

BARRIER BUSTERS NETWORK MINUTES

JANUARY 24TH, 2018

1:30 – 3:00 PM

WCC – MORRIS LAWRENCE BUILDING

4800 E. HURON RIVER DR., ANN ARBOR, MI 48105



Welcome and Introductions- Kevin Bell Facilitating

Approve Agenda

Seconded and Approved without amendments

New Business

- **United Way of Washtenaw County (Brad Swartz)**

Brad Swartz gave a presentation on the tax assistance services offered through United Way of Washtenaw County called VITA or Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program.

VITA assists individuals and families with a household income of 54,000 or lower, file their state and federal taxes. Volunteers become IRS certified and volunteer every Thursday and Saturday. VITA is a Nationwide IRS sponsored program located at United Way: 2305 Platt Road, Ann Arbor from February 1st to April 14th every Thursday 5-8:30 PM & Saturday 9:00 AM-5:00 PM; Michigan Works, every Tuesday from 1:00 PM-7:00 PM and Eastern Michigan at the College of Business. These sites are by appointment only (with the exception of Eastern Michigan). To make an appointment, candidates need to call: 734-677-7235. A foreign language service is offered in Spanish.

Once an appointment has been made, the follow documents must be brought to the appointment:

- Social Security Card for each family member and picture ID for all adults
- W-2 forms for all jobs worked the previous year
- Proof of rent or mortgage and property tax payments
- Childcare provider's name address and federal tax ID number
- Blank, voided check or deposit slip (to set up direct deposit of your refunds)
- 1099 forms for other income, including unemployment
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) letter
- Copy of your last year's tax return (if available)
- Last year's heating bill
- Any other tax-related letters or documents

VITA cannot prepare returns with:

- Schedule C (with more than \$10,000 in business expenses)
- Schedule E (Rental property tax income)
- Schedule F (Profit or loss from farming)
- Income over \$54,000 (unless the client has a disability, elderly, or ESL)
- Some cancellation of debts

Myfreetaxes.com

Myfreetaxes.com is a free service similar to TurboTax that is simple to use. Individuals take a picture of the W-2 and the system auto-populates the information. This service is for individuals or married couples that file up to \$66,000.

Vita Scan & Go

Clients can make an appointment at Manchester Resource Community Center or Chelsea Senior Center to file their state and federal taxes. For clients who aren't able to travel from Manchester or surrounding areas, vita scan & go is a free service that allows clients to have their taxes prepared at United Way.

United Way offers financial empowerment and coaching for individuals seeking income management, credit repair, financial goal setting, and safe banking. People can request to meet with Marshall Averill to go over budgeting, goals setting, debt reduction and workshops.

- **Michigan Ability Partners (Tiara Fells)**

Michigan Ability Partners (MAP) is a non-profit organization in Ann Arbor. In 1991, MAP started their Homeless Prevention/Crisis Intervention program. This program is designed to provide financial management, bill payment and credit repair to assist those experiencing financial barriers. MAP has two office location in Ann Arbor and Jackson Michigan and services over 500 individuals from every county, city and state. They assist individuals with disabilities, senior citizens, social security and VA recipients and people at risk for homelessness.

In order use their service a \$42 fee is required. Fee reductions are offered depending on how much rent the individual is paying and among other circumstances. MAP receives clients from social security, client's landlord and referring agencies.

How It Works

Complete [intake](#) (Payee contact within 3 business days, after receiving intake) ⇒ Schedule an intake appointment with a Payee (Discuss budget, policies and procedures of Payee Program) ⇒ Payee sends intake/paperwork to SSA (1-2 months depending on SSA recipient).

Tiara expressed that Social security tells them if the client can have a payee. Social Security wants to know that the client isn't able to handle their funds on their own. To prove this,

clients have to obtain a letter or documents from landlord proving they aren't able to pay their rent. If the client is approved, during the intake appointment, the payee goes over the budget with the client.

MAP is dedicated to helping their clients increase financial stability, money management skills, build and maintain credit status and promote self-sufficiency.

- **Housing Bureau for Seniors (Janet Hunko)**

Housing Bureau for Seniors (HBS) has been in existence for over 25 years. HBS serves 300 individuals during tax season, assisting seniors with lower income, file their state and federal taxes. HBS primarily serves seniors but serves all ages with all incomes. HBS is partnered with AARP and United Way of Washtenaw County. They now offer the myfreetaxes service.

Tax Preparation Process

Screening (intake specialists ask various questions about foreclosure, filing for previous years, etc.) ⇒ Verification (make sure information is accurate) ⇒ Scheduling (Intake specialists create appointment time for client).

Janet Hunko expressed that 25 appointments are scheduled on a given day. Appointments are required and are held every **Wednesday and Friday from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM until April 13, 2018.**

Old Business

- **HAWC Update (Kara Painter)**

In Kara Painter's absence, Marti Lachapell gave an update on her behalf. HAWC has funding for both those with subsidies and without. The Housing Resource List was updated last month and is available for download on the HAWC website: <http://www.housingaccess.net/> or paper copies are available at the Ann Arbor Salvation Army and the Ypsilanti Salvation Army:

**Ypsilanti Salvation Army
9 S. Park St.
Ypsilanti, MI 48198**

**Ann Arbor Salvation Army
100 Arbana Dr.
Ann Arbor, MI 48103**

HAWC is hiring a part time intake specialist. Interested candidates can email their resume directly to HAWC's program coordinator, Ashlee Cunningham: Ashlee_Cunningham@usc.salvationarmy.org.

- **BB EUNF Update (Marti Lachapell)**

OCED has funding available, so please help us spend it down! The Ann Arbor General Use funds has a balance of \$3,542. Michigan Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) has a balance of \$236,804 dollars available. The Ann Botsford Bach Fund for Seniors has an available balance of \$384. The Washtenaw County General Funds has an available balance of \$50,000.

Barrier Busters are holding Encompass & MEAP/DTE trainings **Monday, February 12th through Wednesday, February 14th** in the computer lab at the Washtenaw Intermediate School District: 1819 S. Wagner Rd, Ann Arbor, MI 48103 on the follow dates:

Monday, February 12, 3:00 - 5:00
Tuesday, February 13, 9:00 - 11:00
Wednesday, February, 14, 1:00 – 3:00 (Valentine’s Day)

Interested participants should email Kiah Williamson: williamsonk@ewashtnaw.org with the date and time you would like to come.

If you are not able to attend the trainings on these dates and would be interested in an onsite training, please send an email to Kiah Williamson: williamsonk@ewashtenaw.org or to the Barrier Busters staff email: bbstaff@listserver.ewashtenaw.org.

Best Practices & Case Consultations

- None at this time

Agency Announcements

- **TheRide**

Residents are able to ride for free using FlexRide starting **January 29th through April 27, 2018**. FlexRide is a pilot service that provides free or reduced prices to residents. FlexRide’s service area is in the Southeastern Ypsilanti Township, between textile, Rawsonville, Bemis, and Hitchingham roads. Destinations include: Ypsilanti District Library, Ypsilanti Township Civic Center and Lincoln schools. Those who are interested in using this service should call: 734-794-0377 to set up a reservation or by using the mobile app, MODE car with the promotion code MYFLEX.

- **Ann Arbor District Library**

Ann Arbor District Library is holding a 3D printing lab **Thursday, January 25, 2018 from 6:30-8:30pm**. Those who are interested in downloading and printing a 3D image using their 3D printers can reserve a meeting room downtown. For additional information please visit their website: <https://aadl.org/>.

- **Alzheimer's Association**

The Alzheimer's Association is offering a variety of free education programs on Dementia and Alzheimer's. The education programs are designed to assist families, caregivers, care partners and those living with Alzheimer's or Dementia. The programs provide information on topics such as: warning signs, understanding the diagnosis, changes in the brain, caregiver issues, legal and financial planning, communication techniques and more. For more information on classes or to register, please visit their website: https://www.alz.org/mglc/in_my_community_education.asp

The Alzheimer's Association is looking for a new director for Public Policy. Interested applicants should email the Executive Director, Jennifer Howard: jhoward@alz.org. For more details the job description can be found [here](#).

- **Ozone House**

The Ozone House is starting their Tri-Annual WorkZone initiative starting **Monday, February 19, 2018**. Youth, ages 18-20, who are in need of job can apply to participate in the job training program. WorkZone is a 3 week job training program where youth gain valuable knowledge and skills to help them on the job. After the completion of the training program, students are then sent to agencies as interns. For more information, please visit their website: <http://ozonehouse.org/>

- **Judson Center**

The Judson Center is hosting a free training on parenting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) Youth on **Saturday, February 10, 2018**. The training will discuss ways parents can communicate with their children around dating, relationships, gender or sexual identity. Trainers, Katie Page Sander and Lori Curry will share personal and professional experiences for parents to better understand and discuss LGBTQ topics with their children. The training will take place at:

**Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
1400 W. Stadium
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
Saturday, February 10, 2018
9:00AM-12:00PM**

To RSVP for this event contact: Luginia Srygley at 734-528-2004 or email Luginia_Srygley@judsoncenter.org.

- **American Red Cross**

The American Red Cross is providing free CPR training programs. Training programs come with free downloadable, digital course materials and training resources through online instructor portal. Companies have the opportunity to become CPR certified and train students through online programs. This program also includes, safety training, training supplies, a comprehensive AED program and free emergency and first aid apps. For more information on the American Red Cross training program, please contact Kathy Danaher at 313-573-7576 or email: Kathryn.Danaher@redcross.org. Store coupon code: MIHY010617. Please see the [flyer](#) for more details.

- **Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living**

Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living is hosting a free workshop regarding mental health rights on **Thursday, February 15, 2018**. The session will help participant's development a better understanding of the rights, responsibilities and complaint processes for individuals receiving community Mental Health and Hospital Mental Health. Those who participate will receive information regarding groups and organizations available to assist individuals and families in navigating the systems and protecting the recipients' rights. The training will take place at:

**Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living
3941 Research Park Dr.
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
February 15, 2018
6:00PM-8:00PM
(Registration starts at 5:45 pm)**

Please view the [flyer](#) for more details and registration.

Public Comment

- Kevin Bell announced that the 2018 Resource directory was available. Click [here](#) to retrieve a copy of the directory.
- Groundcover News will be celebrating their International Street Paper Vendor Week starting **Monday, February 5th through Sunday, February 11, 2018**. Please view their [flyer](#) for more information.

Meeting Adjourned- 2:53 PM