

**Village of Downers Grove
Human Service Commission**

Village Hall
801 Burlington Avenue
June 28, 2022
Meeting Minutes

Chair Aycock called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm and asked for a roll call.

Members Present

Chair Aycock
Member Drabik
Member Nicholson
Member Skerjan

Members Absent

Member Galvez
Member Loftus
Member Silvester

Chair Aycock declared that a quorum was present.

Chair Aycock asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the April 26, 2022 meeting.
Motion to approve the minutes by Nicholson, seconded by Skerjan.
Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

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

Chair Aycock asked how services related to alcohol use would be categorized. Ms. Lippe said that this would be included in the "addiction" category. She noted that this is not a leading category, as noted in the monthly report.

Member Nicholson asked why there was a spike in referrals in February. Ms. Lippe noted that the program officially launched and was publicized.

Member Skerjan requested that a cumulative acceptance percentage be included in the report.

Ms. Lippe provided information on the 12 referrals that were declined.

Chair Aycock called on staff to present the draft Social Services Gap Analysis report. Manager Fieldman summarized the report as follows:

In December 2020, based on the findings and recommendations of the [Human Service Ad Hoc Committee Report](#), the Council directed staff to develop a social services referral program and to prepare a report identifying gaps in services and strategies to address the gaps. The Village developed the social services referral program from August 2021 through January 2022 and publicly launched the program in February. The program connects individuals in need of service with the agencies that provide the services.

Report Scope

- *Identify and quantify gaps in social services determined by the Village through the operation of the social services referral program*
- *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 referral program (Awareness); when a resident does not accept a valid social service referral provided by the Village (Acceptance); and when the Village is unable to identify and contact an agency that provides the requested service and can provide the service in a timely manner (Availability)*

Service Gap Identification

Based on the findings of the Human Service Ad Hoc Committee in 2020, staff is operating under the assumption that public awareness is generally low which constitutes an awareness gap.

No acceptance gap has been identified. The Village has been collecting data on the acceptance of social services referrals since the program’s inception in August 2021. The acceptance rate has been strong.

Additional information should be provided to determine if there is an availability gap. The Village has identified a service provider for each of the requested services. The Village is not tracking the extent to which the requested service can be provided in a timely manner.

Participation in the Village’s Taxi Coupon Program for residents 65 years and older or with disabilities has declined significantly due to a lack of availability of taxi services. The report includes data on the decreasing number of taxi drivers available and the usage of the Village program.

Strategies to Address Service Gaps

The Village should consider taking the following steps to address the awareness and availability gaps identified in this report.

- *Increase Awareness of the Social Services Referral Program by Creating and Implementing a Public Awareness Campaign*

- *Post Messages and Videos on the Village Website and Social Media Platforms*
 - *Provide Information in the Village E-news, Inside DG Newsletter and Utility Bills*
 - *Partner with Other Governments to Provide Information Using Their Communication Platforms*
 - *Highlight the Referral Program in Police & Fire Public Education Programs*
 - *Arrange for the Social Worker to Present Information at Local Community Organizations*
- *Increase Understanding of the Availability of Services by Requesting That the Service Providers Submit Information to the Village About Wait Times and Schedule Availability.*
 - *Improve Senior Residents Access to Transportation by:*
 - *Referring the Issue to the Transportation and Parking Commission for Their Review and Consideration*
 - *Promoting the Use and Availability of Township and County Senior Transportation Services*
 - *Encourage the Township and County to Expand Senior Transportation Services*

Chair Aycock expressed that the report was well done and very thorough. She requested that the Village contact District 58 to explore increasing awareness of the social services program. Chair Aycock noted that her neighbor approached her about service needs and the neighbor was unaware of the referral program. She asked about inclusion in the District 58 information weekly packet. Also, this information could be included in a new resident welcome packet.

Chair Aycock asked about potential partnerships with rideshare companies. Member Nicholson said that “taxi” is not the same concept as it used to be. Manager Fieldman noted that some large cities have partnered with rideshare companies primarily for supplementing mass transit programs. Member Nicholson encouraged the Village to look into working with rideshare companies to provide services to senior residences.

Member Drabik suggested that other community groups (Rotary Club, Lions Club, etc.) may be of assistance in providing transportation to senior residents. Member Aycock asked about liability concerns with this program. Member Drabik stated that he was not aware of any issues.

Ms. Lippe stated that she is aware of a non-for-profit organization that provides rides to seniors for various appointments and errands and Downers Grove residents would be considered.

Member Skerjan asked about the *Coupons Redeemed* and *Number of Participants*. Ms. Lippe explained the *Coupons Redeemed* are those submitted to the Village and the *Number of Participants* are the number of people registered in the program. He asked if seniors are calling for taxis and they are not showing up. Staff noted that this is the case.

Chair Aycock said that the acceptance rate may be artificially high because it relies on self-reporting. She encouraged the Village to refine the acceptance rate measurement and to

continue to work to encourage the acceptance of the services. She asked about the level of service currently being provided. Ms. Lippe explained that she provides a high level of service including calling the service providers directly to inform them of a pending referral as a way of increasing the acceptance rate. She noted that in some cases the trust between the Village and the resident must be strong for the resident to accept the referral.

Member Drabik noted that addressing the awareness gap may drive the acceptance rate and the number of residents seeking referrals. This should be the focus of the project and program. Chair Aycock agreed.

Chair Aycock asked if the Social Worker could make active follow-up calls. Ms. Lippe stated that this type of service would be case management and the program does not include case management services. Member Nicholson said the Village Council may be short sighted in this regard.

Chair Aycock reiterated that the awareness gap appears to be the larger issue. Member Drabik agreed and suggested that the Village obtain data on the awareness gap.

Member Skerjan asked if the Social Worker could survey the residents who received a referral to determine more information about awareness and acceptance rates.

Member Drabik asked if there would be a way to track data and information if the Village were to partner with other agencies to provide transportation services. Manager Fieldman said that the Village would want to track this information. Chair Aycock said the Village should get feedback from the users of the program regarding the quality of the service. Ms. Lippe noted that she will be meeting with senior residents to discuss this. The Social Services Referral Program will be presented.

Chair Aycock suggested that the Village explore partnerships with medical groups on the provision of senior transportation services.

Member Skerjan asked about comparing the VoDG acceptance rate to other municipalities. Ms. Lippe said that Wheaton provides a similar service and we could compare information.

Chair Aycock asked about future "Guides." Ms. Lippe said that she is working on a Veteran Guide, LGBTQ Guide, and Youth Guide.

Chair Aycock inquired if the Village has a summary of services document that could be publicized, similar to a Community Guide. She asked if the Village keeps any statistics on programs.

Member Drabik said that the Inside DG newsletter would be a good source of awareness information.

Chair Aycock suggested that the Human Service Commission operate information booths at various community events. She asked how the Village currently promotes services. Manager Fieldman stated that successful awareness campaigns primarily use the communication tools referenced in the draft report. He provided an example of the recent Boards and Commissions recruitment short form video which resulted in an increase in the number of applications submitted.

Member Nicholson asked who the target audience would be for increased awareness efforts. The target audience should be identified. Chair Aycock said that religious institutions could be targeted.

Chair Aycock asked if Ms. Lippe can discuss issues with school districts social workers. Ms. Lippe noted that school districts are currently providing referral services to students.

Chair Aycock said that the materials should be provided in multiple languages.

Member Skerjan noted that the services provided cover many demographics within the Village.

Member Drabik said that messaging should be provided through other governments and not for profit organizations.

Manager Fieldman said that the comments made by the HSC tonight will be included in a revised draft of the report.

Chair Aycock asked if there were any public comments. Jodi Harap said that the report was impressive. She said the awareness gap was the biggest issue. She agreed that the target audience should be identified. There are certain anchors in the community. All people seek medical services. Many members of the community seek services at the Library, public schools, Good Samaritan Hospital and others. She said that the Village should work with these agencies and organizations to promote the program.

Motion to adjourn by Skerjan, second by Drabik. Voice vote unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 8:17pm.