

Health & Social Services Branch – Lee County Recovery Task Force

Meeting Minutes

3:00 PM – 4:30 PM | SEPTEMBER 7, 2023 | COLLABORATORY | 2031 JACKSON STREET,
SUITE 100, FORT MYERS, FL 33901 | PUBLIC MEETING

Call to Order

At 3:02 PM on September 7, 2023, Jon Romine, Facilitator, convened the Health & Social Services Branch meeting with the following members present:

- Troy Churchill, Branch Lead
- Jorge M Quinonez
- Maria Espinoza
- Blair Fretwell (on behalf of Stefanie Ink-Edwards)
- Therese Everly
- Julie Ferguson
- Angela Katz
- Krissy Houlihan (on behalf of David Brown) (non-voting)

County Liaison:

- Ben Abes

Facilitators and Branch Support:

- Jon Romine, Collaboratory
- Tessa LeSage, Collaboratory
- Tracey Phillips, Hagerty Consulting
- Robbie Heere, Hagerty Consulting

Introductions

Mr. Romine, Facilitator, provided a review of the work of the Recovery Task Force (RTF) and its Branches since the last meeting. Mr. Romine provided an update of the involvement of all stakeholders, including Lee County. He noted the purpose of the meeting to discuss the Draft Branch Initiative Profiles.

Overview of RTF Member One-on-One Meetings

Mr. Romine provided a summary of the meeting conducted by the ResilientLee Support Team (Support Team) to meeting with jurisdictional staff and leadership. Mr. Romine explained that twelve meetings have been conducted to date to brief each member of the Recovery Task Force.

Branch Action Plan

Ms. Phillips provided clarity on the development of action plans and the goal of the planning process to create recommendations (i.e., a terminology change to align with the evolving direction of the project).

Review of Draft Initiative Profiles and Branch Member Feedback

Mr. Romine introduced the Initiative Profiles and reviewed the template. He encouraged feedback from the Branch and the importance of their feedback as experts in this field. He expressed that the Support Team is requesting input on the draft and key areas of feedback including leads, priorities, descriptions, recommendations, measures of success, and overall approach. Members asked how the funding sources align with the Community Development Block Grant- Disaster Recovery (CBDG-DR) funds and prioritization. Mr. Abes emphasized the need to fully develop recovery and resiliency plans, which can lead to more opportunities for other allocation and funding for Initiative Profiles. Members and the Support Team discussed how these Initiative Profiles could support the plans for funding and stacking resources.

Members discussed mobile health clinics and partners. Members expressed the importance of including Salus Care, mental health partners, and additional health partners. They expressed Lee Health and Family Health Centers could look to identify the community needs that the mobile health centers would serve. Members discussed the importance of these clinics providing care in blue skies (i.e., non-emergency) in the communities that need them. Mr. Abes emphasized the value of these resources during emergencies, too, stating that post Hurricane Ian, there were mobile health services that provided direct help on the islands to linemen working for recovery. Lee County Public Safety deployed resources from the State to provide access on Pine Island, Fort Myers Beach, and the Islands. United way would appreciate being a partner during blue skies. Mr. Abes appreciated the context of the areas affected by the disaster that were not on the islands but also required medical

needs as they were left without power. Members were asked to provide feedback on the draft Initiative content through the QR code.

Mr. Romine introduced and summarized the second Initiative Profile, focused on resilience hubs. Ms. Phillips emphasized that the concept is to create a network of resilience hubs as a long-term solution that could solve challenges in blue and gray skies (i.e., emergencies). Members agreed that the Initiative Profile's description needs to include content about a network of resilience hubs that operates under blue skies and gray skies. Ms. Espinoza suggested that United Way makes the most sense to lead the resilience hub Initiative. Ms. Ferguson and Ms. Joy stated their organizations are already planning to do some of the activities that are described for resilience hubs.

Ms. Everly thanked Mr. Abes and the County Commission for their participation in the Plan. Members discussed the leads for the resilience hubs Initiative Profile and core partners that could apply for funding. Ms. Everly stated that the measures of success are difficult to describe when the resilience hub Initiative Profile description is not yet fully developed. Members were asked to provide comments via the QR Code for feedback.

Mr. Churchill suggested that resilience hubs could reestablish a sense of community and may also require creating a campaign to reestablish these centers in neighborhoods. He also stated that during blue skies these community centers could play a huge role and that they are positive and worth the time and effort of this group. Members emphasized that these new spaces may require marketing to the community and may require a communications campaign to inform the community.

Questions and Next Steps

Mr. Churchill suggested that this Branch needs to meet again to provide additional feedback. Mr. Romine explained the next steps for providing feedback.

Members briefly discussed hardened healthcare buildings.

Public Comment

Sophia Brubaker commented and thanked Branch members for their work. Sunshine Village is a senior community in Iona that experienced 6 feet of flooding during Hurricane Ian. These vulnerable populations are in flood zones. She stated that age restricted communities are an important part of Lee County, and they provide seniors with resources and support. Iona McGregor and the senior living communities were impacted; she asked that the area be included in planning efforts. She encouraged Branch members to imagine

a resilient hub in the heart of the Iona area as well as a resilient senior center. She thanked Branch members for their work to help the community recover and asked for support with prioritizing members older than 62 and the development of a senior center complex in Iona.

Alvin Henderson commented that FEMA has announced 483 census tracts nationwide deemed Community Disaster Resilience Zones. Mr. Henderson stated that there are large amounts of dollars available, and the resilience hubs could be a large part of that. He emphasized that based on past disasters including Ian and COVID-19 that the concept of a community resilience hub has value from both the blue sky and gray sky perspective. In the city, the vulnerable populations could not evacuate, and the local neighborhood is critical in providing support during past events.

Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Mr. Romine thanked the members for attending and then adjourned the meeting at 4:07 PM.