

**Village of Downers Grove
Human Service Commission**

Village Hall
801 Burlington Avenue
April 26, 2022
Meeting Minutes

Chair Aycock called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm and asked for a roll call.

Members Present

Chair Aycock
Member Drabik
Member Loftus
Member Nicholson
Member Skerjan

Members Absent

Member Galvez
Member Silvester

Chair Aycock declared that a quorum was present.

Chair Aycock asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the March 22, 2022 meeting.
Motion to approve the minutes by Nicholson; seconded by Drabik
Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Chair Aycock called on staff to provide an overview of the Village's Social Services Referral Program March Monthly Highlights. Ms. Lippe summarized the performance data included in the staff report.

Member Nicholson asked if an objective or a measurable target has been established. Ms. Lippe said that specific measurable goals have not been created. Manager Fieldman said that the goals and objectives are to connect individuals in need of services with agencies that provide services, to increase public awareness about these services and to increase access to resources and opportunities. He stated that one measurable goal could be to achieve a 100% referral acceptance rate. Fieldman noted that the establishment of measurable targets and goals could be included in the social services gap analysis report.

Member Skerjan said that in a few months we will have enough data to help establish measurable goals.

Aycock said that the Village should compare itself to other communities.

Member Drabik asked why other municipalities have social workers in their police departments.

Ms. Lippe said that most municipalities have a social worker in their police departments to support the work of the police officers and to provide counseling sessions related to incidents first identified by the police.

Chair Aycock asked if any other municipalities operate like Downers Grove. Ms. Lippe said Wheaton may have a similar operation and that she surveyed other municipalities on this topic when she started in her position at the Village. Manager Fieldman explained that the Social Workers traditionally work in the Police Department. The Village of Downers Grove established the program by asking broader, more fundamental questions of the Human Service Ad Hoc Committee. The Committee found that there are significant social service needs throughout the community and that services are available from many service agencies throughout the County. Based on this, the Village Council directed that a social services referral program be created. The Village's social worker would support all departments and have a broader scope than the typical social worker employed in a police department.

Chair Aycock said that she appreciates how the Village established the social services referral program and that is working very well to date.

Ms. Lippe explained that she has been working with several area not for profit groups including faith based organizations as part of the referral program.

Chair Aycock called on staff to discuss the scope of the social services gap analysis report. Manager Fieldman said that the Village Council identified the following scope of the report.

- Identify and quantify gaps in social services determined by the Village through the operation of the social services referral program
- Recommend strategies to address the identified gaps
- A "Gap in Service" is defined as: *The inability of the Village to successfully refer a resident to a social service agency which provides the requested service*
- A Gap in Service exists when:
 - A resident is not aware of the availability of the social service provider or the Village's social service referral program (Awareness Gap)
 - A resident does not accept a valid social service referral provided by the Village (Acceptance Gap)
 - The Village is unable to identify and contact an agency that provides the requested service in a timely manner (Availability Gap)

Chair Aycock noted that the awareness gap is the most significant. Member Nicholson said that residents are not aware of services and that this is the most important issue.

Chair Aycock asked if the Village has experienced an availability gap. Ms. Lippe said that she has not encountered this type of gap yet and that the acceptance gap exists and will be more difficult to address. She said that some residents were non-responsive to her phone calls.

Ms. Lippe said that she is tracking awareness of the program. It appears that many residents are not aware of the services that exist or that the Village operates a referral program. She explained that the acceptance rate is higher in cases where the police officer tells the resident that the Village's social worker will be contacting them to assist them.

Member Drabik stated he thinks the awareness gap is the key. This gap should be addressed by marketing the program in a proactive manner. Once more people are aware of the program and take advantage of its services, additional data and information will be available.

Member Skerjan asked if the Village is tracking the data about non-acceptance. Ms. Lippe said that she is tracking this information. Ms. Lippe explained that she interacts with members of the public in a way to make them feel as comfortable as possible in an effort to increase the acceptance rate.

Member Skerjan said that we should learn more about what reasons for why referrals are accepted and that this information should be categorized to develop a better understanding of the issues and to help increase the acceptance rate.

Manager Fieldman asked if the members of the Commission understood the scope. Chair Aycock indicated that it appears all members do.

Member Skerjan asked if there are services that residents are hesitant to discuss. Ms. Lippe indicated that there are likely to be residents who are not comfortable discussing all types of social service needs.

Member Drabik asked about the creation and development of strategies to address the gaps. Chair Aycock said that the HSC will be developing these as the report is prepared.

Chair Aycock and all members presented discussed several ideas that could be explored to increase awareness of the program. This included using a variety of marketing techniques and platforms and partnering with other governments and service agencies. Manager Fieldman explained that staff would provide data on the awareness gap at the next meeting to assist the Commission in developing strategies to address the gap.

Member Skerjan explained that City of Chicago is launching a social services referral program

Member Loftus noted that the acceptance gap is likely to always be present.

Chair Aycock asked for any public comments.

David Rose asked how the social services referrals were handled by the police and fire departments prior to the establishment of the referral program, asked for a summary of a typical referral from start to finish and for a discussion of the scope of services that were included in the referral program.

Ms. Lippe said that when a referral is provided or residents contact the social worker directly, the social worker will have conversations with the individual. The conversations will include a series of questions to help understand the service needs. Based on the conversation and needs, the social worker will provide the resources to help address the needs.

Manager Fieldman explained that the public safety department responses to social service related calls have evolved over time. In the past several years, the police and fire departments have trained their personnel to improve responses to these types of calls and have developed the programs that were discussed in detail at the March meeting of the Human Service Commission. The public safety departments continue to provide these services and programs and now work together with the social worker to provide referrals to other social service agencies.

Chair Aycock asked how staff knows about the interaction between the resident and the service provider and whether the service was accepted. Ms. Lippe indicated that it is not always known and she makes attempts to contact the individual after the original referral to determine if additional assistance may be necessary.

David Rose asked what the definition of a completed referral is. Ms. Lippe stated that the service is complete once the resident receives a referral from the Village.

David Rose asked if the programs operated at the PD and FD are still being operated. Manager Fieldman answered yes.

David Rose asked which cases are handled exclusively by the PD and FD and which are handled by the Social Worker. Manager Fieldman said that this data is tracked and presented in the monthly reports.

David Rose asked if the Village is tracking multiple referrals from each individual. Ms. Lippe noted that she is tracking and presenting this information. Member Loftus noted that this information is in the March data included in the staff report and stated that this is important data.

David Rose asked if it is appropriate to track cases by degree of need and multiple service requests. Member Loftus stated that most people in need are in need of multiple services. Manager Fieldman noted that this data exists and can be reported..

David Rose asked the Village to elaborate on the expectations of the role of churches. Manager Fieldman explained that faith based organizations provide social services and also interact with residents who may be in need of services. Therefore, the Village interacts with these faith based organizations with regards to the provision of social services. Sometimes the Village refers residents to the faith based organizations to receive services and sometimes the faith based organizations contact the Village requesting assistance to refer a resident to a social service provider.

David Rose asked if there are any services that are not included in the Village referral program. Ms. Lippe noted that there are no limitations

Motion to adjourn by Loftus, second by Skerjan. Voice vote unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 8:08pm.