



DESERT HEALTHCARE DISTRICT & FOUNDATION

Coachella Community Listening Forum (2 of 6)
March 7, 2019 (5:30 – 7:30 p.m.)
Coachella Library
1500 6th St., Coachella, CA 92236

Homelessness:

- Overcrowding - more focused on the concept of precariously housed as overcrowding is a bigger issue for the larger population in this community
 - Multiple families living together due to a lack of documentation or migration
 - Multiple people also don't have enough income to qualify on their own for rentals, so they live together in homes/units that are too small
 - The community is resilient – “we don't have another option but to resist” - they will do whatever they need to
 - The migration based on work changes leads to high mobility
 - People renting out to families are not being monitored
 - Permits for homeowners to convert garages, attics, etc. into livable areas to rent out
- Understanding root causes – some people refuse to go into shelters
 - Connecting individuals to mental health and substance abuse programs to improve access
 - Ex. Parents have 3 jobs causing limited supervision for children – what is the impact of stress for the parents and children?
- There needs to be more service awareness for the entire community
 - Increase advertisement for programs that help low income – review and improve current messaging methods and education tools
 - Increased funding for outreach services (Ex. CVRM and Street Life Project)
 - Learn from projects that are working with specific youth-targeted programs
 - Homeless mapping system – match volunteers/services to homeless
- Lack of affordable housing – this is a clear problem across the entire valley
 - Assistance for people making minimum wage or less
 - How are there programs with free ipads /free phones and not more assistance for housing? This money could be better allocated
 - Removing the barrier of immigration status – more programs providing legal assistance
 - Low-income housing options for students
- Emergency shelters
 - Designate more shelters for Coachella Valley
 - Shelters that are for adults, that have less limitations, and that are more family friendly
- Rent control issues
 - Families can be renting and then out of nowhere, they are faced with rent increase and no rent control after the first 3 months – education on understanding rental and homeowner rights
 - People who are undocumented have funds; however, they do not have credit which impacts their ability to rent
 - No access for short-term leases/varying lease terms
 - Requirements and limitations make it tough for people to qualify
 - Create more assistance programs available to all (not just farmworkers)
- Help “bring distinctions” to different types of homelessness and help attribute appropriate services for each category: recently homeless, youth homeless, chronic homeless

- Financial assistance – additional help between unstable harvest seasons and for first time home buyers
- More bridge housing options – tiny house models similar to Seattle and Portland
- Homeless assistance resources – more attention focused on necessities
 - Cart items (water, cell phones, etc.)
 - Outdoor lockers for storage
- Housing matching between rich families/snow birds and seasonal farm workers

Primary Care and Behavioral Health Access:

- Behavioral health and youth
 - The social pressures students are faced with is causing drug use, cutting, etc.
 - Increased access to specialized services in the school setting – someone they trust and depend on
 - Often counselors/therapists only come to the schools a couple times a week and students have limited visits and appointment availability
 - More trauma-informed counseling
 - Parental education - help identify warning signs in students
 - We need to address the connection between social media and the health of students - Are there services offered to help prepare children when on social media sites?
 - Parental training on behavioral health issues – how can they learn to identify problems and help talk about the “taboo” issues?
- Improved, in-school education on sexual health, reproductive health, domestic violence, and overall well-being
- Low ratio of providers to population and limited availability of appointments – more welcomed walk-ins
 - Limited to the provider you can access – this is an insurance and clinic problem
 - More providers utilizing appointment-only schedules with high wait times
 - Increased mobile health units or specialist rotations to address lack of providers
- Preventative practices – screenings, needle exchange, sanitizing stations
- Lower doctor visit fees and improve ways to reduce medication expenses with a 24-hour pharmacy
- Fear of doctor visits – more culturally competent, empathetic care
 - Medical services are different depending on where you go (equality of care)
 - Ex. Kaiser in Indio provides different services compared to the Kaiser in Palm Desert
- Transportation to medical appointments – seniors, homeless, families with no vehicle
- Challenges with dental service coverage and access – paying out of pocket for necessary services
- Help share what primary care looks like for a young generation
- Increase conversation about the Desert Regional Medical Center’s future

Healthy Eating, Active Living:

- Safety issues – there is a lack of sidewalks, no lighting, and stray dogs
 - Increased security is needed at local parks to address safety concerns about substance use, homeless, needles, etc.
- There are limited green spaces; however, the community is not utilizing what is available
 - Identify reasons why people are not using the parks – is it because of safety or time?
- Increase activity in the families – everything begins at the home
 - Help parents take the initiative and model healthy behaviors for their children
 - The second generation needs to create initiative for the third generation
 - Find out how technology advancements are impacting sedentary behaviors
 - Education around utilizing health monitoring apps
- There is concern of the poor nutritional quality of food served in schools
 - There needs to be more parental campaigning around removing sugary food/beverages
 - Find ways to change the habits of children – encourage change to healthier foods
 - Parents need to set the example in the homes

- Find more ways to implement nutritional education directly in schools
- Find out how the low-quality food is impacting the health of students
- Community-driven nutritional education
 - Community gardens, educational classes, more Blue Apron models, a food co-op, community kitchens, health and wellness festivals, and improved access to a nutritionist
- Improve community organization around living a healthier lifestyle
 - Support groups, workout buddies, Zumba in the park – free, easily accessible activities
 - Create spaces for the community to organize activities
 - There needs to be a way to create habit change – families complain about how expensive healthy foods are but choose to spend money on beer
 - Programs that provide subsidized gym memberships with fitness classes geared toward working adults
 - Create shared-use agreements between schools and the community
- Bring more awareness of affordable, cultural farmer’s markets like SWAP meetings
- Environmental justice
 - Healthy options across the whole Coachella Valley
 - Sometimes the people that are harvesting the crops are not able to access them for their own families
- Create more female-friendly spaces to reduce fear of harassment
- Increase dog parks
- A liquor/grocery store hybrid

Other Ideas:

- Fostering the arts for the youth – art and cultural events in the East Valley with event production and technology training opportunities for the youth to participate and work
- Increased public awareness of marijuana dispensary planning processes – how are these decisions made?
 - Ex. There were no warnings for the dispensary on 48th and Van Buren
 - People do not understand the legality of the matter at the state versus federal level
 - Youth openly smoke with no shame
- Later hours at public libraries and schools for basic services such as printing and internet use
- Community awareness of issues occurring in “real-time”
 - Build knowledge on information sharing apps – Desert Hot Springs has a Facebook page, Coachella a Connect App, Next Door app.
- Improved outreach methods in order to have a diverse representation at forums/meetings
 - The needs are different for each neighborhood, we need people to be leaders/representatives
- More stores locally so people have places to get out of the house
- Workshops on cultural differences and equitable treatment
- Air quality – growing issues with the Salton Sea
- Financial literacy - How to purchase a home
- Build better relationships with faith-based organizations and bring them into collaborative efforts
- Access to clean water/clean air resources, Ex. Air-filtration programs
- More financial assistance for college-aged individuals – book vouchers, bus passes, free health services

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

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