

LIAISON REPORT

AGENCY: Mid-Iowa Community Action (MICA)

LIAISON: Sue Draper 10/21/20

Need for Program:

(MICA) is a private, nonprofit organization serving children and families in central Iowa. Established in 1965 to serve children and families affected by the conditions of poverty, MICA provides early childhood, health, family development and housing services as well as community enrichment programs. Per interview with Abra, they are seeing roughly a 40% increase in brand new families requesting assistance with pandemic, immigration and for the recent derecho with FEMA assistance.

Funder priority examples and how MICA critically supports:

- Story County residents have access to enough food and healthy food Strategy – Food Pantry that is expanding and WIC (Women, Infants and Children)
- Children entering school developmentally on track - well-known program is Head Start in Nevada with 17 children served.
- Provides resources and support to families/caregivers that strengthen interactions and promote early learning in a home environment - Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS) program
- Increase access to preventative care – Fluoride Dental Varnish program for maintaining oral health. They are planning on expanding this program.
- Access to basic needs by providing food, rent/mortgage, water, and utilities assistance with the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). MICA is involved in the Federal Govt. Cares Funding program that is a great need at present.

Program Strengths:

- The MICA team excels in collaboration with community connections and teamwork to meet the increasing needs to Story county families.
- MICA's vision is communities without poverty. They help create collaborative communities that are responsive to change and address the causes and conditions of poverty.

Program Weaknesses:

- The greatest weakness is the short staffing at MICA who are spread thin working hard in meeting above needs. They are working on increasing their labor pool to address this.
- With the pandemic and derecho disaster disruptions this year, these have created many new hurdles that that MICA team is diligently working to address new processes. For example, drive up Food Pantry, keeping in line with social distancing means no food choices at present and bridging the technology gap with families at home not familiar.

Financial Outlook:

MICA was doing OK and managing finances well until the COVID-19 pandemic and derecho hit. With the increasing need from community families hard hit by these disasters, it is becoming clear that the need for more funding will continue to grow.

Programs that have been stopped are the Dental Clinic and Steps to Success.

Internal Management Practices:

Mid-Iowa Community Action, Inc. is governed by a board of directors, consisting of a tripartite board with equal representation from public, private, and low-income sectors. Utilizing their personal ideas and experiences, board members provide quality oversight for MICA. Was unable to attend Board meeting due to work schedule conflict.

Agency Suggestions:

MICA is in the process of improving their Scorecard by adding more data points on front office staff support, casework duties and showing referrals.

GENERAL ASSESSMENT:

The MICA team is reaching the people who are in need with their vital focused services and casework support. They are great job of connecting families in need with other support organizations in our community.

MICA's Core Values from website:

In all our endeavors, we are guided by seven values: family, helping others, partnership, achieving results, leadership, advocacy, and innovation.

These values direct the way we provide services and the way that we structure our organization. They constitute the core of MICA's philosophy and, together with our strategic plan, serve as guideposts for our staff. Our core values echo the mission of community action around the country but also highlight MICA's focus on providing excellent services to families.