

**Michigan Commission on Community Action and
Economic Opportunity
Friday, March 26, 2021**

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm – VIA ZOOM

Commission Meeting Minutes

Members: Jill Edwards-Sutton (Chair), Carolyn Bloodworth, Joelle-Jude Fontaine, Kelly Garrett, Matt Purcell, Miguel Rodriguez, Bob Scolnik, Jessica Taylor and Melinda Ysasi
Staff: Kris Schoenow, Paula Kaiser VanDam, Janice Harvey, Melanie Sanford, Chong-Anna Canfora

Guests: Josh Rivera, MDHHS
Susan Newhof

Absent: Tiffany Mayers, Luke Shaefer, Theresa Thompson

- I. Welcome and introductions
 - Due to COVID-19 all in person meetings were canceled per Governor’s order. Chair Edwards-Sutton called the meeting to order via Zoom at 1:03 pm
- II. Approval of September 11, 2020 Meeting Minutes – Chair Edwards-Sutton requested a motion to approve the minutes from the September 11, 2020 MCCAEO meeting. Carolyn Bloodworth made the motion to approve the minutes; Miguel Rodriguez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- III. Michigan’s Poverty Task Force – Josh Rivera, MDHHS
 - Josh shared a PowerPoint Presentation outlining the Michigan’s Poverty Task Force recommendations and that MDHHS focus will be around benefits: Research, Legislative, and Policy.
 - Research: Michigan ranks 4th for percent of TANF funds spent on basic assistance. While rent has risen, spending on cash payments has declined.
 - Legislative: Effectiveness of TANF programs – time limits, distribution of TANF funds
 - Policy: working to support families
 - Paula asked Josh which area would be helpful for Commission to focus on: cash assistance system broken, strategies around increasing FIP funding, revisiting time limits/work requirements, expanding access to federal funds for families.
 - Kris shared that there is new water assistance pilot through CAAs/BCAEO (recommendation #16)
 - Commissioners were polled during the meeting to identify their top 3 recommendations to focus on:
 - #2 – Rethink College Scholarships Funding with TANF Dollars
 - #4 – Improving FIP Participants’ Transition to Self-Sufficiency

- #16 – Establish LIHEAP Program for Water
- After discussion the Commissioners agreed to focus on recommendation # 4 – Improving FIP Participants’ Transition to Self-Sufficiency.
- Kris will draft a letter of support to the Poverty Task Force.
- Next Steps: Map out various areas in topic and how to move forward.

IV. BCAEO Update and Action Items – Kris Schoenow

- MOCAP: BCAEO is working to remove this agency’s community action agency designation for cause. MDHHS and MOCAP completed one day of a two-day appeal hearing prior to COVID. The hearing will resume on May 11. MOCAP has been notified of de-designation and an interim agency as been providing services.
- RFP for CSBG funding for Native American nonprofits serving low-income households has been closed. One submission was received with a request of \$45,000.
- Department of Energy Weatherization State Plan is in the late stages of being drafted by BCAEO staff and will be submitted soon.
- Water Arrearage Assistance Program: BCAEO has submitted a proposal and funding is pending.
- BCAEO has partnered with an organization called Social Finance for a project with CAAs and other national partners. Key data indicators and data sets will be identified in moving people out of poverty.
- BCAEO is working with weatherization operators to increase their capacity to be prepared for the next wave of stimulus funding.
- Funding Updates:
 - CSBG - \$26.7 million
 - CARES - \$37.7 million
 - Weatherization - \$20 million
 - LIHEAP – 6 million
 - MEAP - \$6.3 million

V. Public Comment - None

VI. Adjournment - Meeting was adjourned at 3:03 pm