



*The Schreiber Research Group (TSRG) is a team of experts whose mission is to improve substance-use-related outcomes through community outreach, consulting services, and research.*

**The Schreiber Research Group**  
**Workforce Development Meeting Minutes**  
**9.18.2024 via Zoom**

The group discussed updates on current workforce development initiatives in the region. TSRG provided updates on grant application statuses, recruiting AmeriCorps members, and the AmeriCorps members' workplan. The group also discussed the issue of homelessness in the Southeast, which currently a pressing topic.

**Action Items**

- Interview, hire, and onboard AmeriCorps members
- Announce funding awards in the next 1-2 months
- Continue discussions of incorporating homelessness initiatives in the region.

**Outline**

**Administrative Announcements**

- Small groups will have the ability to meet in-person at the quarterly meeting on 9/25 at the La Junta City Courthouse. Following the meeting, the group will tour a potential new venue for quarterly and small group meeting.
- Funding announcements
  - AmeriCorps – awarded an in-process
  - HRSA Impact – still awaiting a decision, expect announcement in Sept/Oct 2024
  - SECOR – expect decision Oct 2024

**AmeriCorps Hiring Updates**

- TSRG is undergoing the process of hiring two new AmeriCorps members.
- There are currently three application submitted. At least five other potential applicants have expressed interest in the position.
- AmeriCorps has approved one position to start in November. The other will start in January.
- TSRG provided the group with the opportunity to review applicants and participate in the hiring process. Lisa said she would be able to help if needed.

**Incorporating Homelessness Initiatives into the Workplan**

- AmeriCorps members will now investigate service delivery needs that are broader than the SUD population's workforce development initiatives. Some questions to consider include:
  - What are the root causes of homelessness in the region? What does the homeless population look like? What services does the population receive, and what is needed?
- The workgroup discussed their suggestions for how AmeriCorps members can help support the current work.



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- One group member suggested that AmeriCorps members create a by-name database that can be used by the health department. This data should be securely collected and stored but can help the health department understand who the population is that experiences homelessness.
- The group discussed the existing data around homelessness in the region. One limitation around this data is that it is only collected in the metro areas of the region.
- The group also discussed the community meeting around homelessness that occurred a few weeks ago.
- One group member explained that the size of the homelessness problem is significantly smaller in Otero/Bent/Crowley counties compared to other counties in the Southeast. This may be due to the presence of Fort Lyon, although there is not currently data to support that.
- One purpose of the meeting was to get a baseline understanding of what people are frustrated about or what they are seeing. The results are as follows:
  - Safety concerns:
    - Not feeling afraid/peace of mind/trust (9 mentions )
    - Police presence/low crime rate/police funding/keeping guns legal (9 mentions)
    - Safe spaces to sleep/shelter (8 mentions)
    - Safe public spaces/children able to play outside (6 mentions)
    - Built environment: Adequate street lights/walkability in community (5 mentions)
  - Top Seven Issues Related to Homelessness in the Community
    - Stigma/language around homelessness/hate/judgement/aggression (53 votes)
    - Lack of knowledge of **existing** resources & coordination (46 votes)
    - Drugs/alcohol/mental health (25 votes)
    - Lack of **adequate** resources in the community (19 votes)
    - Crime and violent crime (17 votes)
    - Funding/bankrupt state/poor municipalities (16 votes)
    - Lack of housing/shelter/housing first initiatives (16 votes)
- The group conversation shifted to the camping ban ordinance in La Junta. The ban passed a preliminary vote, so it will most likely be approved. This ban will enforce fines or misdemeanors for sleeping outside.
- The group ended the meeting with a discussion of Fort Lyon and how its program typically takes blame for issues of crime and homelessness in the region. This rhetoric is particularly rampant given the upcoming election and the controversy of Fort Lyon among Bent County politicians and residents.