

Latinx Community COVID-19 Response

Monday, May 4, 2020 - Meeting Minutes

Housekeeping

- Using Microsoft teams for future meetings
- Meeting minutes— will do short summary with key links
- Future meetings will be between 1 and 1 1/2 hours depending on the week/subject

Governor's office updates: Migdalia and Nico

- Stay at home order extended through Sunday, May 17
- Certain retail and other businesses to resume operations by allowing curbside pickup—continue to calibrate testing/tracing/isolating—keeping virus at a simmer, not a boil.
- Today's press conference—Governor Walz will highlight way that administration is engaging employers and employees to strategically reopen.
 - Engagement done by virtual and in person conversations and meetings—survey tools and other methods
 - Hearing much about desire for safe reopening—proceeding cautiously
- This month lots of opportunities to honor and congratulate residents: Older Minnesotans month, Jewish Americans month, Asian Pacific Islanders, Nurse's appreciation week; many people on the front lines.
- Applications for unemployment for latinx people—we can help people who are struggling with unemployment applications. DEED uses language line.

State Capitol Updates: Senator Melisa Franzen/Representative Carlos Mariani

Rep. Mariani (Chair of House Public Safety and Criminal Justice Reform Committee)

- Expand authority of Commissioner of Department of Corrections to depopulate our prisons
 - Some movement under current authority but to get #s down he needs greater authority. Politically sensitive issue. Focus on those who will be released anyway—extend 90-day release to 180 days. Probably impacts 500 people in the state. Not a big # but would help. Senate not helping.
 - What supports exist for people released: we don't want to just throw them into the streets—release them somewhere that preserves public health. Need money for probation supervision, housing and healthcare access.
- ICE detainees—most are in local jails
 - There has been movement across the state/aggressive moves to depopulate jails but not so much with ICE detainees—don't have uniformity across the state. Clearly local sheriffs are motivated to get people out.
 - Rep Mariani and Michelle are starting to discuss this issue
- Spending CARES money equitably
- Budget surplus? We spent \$500 million within the last month to do emergency work. Currently flying blind.

- Special session likely:
 - May 18 is when budget should be resolved—wrap up not likely.
 - Special session on or before July 1. Will be important to be working a strong advocacy agenda that goes beyond May 18
- Reopening economy will only become increasingly polarized and politically partisan.
 - This is a danger. CDC projecting a huge potential uptick in infections. Our governor has been very responsible in maintaining social distancing work. Will be important for our community to speak to the issue of public health.

Sen. Melisa Franzen

- Fluid situation in legislature/bonding bill
- Trying to fill gaps in housing, unemployment insurance
- COVID has highlighted disparities that we already knew existed
- State efforts to provide financial support for gap communities:
 - Veena from Immigrant Law Center instrumental in framing communities left behind
 - \$50 million COVID-19 emergency community relief grants—bill introduced by Rep Aisha Gomez and Sen. Melisa Franzen—Allocate state funding to vehicle of MN Council of Foundations through DEED. Working through details to make it feasible. Would grant funds from community intermediaries to individuals.
 - Max amount up to \$1500 but may make a flat \$1500 per individual, not household. Easier to track individuals than household.
 - Evidence required: proof of financial hardship/denial letter for unemployment, eviction notice. Would go for food, rental utilities, emergency expenses. Pretty flexible. Would like to have this be part of end of session negotiations.
 - Would benefit students who don't qualify for federal aid, unemployment insurance, elderly people. (Veena has been writing to get signatories and letters of support)—Unions, faith-based organizations—trying to get hearing in the house.
 - Broad enough that it covers not just rent, but also food and utilities.

Questions from community for elected officials

- Q: What is the paperwork the state will require of nonprofits for money to be distributed—this is a burden on nonprofits and privacy of communities that are most vulnerable?
- A: We anticipate factoring in admin. costs on recordkeeping—talking to DHS/Governor's office now. DHS may be the better place to land regarding oversight. MNCouncil of Foundations has also been at the table. Possibly fewer intermediaries but breadth of entire state. This bill has not had as much traction in the house as senate. Committee Chair Mahoney—Jobs. Need to continue to push for this all the way to July 1
- Q: Proving hardship piece—CLUES has been actively distributing funds and many community members cannot provide evidence of loss of income.
- A: Will make sure to get input from you all and DEED. Mariani—bureaucrats will default to last year's report of income—how do we factor in up to date metrics?

City of Minneapolis Updates

Andrea Brennan: Director Housing Policy and Development, Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED)

City of Minneapolis GAP fund: critical importance of having state resources. The city has \$3 million in emergency housing assistance and received more than 8000 applications for these funds. Hope to serve around 1500 households.

- Program designed to be flexible, making sure that applicants can self-certify loss of income, knowing that some don't have a documented source of income.
- Approx. 30% of applicants indicated Spanish as their preferred language. Grateful for outreach so residents whose primary language is Spanish.
- Lottery applies a random anonymized list order. Start working down that list until we run out of funds.
- Will be referring people to community prevention providers (eviction prevention)-working on making referrals.
- Community partners to help with language needs: CLUES, Centro and COPAL.
- Timeline: by end of this week referrals, and by early next week writing checks.

Mariano Espinoza: Latinx Community Specialist, Neighborhood and Community Relations

- Helped over 100 people just over course of 4 days to submit their applications, most from Ecuador, Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico.
- Applicants included hotel, restaurant workers and other service workers. People who are just arriving to the US as asylum seekers.
- Three 3 issues of concern:
 - Unemployment situation—families and individuals are worried about their ability to pay rent, causing psychological stress.
 - Landlords starting to put pressure—they want their rent.
 - Food—people are feeling pressure to get food—we have a very strong food bank system in place, but many families don't know they can get food assistance
 - Education—families struggle to help their children with technology—is a barrier as well as is language.
- Also noted large group of self-employed Latinx; many single mothers with kids—have to sell tamales—they don't have any income.
- Great outreach through media partnerships—La Raza did an incredible job, they were running PSAs every hour, free of charge. Mariano also did over 20 interviews with media stations in the Twin Cities.
- Comparing this situation to Worthington, September 11—the impact is very similar in Latino community.

Monica Romero: CPED Small Business Team

- Emergency Gap fund for businesses: Received just over 1200 applications. 45% black, 35% white, and 13% latinx. We will start calling applicants that were part of the lottery and that were able to get the funding, and could start closing their loan with the community organizations that we chose to close the loans with.
 - Loans were for city businesses located in certain areas—poverty concentration and cultural district designation.
 - BTAP (Business Technical Assist Providers) have helped businesses apply for loans.
 - Self-employed and subcontractors can sign up for unemployment
 - SBA Latino Economic Development Center and Small Business teams have been doing weekly webinars in Spanish. Have had 50+registered.

- Webinar en español—tomorrow at 5PM <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/informacion-sobre-recursos-para-negocios-tickets-103928701544>
- BTAP providers for Covid-19
<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@communications/documents/wccontent/wcmssp-223453.pdf>

Questions for City:

- 1) Will the City notify people who did and did not get GAP assistance and how? A: communication confirming receipt of app sent Friday. Will let people know as we make referrals to community prevention providers. Then will let others know that they are not eligible or that we ran out of funds. Will be communication to everyone who applied.
- 2) How many BTAP recipients can support Latinx community? A: There are Spanish speaking staff in organizations. Ortensia law, Miluska Novota, Lake St. Council., Centro Para Desarrollo Latino (LEDC), Neighborhood development Center and Seward Redesign. CLUES was always on BTAP program.
 - Remind City of MPLS staff—CLUES received over 700 referrals. Were overwhelmed and without resources from the city. Impact on nonprofits on the ground—must cover expenses for our staff. P-ships that are financed are more helpful.
- 3) Mariano— supports for families that are affected by COVID-19. Ruby—we are being contacted by families who are hospitalized. Ruby and Roxana are talking about people who are enslaved (Connect with CTUL and with Shunu Shrestha—Senior advisor on Human Trafficking shunu.shrestha@minneapolismn.gov)
- 4) Available data on race/ethnicity: tension on how much information to release about applicants—there are concerns about people putting their name on any kind of list. How widely we want to broadcast information—did receive a high level of interest from Latinx population.
- 5) Ambar: Any public charge concerns? A: No, b/c this is emergency assistance. *Also see attached 1 pager for legal advice put out by Department of Human Services (attached).
- 6) Is city support available for families that already have access to unemployment insurance/stimulus check? A: No. Targeting families with extremely low income.

Education and Distance Learning

Leticia Guadarrama and Paulina Jacobson

- We have over 36,000 students
- Ratio for devices- 2/1 ipads in household. From ages 6-12 it is 1 to 1
- Distance Learning Website:
<https://sites.google.com/mpls.k12.mn.us/distancelearning/home?authuser=1>
- For questions on food, please use: 612-668-0000
- Food:
 - 50 sites providing access to food—only proof needed is to show is that you have children under 18 years.
 - Website: you can put location where you live and can find closest distribution location. Parents allowed to pick up a box that contains breakfast and lunch for 5 days.
- Most of the students have a device—if there are students that have not received a device, they can contact us.
- Internet—if parents don't have internet access they can use City of Minneapolis
- District has provided 600 hotspots for internet access

- Principals sharing their experiences with distance learning:
 - Matthew Arnold: has been an area of growth for our teachers—teacher appreciation week this week—teachers have been working really hard.
 - Chris Ledesma:
 - students are anxious and worried about family here and back home.
 - Financial needs: undocumented families don't have support from federal government. Much anxiety around finances, inability to connect with colleagues/classmates
 - Students who school has not been able to connect with (5 at Wellstone)
 - **Mental health supports are necessary**—continue to worry about the financial piece—need continues.
- MPS is using various communications: radio station, Univision.
- CLUES is a behavioral health clinic—MPS—funding goes directly to schools and not to system. Limited number of new intakes for people who are undocumented. Chris—says very lucky to have support of CLUES. As new issues arise/issues become deeper and wider—making those connections is becoming more immediate and urgent.
- Charter School perspective (Ambar):
 - Foundation supports district with funds and some of the charter schools.
 - Charters were quick to start connecting with families and distributing technology—connected with families to assess need.
 - Wanted to understand how many children—taking count on how many kids have not been reached.
 - Lots of gaps with WiFi access.
 - Food distribution—so issues for transportation to get to spots. Both Charter and district are being charged for food they give away—how to close that gap?
- Latinx and East African students may have just become the sole income provider for their family.
- Out of school/in school support—for social and emotional learning—close connections to students—have those contracts continued with nonprofits—support system within context of mental health.
- Achieve MPLS is active with students applying for college. Relationships happen in person. Need to fund schools and change the way that our schools are giving learning. This is the beginning of a new era.
- Often the only person who hears of challenges is the teacher or principal of school directly—referrals to clinics are hard.
- Laura Sanchez: school social worker at Wellstone. Our building teachers who see students are having problems/process and follow through. There is a triage for mental health challenges.
- Lisa from Dept. Chicano Latino studies at U of M: college student challenges—stressful situation. Sometimes they are major breadwinner/also trying to support younger siblings. Finishing up semester—need financial resources applied to college kids. U of M has made an agreement to not raise tuition for next year. Some fees are being returned for next year. Happy to talk to others offline on this.
- Multiple challenges that students are facing:
 - Being the sole breadwinner
 - College students
 - Mental health
- Schools need FUNDING:
 - We are going to be in serious trouble for next school year.

- The way school budgets work, we have allotted our funds for upcoming year. When Wellstone suffers a large budget cut per year, it's per student. Had to cut some mental health support in building. This is pre COVID—don't know if we're coming back as a full-time school building or part time. Mental health needs are bigger.
- Within the school realm, great need to push for greater supports even though money has been allocated.
- Action items—transition to summer programming:
 - Access to ipads—if schools take them it will be a problem for summer learning
 - Funding: making a request to governor and legislators around supporting out of school time organizations that work with kids. Families rely on out of school time programs.

CM Cano Wrap Up

- Next week focus will be on evictions. No evictions protection for people once protections from state of emergency are lifted. Avoid situation where we face mass eviction for most vulnerable members of community.
- Governor's Office, Legal Aid, Hennepin County Sheriff's Office, Inquilinxs Unidxs will be invited to speak on the topic.

Post-meeting Addendum

May 1, 2020

Additional distance learning info from Governor Tim Walz's Office via Migdalia Loyola:

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is taking action to support students, families and educators during the next phase of distance learning. Distance learning has placed burdens on children and families that disproportionately impact communities of color, as well as indigenous, immigrant, low-income families and communities, and students with disabilities and their families. MDE has taken the following actions to ease these disparities:

- As the next phase of distance learning begins on May 5, MDE is providing additional guidance for school districts and charter schools to support students, families and communities.
- MDE is providing webinar trainings for educators to share strategies and promising practices to support all students and families.
- Families across the state have shared problems with accessing reliable internet connections. The interagency Education and Child Care working group is working with private and public partners to get broadband access and devices to every student.
- MDE is also partnering with interagency groups to ensure every student still has many adults in their lives checking in on them, and keeping their wellness in mind.
- To provide educators with time to update their distance learning plans, there will be no student instruction provided on Friday, May 1 or Monday, May 4. School districts and charter schools are expected to share their updated distance learning plans on their websites and with students and families in their communities by May 5, 2020.

- During the extended distance learning period, school-age childcare will continue to be available for the children of critical workers. Free, nutritious meals will also be available for children under the age of 18.
- MDE has created a variety of [resources for students and families](#) to help throughout the distance learning period.
- The Minnesota Children's Cabinet has created a [resource document for families](#) that includes information about health resources, economic assistance, housing, child care and food resources.
- View the [MDE COVID-19 website](#) for additional information about the agency's guidance for schools.