

Fairfax County Community Action Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 2, 2025, 7:30 PM
Fairfax County Government Center
Meeting rooms 9&10

Members in Attendance: Nermin AbdelWahab, Bronia Ashford, John Forrest, April Hall, Dolores Cole, Juana Cruz, Will Guthrie, Michelle Jefferson, Michael Mahrer, Marcia McDevitt, Michele Menapace, Lisa Washington, Shari Zamarra, Felicia Webster

Remote participants calling in due to medical reasons: Ken McMillon, Falls Church; Sandra Barksdale, Reston; Heather Thomas, Centreville; Ben Zuhl, Dranesville

Absent: Adriana Llosa, Alice Yam, Caroline Hockenberry, Maria Leiva, Hunter Doe, Nicole Tapia

Guests: Vannessa Calderon (DPMM), Karin Ventura (DPMM), Scott Mengebier (United Way)

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 PM by Chair, Michelle Jefferson. Michelle stated the mission of the CAAB.

Minutes – October 2025

The motion to approve the meeting minutes was made by Michele Menapace, seconded by John Forrest, and passed without objection.

First Quarter CSBG Report

CAAB staff presented the first quarter Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) report, including narrative reports. Non-profit organizations' client stories were highlighted. The motion to approve the report was made by Michele Menapace, seconded by Nermin AbdelWahab, and passed without objection.

United Way Presentation

Scott Mengebier, Senior Director of Research and Evaluation from United Way of the National Capital Area, presented on the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) community. 24% of households in Fairfax County are ALICE. Combined, more than 125,000 households fall below the ALICE threshold. Residents living in poverty typically qualify for all programs, but ALICE households, though employed, often face barriers due to income thresholds and limited outreach. By recognizing that working households often fall outside traditional eligibility lines, United Way NCA has updated income guidelines and redesigned programs to reach those previously overlooked, especially ALICE families who face financial strain despite employment.

Membership and Election Committee Report

Shari Zamarra shared that there are vacancies in the Sully District and the Springfield District. There is a vacancy for the representative sector, United Way, the Fairfax Federation of Citizens' Associations, and the Chamber of Commerce. Shari motioned to vote in Debra Graves for the representative sector; the CAAB voted all in favor for Debra Graves to join the CAAB.

Fairfax County delegation to the General Assembly's pre-2026 public hearing session

Michelle Jefferson asked for two volunteers to speak at the hearing about CAAB's priorities. The purpose is to testify to the state legislatures that represent the area to make sure they include budget items for the state budget.

CCFAC Meeting Report

The CCFAC will be meeting next Tuesday. There will be an update at the January meeting. Michele Menapace discussed the new RFP for emergency food and shelter, and the RFP for enrichment activities and deadlines coming up. The CCFAC will be considering the recommendations that were developed by the Working Advisory Group (WAG).

CAAB Member Sharing

John Forrest is planning to coordinate a community financial planning and personal finances seminar in early 2026. It will be free and open to the public and will hopefully include volunteers from credit unions to share their time and resources. Topics will include personal finance consumer protections about personal lending, predatory credit cards, and predatory loans and related issues. If anyone is aware of specific financial planning issues that are relevant to people in the community that would benefit from a seminar like this, please reach out to John Forrest. Helping communicate this opportunity and resources will be helpful.

Michele Menapace was appointed to the Community Services Board (CSB), and they distributed the annual report. Copies are available.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.