



DESERT HEALTHCARE DISTRICT & FOUNDATION

Mecca Community Listening Forum (1 of 6)

February 21, 2019 (5:00 – 7:00 p.m.)

Boys and Girls Club

91391 66th Ave., Mecca, CA 92254

Homelessness:

- Housing
 - Lack of housing supply to keep up with demand
 - Available housing is of poor quality
 - A need for more housing assistance programs to place people timely and efficiently
 - Down payment and rental assistance programs
 - Assist with relocation for individuals who have been evicted
 - Affordable housing opportunities for workers during harvest season – often they are residing with family in overcrowded situations
 - Low-income housing
 - Single family apartments for low-income individuals with options for disability services and additional services available onsite
 - Mixed-income housing
 - Providing people the opportunity to live where their parents and grandparents reside without gentrifying neighborhoods
 - One resident left Mecca to pursue a degree and came back to work in the community she grew up in and be close to family; however, there were no opportunities for mixed-income housing
 - Availability of varying lease options – short-term housing
 - Senior living opportunities – a need for a senior housing development with onsite resources/activities
 - Connect seniors with savings plan information for retirement
- Infrastructure improvement
 - Many of the trailer parks experience mold issues from leaks but cannot get the resources to fix it
 - Bring in programs that help with housing modifications – ability for disabled individuals to alter their infrastructure for ease and accommodation
 - Assistance programs for old mobile homes replacement, street paving, and repairs
- Anti-poverty programs that focus on the at-risk population

Primary Care and Behavioral Health Access:

- Preventative care
 - Create additional opportunities for first aid training
 - Suicide prevention programs targeted toward youth
 - Provide programs around sanitary and pesticide education
 - Increase efforts that target prevention methods to keep people out of hospitals and clinics
- Programs directed toward people living in poverty – especially seasonal workers who are exposed to harsh working conditions
 - Find a way to increase outreach to harvest workers who are fearful of doctors or undocumented
 - Address the increase of stress within the agricultural workers as anxieties increase during off season
 - Improve availability of doctors who are educated on pesticides, asthma, and air quality

- Alcohol and drug assistance
 - Substance abuse among youth is increasing partially due to mental health issues not being addressed
 - Individuals are self-medicating and worsening underlying issues
 - The process to get help in the eastern Coachella Valley is challenging because of the limited rehabilitation services and resources
 - What is available is either far away, not affordable or targeted to a specific group
 - There needs to be a softer approach to address mental health with the youth
 - Increased availability of psychologists/therapists (for all age groups)
- Access to psychologists and therapists (for all age groups)
 - Have psychologists rotating monthly at apartment complexes
- Walk-in clinics/centers/counseling
 - Improve the process of getting to a mental health professional – too much time is wasted going through a primary care provider first or waiting for insurance approval
 - Increased access to care outside of regular business hours
- Address stigma associated with getting help – more encouragement to get people to access the assistance when they need it
- Resource awareness – how can we improve utilization of what is already available?

Healthy Eating, Active Living:

- Farmers' markets
 - Ways to look at the costs associated with farmers markets.
 - The fees and permits associated with opening and running a market are expensive and you must go all the way out to Riverside County to get them
 - Have a program so that the costs do not all fall on the people and they can make a profit and increase access to healthier foods
- Reduce the dependence on food banks
 - There are a lot of competition problems because no one can compete with free
 - How would we get a grocery store to be sustainable out in Mecca?
- Education/Information
 - Help promote use of EBT, food stamps, etc. to get people off the food lines
 - It is often a matter of time as many work 10-hour days on the fields, pick up their kids, etc. and don't have the time to properly nurture their family →they have the intelligence and experience but not the time
- Active living – we need to improve the quality of work life
 - There are a lot of physical injuries at work in addition to mental exhaustion
- Reforming school meals - many children are utilizing the school for the majority of their school meals
 - Youth experience – the most common menu item offered is chicken sandwich or cheeseburger. The school meals offer little to no nutritional value and are of poor quality
- Infrastructure improvement - lack of sidewalks and lighting to be active after work hours
- Shared kitchen space
- Helping to create opportunities to be active
 - How does it look to promote being active for families that are working physically exhausting jobs? - By the end of the day, they are exhausted. How can they promote active living for their family?
 - Healthy living is going to be different for communities that are laborers
 - Focus more on destress and relaxation
- There is a need for program awareness that focuses on mitigating stress for all ages
 - Educate individuals on the health benefits achieved by reducing stress levels

Other Ideas:

- Transportation – increased frequency of bus routes
 - Opportunities to access doctors with appointment transportation assistance
 - Additional routes will help the senior population’s independence
- Assistance after fires
 - There have been a lot of fires out in the Eastern Coachella Valley in the past two years with multiple mobile home parks burning down
 - Several mobile parks do not have access to readily available, proper trucks and equipment
- Access to water - water delivery services and access to filters
 - Connection to main water lines and sewage for mobile homes
- Support for pregnant women – access to prenatal care
- Local SWAP Meets
- Sexual harassment trainings
- Increased access to LGBTQ programs
- Financial literacy - education
 - How to conserve credit and get information on loan opportunities
 - There are only a couple banks that are easily accessible, and banks here provide limited options with several providing high interest rates
- Opportunity programs
 - Job training – expand programs similar to the WIN center (Indio program)
 - Savings programs – matching options
 - Vocational training
- Community policing
- Workplace safety - addressing injuries
- More stores locally – residents’ ability to choose stores
- More employment opportunities nearby for all ages
 - Ex. Oasis – there are a lot of elderly people who want to work but don’t have the option
 - Businesses prefer youth over the elderly
- Animal control
- Volunteer opportunities - ability to get people out and assisting in their communities

Ranking of priorities from Mecca participants [please note not everyone returned the ranking sheet]:

1. Homelessness
2. Primary Care/Behavioral Health access
3. Healthy Eating, Active Living
4. Other Ideas