recommendations should be made more specific?

- What specific recommendations or direction should be added to the original recommendations?

The recommendations in the 2019 report are as follows:

What role shall an appointed Human Service Commission serve in the Village?

The **Human Service Commission** should serve as:

- **Advisors** to the Village Council and Staff
- **Ambassadors** for recognizing and celebrating diversity in the community
- **Advocates** for the Provision of Social Services to Downers Grove Residents
- **Coordinators** of Social Services for Those in Need
- **Facilitators** of Communication and Engagement Among:

Residents	The Village of Downers Grove
Stakeholders	Other Governments and Agencies
Service Providers	

The **Village of Downers Grove** should support the Human Service Commission efforts by:

- Including **social service issues in the Long Range Plan**
- Identifying and **securing funding and resources** to sustainably support the Human Service Commission efforts
 - Consider partnerships with other governments, businesses and agencies
 - Consider the use of sponsorships
 - Consider the use of volunteers
 - Identify permanent, dedicated revenue sources
- Hire a **qualified professional staff member** to serve as the liaison to the Human Service Commission and to coordinate the provision of services to those in need

What can and should an appointed standing Human Service Commission do to assist the Village Council in promoting the function and mission of the Village on an on-going basis?

The Human Service Commission should:

- Work to make the Village of Downers Grove a **Community of Inclusiveness** where all residents and community members are welcomed and supported
- Promote community **events celebrating and promoting diversity**
- Promote and facilitate **diversity in community leadership positions**
- Identify **social trends and issues** facing the Village by reviewing and analyzing data
- Identify **gaps in services** to those in need in the community
- **Identify and prioritize social service needs**
- Assist in providing services to **connect residents with social service providers**
 - Create and maintain a database of social services available in Downers Grove
 - Consider hiring a staff member who works as an advisor and advocate for residents in need to social services
- Work with the Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation to **address social issues through economic development** activities
- Promote the inclusion of **social service issues in the Village's Long Range Planning and Budgeting** efforts
- Develop **recommendations for resource allocation**
- **Focus its efforts** on those in need, including but not limited to:
 - Homeless
 - Elderly
 - LGBTQ community
 - Low income
 - Persons with disabilities
 - Persons in need of transportation
 - Youth
 - Persons with mental health issues
- Be a **permanent, active commission** which meets on a regular basis
- Explore the **creation of committees** to maximize the effectiveness of the Human Service Commission
 - Committees could focus their efforts on specific topics
 - Could increase the resources available to address issues
- **Engage directly** with the segments of the community in need of services
 - Appoint representatives of the focus populations segments to the Commission and committees
 - Facilitate communication with residents in need of services
- **Review Village of Downers Grove actions** which may affect the availability of services

Attachments
Summary of Services