

Age-Friendly Hyattsville Work Group Meeting

Friday, April 22, 2022; 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Work Group Attendees: Dawn Bohls (W-2); Rosezella Canty-Letsome (W-1); Edna Lytle (W-4); Sherri McGee (W-2); Suzanne van Nuys, Program Director for Lifelong Learning, Prince George's Community College; Winifred Weaver (W-1)

Staff Attendees: Reggie Bagley, Emergency Operations Manager; Marci LeFevre, Age-Friendly Program Lead; Sandra Shepard, Director, Community Services

Guests: Lisa Butler McDougal, President, Sowing Empowerment & Economic Development, Inc. (SEED); Mashaal Munir, University of Maryland School of Public Health

Housing and Other Support Services for Older Community Members

In observation of Affordable Housing Month, Lisa Butler McDougal, President of Sowing Empowerment and Economic Development (SEED), joined the meeting and presented an overview of SEED's services offered to older adults in need of housing and other types of assistance.

Food and health insecurity, (un)affordable housing, and financial hardship were among the most cited challenges experienced by respondents of the city's senior community needs survey. Lisa discussed SEED programs and services that assist community members, and highlighted resources available to help low-to moderate-income individuals and families prevent home foreclosures and evictions.

Provided Services

Established in 1997 and located in Riverdale, MD, SEED provides food, clothing, education, and training to foster environments where all individuals are empowered, children are nurtured, families are strengthened, and communities are transformed.

- SEED operates an emergency food distribution center and clothes closet; serves as an enrollment site for residents seeking health options through the Maryland Health Exchange; provides nutrition and health awareness classes, distributes free diapers; and provides after-school and summer enrichment programs.
- In addition, SEED operates the EXCEL Academy Public Charter School.
- The organization serves clients in both English and Spanish and has offices in Prince George's County, Maryland, and Detroit, Michigan.
- As a HUD-approved housing counseling and financial education agency, SEED offers a pre-purchase and post-education housing counseling program committed to increasing homeownership and reducing foreclosures while providing financial education.
- Like the Housing Initiative Partnership (HIP), which presented at an earlier Age-Friendly Work Group meeting, SEED assisted county tenants and landlords with completing and following up on the application for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). While the application deadline for the program was December 15, 2021, SEED continues to receive a high volume of requests for rental assistance.

- SEED develops and rehabilitates affordable housing for area residents, including older adults. SEED is currently developing an affordable housing complex in Riverdale that will have 287 units, 80 to 90 of which will be set aside for older adults. The building, expected to be completed at the end of 2023, will offer intergenerational programs for residents. Community members interested in learning more about the units can call (301) 458-9808 or (301) 458-9805.
- SEED's Family Financial Fitness Program (FFFP) is a year-long program that helps young adults and families build a more secure financial future through workshops on credit, savings and insurance basics, money management and budgeting, investments, and retirement planning.
- SEED also provides financial education and legal assistance (e.g., preparation of living wills) to older adults residing at Emerson House in Bladensburg.

SEED and City of Hyattsville Partnership Opportunities

City staff and work group members inquired about partnering with SEED to offer financial fitness workshops in Hyattsville to older adults, youth, and families. Lisa McDougal noted that SEED would welcome partnering with the city on a workshop series.

Other topics of interest that would be worthwhile to include in a workshop series are:

- preventing identity theft and scams (online and phone)
- computer technology training (in partnership with Hyattsville Branch Library)
- legal assistance (e.g., power of attorney, will)
- food security and nutrition
- accessing health insurance

City staff will follow-up with SEED about partnership opportunities for this Summer or Fall. Lisa suggested that city staff contact her or Camron Nunez, SEED's Community Services Manager, when reaching out to schedule a follow up meeting. Marci LeFevre thanked Lisa for presenting and will coordinate a follow up meeting with SEED staff to plan a workshop series.

Key Updates

Hyattsville Emergency Operations Manager and Department of Community Services

- Reggie Bagley, the city's Emergency Operations Manager, shared an update on COVID-19 outreach efforts and noted that first and second booster shots are available at First United Methodist Church. Transportation is available for community residents and can be scheduled by calling the city's Call-A-Bus service at (301) 985-5000.
- Although the county recently relaxed guidelines for the wearing of masks indoors, Reggie encouraged community members to continue to "mask up" as the unvaccinated and vaccinated are still at risk of serious illness or death from COVID-19 exposure. In addition, Reggie noted that more is now known about COVID's long-term effects. These "long-hauler" effects (e.g., chronic fatigue, lung tissue damage, memory issues) can be debilitating for individuals who have had COVID-19.

Mental Health Awareness Month (May)

- The city will kick-off a series of activities on Saturday, May 7, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. to increase awareness about mental wellness and available mental health resources. Information will be promoted by the city's communications team and shared with Age-Friendly Work Group

members in a follow-up email. Activities will include free yoga and mindfulness classes for youth and adults (all ages), a “forest bathing” stress reduction activity at a local park, a community forum to be held at the end of the month with local mental health providers, and the publication and circulation of a city-curated guide on mental health resources.

University of Maryland School of Public Health Graduate Capstone Research Projects

- Graduate students Mashaal Munir and Adina Kisilinsky will present their respective research projects on the topics of the Senior Community Needs Survey (Mashaal) and In-Home Care Support Services (Adina) at the next (May 27) Age-Friendly Work Group meeting.

Other Business

Upcoming Age-Friendly Work Group Meetings

- May 27, 2022, at 11:00 a.m.
- June 24, 2022, at 11:00 a.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.