



On **July 25, 2019**, Bridges to Progress met at the Miller Center for their 90 day community meeting.

The Taskforces reported updates on their goals as follows:

**Community:** The focus of the Community taskforce is to find ways to provide support and mentoring to the graduates of the Getting Ahead classes and to schedule future Bridges out of Poverty community training opportunities. Anyone interested in helping build the support network should contact Lindsey Cawood at [lindsey.cawood@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:lindsey.cawood@vdh.virginia.gov).

**Education:** The Education taskforce has partnered with Parks & Recreation to provide 'Social and Emotional Learning' for their staff in August with an additional training in September for volunteers. They may also participate in a survey with the Search Institute which may lead to some funding opportunities.

**Early Childhood Education:** This group continues to focus on building and providing quality pre-K care and education.

**Faith:** The Faith taskforce hosted a community dinner on August 1 at two neighborhood recreation centers. They have also organized speakers, Tamara Rosser from Lynchburg Human Services and Keith Cook with Virginia Career Works, to talk about benefits and services available through their agencies on September 11, 2019, 2:00 PM at Lynchburg Human Services in the 5<sup>th</sup> floor training room. **Next Faith meeting:** The meeting schedule is the first Wednesday of every month in the Carriage House behind St. Paul's.

**Food Disparity:** The Food Disparity taskforce continues to research ways to support the Red Truck food ministry by soliciting donations of canvas bags and to encourage recipients to eat more healthfully by providing recipes and preparation demonstrations during the Red Truck distribution. **Next Food Disparity meeting:** August 27, 2019; 5:30 PM at Lynchburg Human Services, 99 Ninth Street, Lynchburg. There will also be an **update on the Oasis Non-Profit Grocery store** project on August 22, 2019 at 5:30 PM at the Lynchburg Library on Memorial Avenue.

**Health/Mental Health:** The Health/Mental Health Taskforce has identified a need for an on-line Resource Directory for our community to assist with increasing health and mental health awareness in the community. The group plans on working to have this information about the resources to provide to individuals that are in need of services. The trauma workgroup is now a part of the Health/Mental Health Taskforce. **Next Health/Mental Health meeting:** August 20, 2019; 5:30 pm; Horizon Behavioral Health, 2215 Langhorne Rd (Lower

Level). Please contact Debra Jefferson at [debra.jefferson@horizonbh.org](mailto:debra.jefferson@horizonbh.org) if you plan to attend so she can make sure you gain entry because the building will be locked.

**Housing:** The Housing Collaborative met with city staff to review the opportunities for and barriers to affordable housing. The research by city staff resulted in a 35 or so page report that included 13 possible opportunities for change. A follow up report will go to City Council. There has been coverage on the high number of housing evictions in Lynchburg.

**Legal:** The Legal taskforce has created a pamphlet with helpful resource information to assist folks re-entering the community to get legal documents, housing, etc. These pamphlets as well as 100 backpacks with toiletries and other essential items have been assembled. Some of the backpacks are being housed at Interfaith Outreach which has a ministry at the jail and some are located at the Salvation Army. The Legal taskforce welcomes any donations of toiletry items. The group is also working on a re-entry clinic. **Next Legal meeting:** The Legal taskforce meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday each month at 6:30 PM at the Salvation Army.

**Transportation:** Transportation discussed that the 6 month analysis of the GLTC route changes (which took effect in December 2018) had been conducted and minor adjustments were going to be made mid to late August to some routes. The adjustments were to help improve the on-time performance of routes struggling to stay on time which will assist to ensure better connections between routes at the Transfer Station. They also had a plan to grow the focus group with key individuals in Lynchburg having a stake in Transportation. From this group we will discuss suggestions previously brought forward from the initial public input session a few years ago and prioritize other tasks to work on. **Next Transportation meeting:** August 29th at 12 pm at the Transfer Station 800 Kemper St.

**Workforce:** Major projects over the last 90 days are: 1) working on a region wide Career Essentials soft skills training program to address the needs of employers and better prepare individuals (especially individuals with barriers to employment) the skills they need to be successful on the job. 2) Business resource fair with local employer. Multiple agencies were on site to help provide information to 100's of employees to help them maintain employment and reduce the level of turnover for the employer. These events will continue with other employers in the future. 3) Project to help currently incarcerated individuals receive two manufacturing certificates through a partnership with the regional jail authority, CVCC, ACE and Virginia Career Works Adult program to help ensure employment and reduce recidivism. **For more information, contact Keith Cook** at [keith.cook@vcwcentral.com](mailto:keith.cook@vcwcentral.com)