

**CHC - Basic Needs Sub-Committee**  
**Meeting Tuesday, November 16, 2021**  
**2:00 – 3:00 pm**  
**Discussion Summary**

**Attendance**

- Lisa Zuhn – Los Alamos JJAB
- Susan Williams – First Born Program
- Deni Fell - Los Alamos County Social Services
- Lyn Haval – LA Cares
- Christine Martinez – Los Alamos JJAB Resource Specialist
- Leanna McClure – The Food Depot

**Updates/Needs**

LA Cares – Last distribution assisted fifty-nine families and included twenty-four deliveries. December distribution will include fruit bags donated by the AAUW, household items, and a special holiday meat item. Freezer space continues to be an issue so hoping to find others that can store the meat items or purchase them right before the distribution on December 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. LA Cares is looking for volunteers to assist with deliveries.

First Born – Serving their funding maximum of seventy-five families and currently have a wait list. Seeing issues with women being able to get an appointment for OB/GYN care in Los Alamos. Families continue to struggle with mental health care. Also, seeing issues related to holiday stress and looking to partner with LAFD to adopt families needing assistance.

Social Services – Have Food Depot distribution flyers available for organizations. Donna Casados, Social Services Manager will be leaving employment with the County on December 10<sup>th</sup>. Katherine Hudspeth has been named as Interim Social Services Manager and recruitment to fill the position is under way.

JJAB – Resource Specialist Christine Martinez helped to organize a successful event for Spanish-speaking parents. The event included 25 participants and a range of topics including mental health, school resources, LGBTQ+, and family challenges. JJAB partnered with First Born and Los Alamos Family Council to provide the workshop. Had ninety-four requests to provide youth with winter clothing and the project is currently in distribution phase. JJAB is hosting a discussion with multiple organizations about the current levels of substance use among middle and high school youth and in the community.

The Food Depot – Due to the holidays, the mobile food pantry distribution dates for Los Alamos have changed to November 19<sup>th</sup> and December 17<sup>th</sup>. Normally have two hundred cars for the distribution, however most of the people receiving food live outside of Los Alamos County.

**County Health Council Update**

Lisa Zuhn provided an update that the CHC work group is continuing to discuss options for a comprehensive Community Health Plan.

**Discussion**

The group had a discussion on families with long-term basic needs - identifying the root cause, providing families with long-term solutions, and assisting families in releasing from the cycle. Highlights from the discussion were:

Need someone from Human Services Department to be a part of the Basic Needs Committee to ensure we are making connections with them about long-term resources (SNAP, Medicaid, State Services). Barriers identified were access to internet to apply for benefits, inability to complete paperwork or provide data, documentation required, overwhelmed by the process, and the State is lacking staff there for not providing in person hours in Los Alamos. It was also discussed

that many programs rely on income as the deciding factor but do not look at debt to income ratio. Providing face to face, individual assistance is particularly important and works well for assistance.

LA Cares indicated that Human Services could come to their distribution events to provide information and assist people with completing paperwork. It would take them being there a couple of times for people to feel comfortable with the process.

Deni indicated that LifeLink in Santa Fe is also a valuable resource, and they did a presentation at the Youth Resiliency Committee meeting.

The group discussed the option of providing career possibilities to adults within the community. For example, certification for Community Health Worker or Peer Support Worker. SFCC and CNM currently offer classes, could it be possible for UNMLA to provide? The certification can provide opportunities in the medical field and could also provide case worker options within the County. Barriers for people wanting to receive additional education are, childcare needs, need to continue working while in school, and loss of some benefits if income increases yet do not make enough for cost of living. The Early Childhood Education Department does have some grants if programs are related to early childhood programs.

One suggestion provided was to create a “roadmap” for long-term resources based on available and the ability to provide stability.

The discussion will continue at the next sub-committee meeting that will be scheduled for mid-January.