

Special ASSET Joint Funders Minutes

United Way, 315 Clark Ave., Ames

July 21, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.

In Attendance: Karen Keil Rosser, Sandra King, Lisa Heddens, Latifah Faisal, Pa Goldbeck, Gloria Betcher, John Haila, Tim Gartin, Linda Murken, Jenny Schill, Chelsey Aisenbrey,
Virtual: Katie Shively, Anita Rollins, Amber Corrieri, Amy Shaw, Liz Zuercher, Shamaree Brown, Rachel Junck

Heddens called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm

Joint Funders Priority Discussion

Thompson reviewed the updated crosswalk of the priorities. Thompson reported that three of the Funders agree with this version, the City, ISU and United Way. Thompson said that King also has a version included in the packet that will be presented tonight. Gartin asked if each Funder is supposed to take these back to their boards and approved and when. The City will have it on their agenda for August 12th so the volunteers and agencies can know the general direction of the priorities at the training on August 11th.

Murken likes the version that is laid out as a table because it shows a narrative starting with getting services to people who need to make it through the day, down to getting services to the next generation so they don't end up in the same situation.

Betcher stated that she was a little confused by the last row in Youth Education and Financial Education. Betcher thinks moving financial education to a different area would help clarify this and then leave youth education on its own. Goldbeck went over the crosswalk with 1, 2, 3 priorities listed. Goldbeck said that it aligns with the City priorities and is simple to see. King went over the version laid out as a table. She stated that it starts with the basic needs someone needs as well as moving to getting someone on the path to being self-sufficient. The third priority is focusing on youth so they can be on this path from birth. Heddens stated that she likes this version because it encompasses the physical health aspect as well as the mental health. Murken likes that the table version includes an evidence column so volunteers have information to back up the need in the community. Thompson spoke to the issue that "income enhancement" could be seen as an income pilot that the government has gone after. She also stated that the term "poverty" is not a term that is used anymore. Financial stability or financial education is used in its place.

Haila stated that it's important to keep it simple, keeping in mind that the volunteers will be using this. He asked if there are larger funding needs in the top priority, will that mean that less dollars are available for the third priority. King responded that not necessarily. Each funder allocates an amount for each panel and then any left-over funds can be passed on to the next panel to be allocated. Gartin asked, do we all have to come to agreement or can each Funder still have freedom to say "Our constituents have this particular need so we are keeping this a priority." Thompson

replied to Gartin that it's the assumption of Funder staff that these are the general priorities and then each Funder has the ability keep or drop a priority based on what they see.

Faisal asked if each Funder sees all basic human needs listed in the top row. Betcher responded that because terms are not consistent it's hard to determine if all services are encompassed in the list on the table version. Zuercher asked if we are identifying priorities or are we trying to identify where everyone fits in the needs. Faisal shared that her concern is if we agree on these general priorities and one of the Funders has an additional priority, that it won't float to the top and will get lost. Heddens stated that she is confused on what the purpose of this process is if we are going to identify shared priorities and then each Funder adds their own priorities.

Thompson stated that this year, if we just agree on common language that could be enough. Betcher suggested coming up with the three general categories now and then working on the sub-categories. The response was, there isn't enough time to gather this information from the agencies before the volunteers and agencies are going to need them. Gartin asked if we can come to consensus on the priorities tonight? Keil-Rosser spoke to the volunteer perspective that general priorities listed are the most helpful and then further definitions are available when you break down services.

Murken suggested we move away from defining the services and state the outcomes that each Funder is looking for. Thompson responded that this is a good idea but moving that direction this year is not doable in the time we have. Thompson updated the cross-walked document with the suggested changes that were pointed out during discussion.

Goldbeck asked if all Funders can agree with what's listed on the updated document, with the freedom to add additional priorities for each Funder. Corrieri stated that if we keep what is currently listed, we haven't given volunteers any additional help in making their recommendations. Funders have to identify the agreed upon top priorities that will receive funding and ASSET is going to have to tell some agencies no.

Murken volunteered to be on a sub-committee to work on outcomes. Zuercher stated that if we fund some of these services it takes care of some of the other priorities, ex – if housing is fully funded then nutrition and education are largely taken care of. Corrieri added to the chat, we're trying to fit everything into the boxes rather than creating the boxes and funding those agencies that fit. It's a disservice to agencies when they are totally reliant on ASSET to operate a program that's not sustainable.

Motion to adjourn, Faisal, seconded by Betcher. Motion passed unanimously.