

Power of We Consortium
Leadership and Practice Committee
Meeting Minutes – September 28, 2011

Present: Justin Sheehan (Community Legal Resources), Cathy Babcock (Lansing Art Gallery), Katie Ellero (AmeriCorps), Cindie Alwood (Women’s Center), Dennis Neuner (VOA), Peggy Vaughn-Payne (NorthWest Initiative), Joan Nelson (Allen Neighborhood Center), Jim Zachs, Serg Ruiz (VISTA-PWC), Peggy Roberts (PWC).

Cathy Babcock opened the meeting with introductions. The agenda was slightly adjusted to accommodate members having to leave early.

Capacity Building:

- Capacity Building Program update from Joan, Cathy and Peggy. LPC members were provided a brief overview of the successes and challenges of running the Capacity Building Program without grant funds. Also discussed were ideas being considered as to how to support the program during 2012. This lead into a discussion about efforts underway to establish a support center for nonprofit organizations, now being called the Power of We Capacity Center (PWCC). An ad hoc committee continues to meet to move this concept forward by writing an executive summary and preparing to meet with key stakeholders.
- Jim Zachs provided an overview of the growing capacity building section of the Power of We Consortium’s website. Jim explained that the site is designed to provide education as to what capacity building encompasses, as often folks don’t know what to look for. It was agreed that we need to begin tracking analytics to be able to report at the next LPC meeting as to how many hits we are getting, and in what particular areas. We also need to get the word out more via the e-bulletin and other methods as to this availability of this resource. There also was a brief conversation about adding a section on legal resources.
- Justin Sheehan reported that Community Legal Resources (CLR) in Lansing has been swamped with clients – which is a good thing – but has prevented Justin from establishing a more formal legal outreach clinic as had been originally planned. Until CLR is able to hire additional staff, this outreach clinic is unlikely to happen. The question was asked as to how CLR differs from some of the other many legal clinics around such as Legal Aid, Elder Law, MSU Legal Clinic, etc. Justin explained that CLR is one of the few clinics that serves nonprofit organizations, as most clinics serve individuals. Justin also reported that Michigan is one of the top states for philanthropic giving from foundations and for pro bono work by attorneys.
- LPC members discussed the issue of how often to continue to offer LPC meetings. Currently, LPC meets every-other month. The benefit of meeting just quarterly was discussed, and determined that the every-other month meeting time is preferable to keep issues moving forward.
- Discussion was held regarding potential topics for upcoming capacity building workshops. Peggy reported that already scheduled upcoming workshops include grant writing (Doak

Bloss), databases (Jim Zacks), and community organizing (Jessica Yorko). New ideas mentioned by LPC included: 1) accessibility issues for nonprofits; 2) special event planning – friend raising vs. fund raising; 3) Facebook, Twitter, Linked-In; 4) diversity training for nonprofits. Peggy suggested that LPC members send her names of individuals who might do a good job of presenting these workshop ideas.

AmeriCorps:

- Katie Ellero gave a brief update on the successes of the AmeriCorps State program. Highlights include that over the past 2 years, the program has created over 40 neighborhood gardens on Land Bank land. The Ingham Family Center now has a hoop house, garden, chickens, and provides cooking and canning classes for residents. Fenner Conservancy now has a volunteer stewardship program. AmeriCorps members are now targeting food distribution centers to disseminate nutritional education and how to prepare fresh foods.
- Peggy, acting VISTA coordinator, distributed a draft letter that is soon to be distributed to the community regarding the current status on securing a new VISTA grant in early 2012. Potential host sites will need to apply for a VISTA this fall, ahead of the application to the Corporation for National and Community Service for the new grant. LPC members provided feedback on the draft letter.

PWC Updates:

- Peggy provided an overview of the last PWC meeting content, and content for the upcoming meeting in October, including a reminder that the October PWC meeting will be at Foster Community Center due to Conference Room A at HSB being unavailable due to flu clinic.

Sharing of Resources: Need it or Got it?

- Cathy Babcock discussed how the Lansing Art Gallery received a letter from an organization claiming to have sent a person into LAG to do an accessibility audit. The letter said that if LAG wanted to get the results they would need to pay a fee. Cathy indicated that LAG would not pay a fee, but she is now interested in getting a legitimate audit done. Cindie indicated she had some online links that might assist and would distribute them.

Next Steps:

- Include an update on the PWC Capacity Center
- Include analytics from the PWC website
- Next meeting: **November 16, 2011 10:00 – 12:00 (One week earlier due to Thanksgiving)**