



CAN Retreat

12/10/21 Minutes and Notes

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Board Members Present: **Tamara Atkinson**, Capital Area Workforce Solutions; **Moin Baig**, Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce; **Chris Cervini**, Austin Community College; **Nora Comstock**, ACC Trustee & CAN Community Council; **Devon Darden**, Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; **Amy Einhorn**, St. David's Foundation; **David Evans**, Integral Care; **Jimmy Flannigan**, Immediate Past Chair; **Vanessa Fuentes**, Council Member, City of Austin; **Juan Garza**, Central Health; **Suchitra Gururaj**, UT Austin; **Stephanie Hawley**, AISD; **Tam Hawkins**, Greater Austin Black Chamber of Commerce; **Hal Katz**, Integral Care; **Dan Leal**, One Voice Central Texas; **Lawrence Lyman**, Travis County Health & Human Services; **Jeremy Martin**, Austin Chamber of Commerce; **Rudy Metayer**, Council Member, City of Pflugerville; **Jo Anne Ortiz**, Capital Metro; **Charlene Rollins**, Huston-Tillotson University; **David Smith**, United Way for Greater Austin; **Ingrid Taylor**, Ascension Seton; **Jeffrey Travillion**, Precinct 1 Commissioner, Travis County;

Other guests: **Kelly Crook**, CAN Community Council; **Korey Darling**, Travis County Health & Human Services; **Lydia Galvan**, CAN Community Council; **Denise Hernandez**, Travis County Attorney's Office; **Ara Merjanian**;

CAN staff in attendance: Raul Alvarez, Melinda Barsales, Carlos A Soto, Jelina Tunstill

Call to order: Board chair Suchitra Gururaj called the meeting to order at 1:09 pm.

Selection of CAN Vice Chair: Juan Garza submitted a motion to nominate Tamara Atkinson to the position of CAN Board Chair for 2022, Jeremy Martin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Jimmy Flannigan submitted a motion to nominate District 2 City Council Member Vanessa Fuentes to the position of CAN Board Vice Chair for 2022. David Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Year in Review, CAN Accomplishments & Impact, Work Plan Status: A variety of collaborations emerged during the pandemic. 2021 non-program highlights include hiring a new Communications & Administrative Specialist, moving offices from Oak Springs Elementary School to Brook Elementary School, creating a hybrid meeting space at the new office location, and starting the process for establishing CAN as a non-profit association per the Texas Uniform Unincorporated Non-Profit Association Act (TUUNAA). This was followed by an overview of the previously established 2020-2024 strategic plan, goals, and strategies, and how the work we have done since connects to them. The CAN Community Council has been working on the pandemic related issues of housing evictions, food access and mental health/wellness. Raul then provided an overview of three initiatives as a way of understanding CAN's approach and impact.

The CAN Language Access Initiative was launched in 2015 and is currently in the third phase of implementation (engagement & accountability). Outcomes include assisting partners in revising language

access policies/plans, developing the We Can ATX website and other community engagement tools, and establishing the Central Texas Language Access Fund.

Race equity engagement & accountability activities planned for 2022 include collaborating with One Voice and the Central Texas Collective for Racial Equity (CTCRE) to facilitate lunch-and-learn conversations on the utilization of CAN race equity tools, establishing a volunteer research team to keep the REAF data and research timely and relevant, and finalizing the CTCRE's diversity, equity, and inclusion professional's registry.

The final initiative was centered around pandemic equity. This work includes a combination of completed and planned engagement & accountability activities including: meeting with City Council members and County Commissioners to discuss recommendations; presenting the plan to the City/County AISD joint subcommittee and to the Commissioner's Court at a work session; supporting City and County Emergency Operations staff with the implementation of recommendations; and revising the We Can ATX website to help direct residents to emergency alerts and resources.

Regarding this year's Central Texas Regional Summit, expanding opportunity forums are planned as a way of building on topics relating to the theme of "ensuring an equitable economic recovery," specifically taking a deeper dive into post-pandemic issues affecting women and communities of color. Another follow-up session is focused on highlighting businesses that have worked to "build a family friendly workplace" as a strategy for retaining and recruiting employees. The forums are scheduled for January 26, February 9, and February 23.

Small Group Discussion Prompt: How can we better engage with or support your organization around the CAN work plan priorities?

Small Group Discussion and Report Out – Group 1

EDUCATION: One of the groups reported an overarching theme related to education. The need to support schools, after school programs, and other youth activities with quickly identifying, referring, and providing services to youth. This is one of the hardest years for educators and administrators as well. When we have discussions about whether schools can support our students, we talk about diversity, equity, and inclusion, and conflicts around critical race theory. What could be CAN's role in helping support our schools?

HELPING TO ENGAGE DIFFICULT TO REACH POPULATIONS: There was also conversation about using CAN as a springboard to reach communities that our partner representatives also represent.

ADOPTING A REGIONAL FOCUS: Another topic was adopting a regional focus, and how CAN has an opportunity to engage with more Hays and Williamson County communities. Is CAN able to bring together funders relevant to these conversations? How do we take the CAN work beyond its current focus to maybe a 3-county orientation? Currently CAN is in negotiations with the Austin Area Research Organization (ARRO) to expand the We Can ATX Dashboard to bring critical data elements that are important across our region to develop the community's understanding.

PARTNER ENGAGEMENT: CAN could also inform partners about the work CAN has done that helps support that partner's work. Doing so may help with partner engagement.

REACHING OUT TO OTHER COMMUNITY LEADERS: How might we facilitate conversations with community leaders, not just among those that are part of CAN by those entities, but to the other leaders of those organizations. For example, can we have a cohort consisting of members from several

different government entities/agencies (Austin, Travis, Leander, Manor, etc.) that connects every other month to catch-up. These cohorts can provide mutual support while exploring the bigger, deeper work we can do collaboratively. Since it would be led by a CAN board member, it would help smooth out conversations about membership and building relationships across the wider community.

Small Group Discussion and Report Out – Group 2

BETTER ENGAGE CAN PARTNERS ON PRIORITY ISSUES: Group 2 discussed engaging CAN partners on the priority areas (like we've done in the past) through committees and workgroups. We want to identify other vehicles by which CAN partners can engage on priority area. They talked about creating new vehicles for that kind of engagement.

REACHING OUT TO OTHER STAKEHOLDERS: Another thing that came up was about who else to engage in these conversations. Possibilities included faith groups, mutual aid groups, and community-based groups that are also connecting with family on an organic or informal sort of basis as ways of thinking about these issues by engaging with these folks. Thinking in broader terms, faith communities may be valuable communities to connect with. Some are struggling to find ways to help and support the community more. Faith based communities may be a way to enhance the reach of CAN as it relates to diversity, too.

ASSESSING & IMPROVING EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN GENERAL: At Travis County Commissioners work session, there was discussion about the importance of looking at after-action reports that have been put together after the storm and pandemic to identify things that we did well, particularly things that community members did well that we can build on. This way we don't try to reinvent the wheel and we don't think that we are everything to everybody. Instead, we can look at our school districts, look at our cities and the county and say, "where should we put resources if something else happens?" The County has worked with the Food Bank to look into turning a few Title 1 schools into food pantries. The County is also focused on creating an asset map with all the places where services are provided, services provided at each location, and the funding sources for those services. This kind of information helps to understand what resources/services are there and what is needed.

We should also consider engaging with church groups (i.e. St. Vincent de Paul) that are doing the work. There's a need to know where to refer people who are in need.

How do we help build trusted social networks for hard to reach populations? For example, some communities may be scared to call 9-1-1 to get mental health help even though there is an option to ask for a mental health professional. We also will need to do messaging around the fact that 988 is a new national mental health hotline. Are we collaborating in a way that community groups would have a menu of who to call?

PROFILING & SHARING WHAT IS WORKING: Part of what we could do around these topics is to document a few of these efforts, create profiles, and then we can see where the linkage points are that we can connect with to provide support. For instance, as part of the regional summit, we highlighted effective public private partnerships. One idea is to profile those partnerships so that others can replicate them in other arenas or communities.

EDUCATION: In the economic recovery, it seems beneficial to help students find their way into the skill labor pool and feed into employers. Adding to this point, we might consider promoting higher learning

instead of higher education/college. Build a marketing plan to help parents help their children. There is also a need to help build resilience starting with young people and children.

IMPROVED COORDINATION OF COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENTS AND SERVICE

DELIVERY: Given the work of CAN partner organizations and what are community has been through as a result of the pandemic, CAN seems like a good place to discuss the opportunities for connectivity and coordination of services and strategy in health care, for example with regard to the City/County CHA and the service provider CHNA's.

BETTER ENGAGE CAN PARTNERS: It would be great to create opportunities for CAN partners to engage with each other. An idea may be to create affiliate groups of CAN partners with common interests.

ALIGNMENT WITH COMMUNITY COUNCIL: We should continue the presentations from Community Council on the issues on which they are focused.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:02 pm