

Service Providers Discuss Outreach Needs with Office of Community Partnerships

The Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center hosted the quarterly Down County Providers Network meeting on October 16 at its Wheaton office. Representatives from Interfaith Works, CASA, EveryMind, DHHS, and many other organizations attended the meeting, which featured an update on the impacts of changes to federal Public Charge rules from Agatha Tan of the Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center (APALRC) and recommendations on how to prepare for the upcoming 2020 Census from Diane Vu and Shawn Ellis from the Office of Community Partnerships.

Providers had the opportunity to meet the Community Liaisons for the Latin American, African American, Asian, and African communities, and learn about their roles. The bulk of the meeting focused on challenges that providers face in their outreach efforts, and ideas for how to make outreach more effective.

This topic was continued from the June meeting, which focused primarily on outreach. Participants at that meeting highlighted their need for training, especially related to social media and outreach strategies; help with using mass media; greater collaboration and improved communication among providers, an online directory of providers and calendar of outreach opportunities; and more data about community services and needs. The importance of building trust and culturally sensitive communications was a theme woven throughout the entire discussion.

The October meeting continued the conversation, delving specifically into the providers' challenges and successes in using the media as part of their outreach strategies.

Please contact Kaori Hirakawa at Kaori.hirakawa@montgomerycountymd.gov for more information about past or future meetings, or to be added to the mailing list for the next Down County meeting.