



Cherokee County Smart Start / Local Interagency Coordinating Council Team Meeting Minutes
 Date: 4/2/25
 Minutes completed by Jody Miller

Welcome and Introductions

Monica Matthews (PAT); Lorrie Ross (Mountain Projects); Cecilia Estremera (Vaya); Syvella Symonds (Maximus); Tiffany Martinez (CDSA); Lori Baker (LANC); Patti Leach (PAT); Jenni Irwin (Vaya); Jamie Bryant (LANC); Chrystal Mimbs (Catholic Charities); Jesse Boeckerman (Catholic Charities); Dawn Neatherly (Circles of Jackson); Sarah Clark (Mtn Projects); Angie Parker (NFP); Toineeta Saunooke-Leonard (BCBS); Amber Kevlin (NFP); and Jody Miller (RAPC)

Presentations

Katrina provided the attendees with information about Food Nutrition Services. During the month of February 2, 492 families were served providing \$805,394 in food funds. The program is income based however they do allow for some deductions such as utilities. Individuals without children are also able to receive services if they meet other criteria such as working. If they do not meet the criteria, they are allowed 3 months of food in a year's time. One can apply in person, mail in an application, or online at EPass. There is criteria where services can be expedited. Recertification happens every 6 months for those under 60 years old or disabled. For those 60 and over or disabled, recert is every year. An interview needs to occur once a year.

Jesse provided attendees with an overview of Catholic Charities Diocese of Charlotte. One does not need to be catholic in order to receiving assistance. Catholic Charities helps with the following areas: Adoption and Pregnancy Support; Burial Assistance; Case Management; Disaster Relief; Elder Ministries; Food Assistance; Housing Permanency Services; Infant Clothing Closets; Legal Immigration Services; Mental Health Counseling; Refugee Services; Social Concerns and Advocacy; Stay the Course; Supportive Services for Veteran Families; Transition Out of Poverty; and Youth Empowerment Opportunity Program. The Murphy office which serves Cherokee, Clay, Graham and Swain Counties as well as the Qualla Boundary offers direct assistance in helping with food, baby supplies, disaster relief, case management, help with utility, rent and housing; food and diaper hygiene ministry with diapers of various sizes; elder assistance which could just be sitting and talking for a few minutes; low case of case management; and, burial assistance. Assistance of other services may be available through the Asheville office. For questions or assistance reach out to

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Chrystal Mimbs, Case Coordinator, Catholic Charities Diocese of Charlotte, 27 Hatchett Street, Murphy NC 28906, Phone: 828-270-3067, Fax: 828-835-9794 or CLMimbs@ccdcc.org.

Angie provided information about Nurse Family Partnership. A free in-home program for individuals who are pregnant for the first time prior to 28 weeks. If after 28 weeks, approval needs to be received to enter the program. In-home is ideal, however we can meet at other places. Referral can be received from anyone. Assessments are completed as well developmental screenings of the children. A nurse stays with the mom until the child turns 2. The focus is on increasing positive outcomes, improving child’s health and development, and helping the individual become economically self-sufficient. Currently serving 83 clients with 125 being full capacity. Looking at serving at least 100 with a new hired nurse for the farther west counties. Introduced Amber as the new nurse for this county.

Dawn explained that Circles of Jackson is not bound by Jackson County. The program helps families get sustainability. The program teaches, supports, and mentors to self-sufficiency. To be eligible a client needs to have some type of housing (not living in a car), be aware of income source such as disability (not necessarily from working), and want to make a change in their life. Dawn talked about the cliff effect where someone tries to get out of poverty and when things are going well, they lose a lot of the supports they have such as food stamps which then drops them off the cliff and back where they were. The staff understands where those thresholds of the programs are and help the client work within and knows what will happen if they make 2 dollars more. It takes about 2 years to get to a living wage. Anyone willing to drive to Jackson County is welcome to participate.

Upcoming Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May—open • June—Planning for next fiscal year
Smart Start Strategic Plan	<p>The team is focusing on Children in households that are food insecure: 16.1% in 2021. A decrease from 22.1% in 2019. The team feels that there was a lot of food available during COVID and this still may not be a true number.</p> <p>The second data point the team wants to impact on is Children without health insurance: 8.3% in 2021. A slight increase from 8.2% in 2020.</p>
LICC Strategic Plan	Promote child find through events.
Activities to Achieve Strategies	<p>Collaborate with Legal Aid and the 3rd Annual Resource Fair—Promote Medicaid, healthcare marketplace, food resource list, early intervention and preschool services.</p> <p>Plan a drive through food distribution/resource fair in collaboration with Catholic</p>

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	Charities in the spring of 2025.
General Team Goals	Desired outputs for 2023 - 2024: Number of meetings/times review goals: 8 (8); Number of events: 2 (2); Number of team members / community presentations: 7 (11)
Old / New Business	N/A
Planned Community Events	Cherokee/Clay Roll and Read—5/17 at TCCC 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. Theme is Bedtime Routines using Brush Book Bed. Book is Pete the Cat and the New Guy.
What worked, what should we do differently, and when do we meet again	Our next meeting is scheduled for May 7, 2025.

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