VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE
Report for the Village Council Meeting

11/15/2022

SUBJECT:	SUBMITTED BY:
Accept the Social Services Gap Report	Dave Fieldman Village Manager

SYNOPSIS

A motion to accept the Social Services Gap Analysis Report is requested.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

The goals for 2021-23 include *Exceptional Municipal Services. Complete a Social Services Gap Analysis Report* is a Priority Action in the 2021-2023 Long Range Plan.

FISCAL IMPACT

N/A

RECOMMENDATION

Approval on November 15, 2022 Consent Agenda

BACKGROUND

The Village Council considered the Social Services Gap Analysis Report at their October 18, 2022 meeting. Based on the Council discussion at the meeting, the following changes were made to the report:

- The recommendation regarding the operation of information booths was changed to reflect that the Village should consider operating information booths at community events and that staff and volunteer members of the Human Service Commission (HSC) should operate the booths.
- The recommendation to refer the senior transportation availability gap to the Transportation and Parking Commission was deleted.
- The recommendation that the Village should explore partnering with rideshare companies to develop a senior subsidy program was deleted. The recommendation regarding partnering with the County and Townships was amended to encourage these entities to develop senior subsidy programs with rideshare companies.
- The recommendation to obtain feedback from current users of the taxi subsidy program was amended to also state that the Village should engage with senior residents on this topic.

At their October 25, 2022 meeting, the HSC reviewed, discussed and approved the changes to the report.

ATTACHMENTS

Social Services Gap Analysis Report

VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE

COUNCIL ACTION SUMMARY

INITIATED: ___Village Manager___ **DATE:** ___November 15, 2022___
(Name)

RECOMMENDATION FROM: _____ **FILE REF:**_____
(Board or Department)

NATURE OF ACTION: **STEPS NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT ACTION:**

___ Ordinance   Motion to accept the Social Services Gap Report.

___ Resolution

_X_ Motion

___ Other

SUMMARY OF ITEM:

Adoption of this motion shall accept the Social Services Gap Report.

RECORD OF ACTION TAKEN:

_____

_____

_____

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Social Services Gap Analysis Report

November 15, 2022

Executive Summary

In December 2020, based on the findings and recommendations of the [Human Service Ad Hoc Committee Report](), the Council directed staff to develop a social services referral program and to prepare a report identifying gaps in services and strategies to address the gaps. The Village developed the social services referral program from August 2021 through January 2022 and publicly launched the program in February. The program connects individuals in need of service with the agencies that provide the services.

Report Scope
- Identify and quantify gaps in social services determined by the Village through the operation of the social services referral program
- A "Gap in Service" is defined as: *The inability of the Village to successfully refer a resident to a social service agency which provides the requested service*
- A Gap in Service exists when a resident is not aware of the availability of the social service provider or the Village's referral program (*Awareness)*; when a resident does not accept a valid social service referral provided by the Village (*Acceptance*); and when the Village is unable to identify and contact an agency that provides the requested service and can provide the service in a timely manner (*Availability*)

Service Gap Identification

Based on the findings of the Human Service Ad Hoc Committee in 2020, staff is operating under the assumption that public awareness is generally low which constitutes an awareness gap.

No acceptance gap has been identified. The Village has been collecting data on the acceptance of social services referrals since the program's inception in August 2021. The acceptance rate has been strong. However the Village should refine the measurement of the acceptance rate.

Additional information should be provided to determine if there is an availability gap. The Village has identified a service provider for each of the requested services. The Village is not tracking the extent to which the requested service can be provided in a timely manner.

Participation in the Village's Taxi Coupon Program for residents 65 years and older or with disabilities has declined significantly due to a lack of availability of taxi services.

Strategies to Address Service Gaps

The Village should consider taking the following steps to address the awareness and availability gaps identified in this report.

- Top Priority - Increase Awareness of the Social Services Referral Program by Creating and Implementing a Public Awareness Campaign
  - Post Messages and Videos on the Village Website and Social Media Platforms
  - Provide Information in the Village E-news, Inside DG Newsletter and Utility Bills
  - Provide Information in the Chamber 630 New Resident Welcome Package

- ○ Partner with Other Governments, such as Downers Grove school districts to Provide Information Using Their Communication Platforms
  - ○ Highlight the Referral Program in Police & Fire Public Education Programs
  - ○ Arrange for the Social Worker to Present Information at Local Community Organizations
  - ○ Explore Partnering with Downers Grove schools to Promote the Social Services Referral Program as Part of the Learning Curriculum.
  - ○ Obtain Data and Information to Quantify the Extent of the Awareness Gap
  - ○ Use the Data and Information to Identify a Target Audience
  - ○ The Village should consider operating information booths at various community events. Staff should be the lead participants and HSC members should participate as necessary.
  - ○ Publish the Information about the Referral Program in Multiple Languages

- Increase Understanding of the Availability of Services by Requesting That the Service Providers Submit Information to the Village About Wait Times and Schedule Availability.

- Improve Senior Residents Access to Transportation by:
  - ○ Promoting the Use and Availability of Township and County Senior Transportation Services
  - ○ Encourage the Township and County to Expand Senior Transportation Services and Encourage them to Explore Partnerships with Rideshare Companies to Develop a Senior Subsidy Program
  - ○ Obtain Qualitative Feedback from Current Program Participants. Engage the Senior Resident Community to Obtain Their Input
  - ○ Explore Partnering with Local Community Groups, Local Medical Service Providers and Not for Profit Organizations to Provide Rides to Senior Residents

Background & Introduction

In December 2020 the Village Council considered the Human Service Ad Hoc Committee Report. The Council approved an implementation plan which directed staff to develop and operate a social services referral program. The Village publicly launched the social services referral program in February 2022.

The implementation plan also called for the Village to prepare a report identifying gaps in the provision of services and strategies to address the gaps as described in the excerpt from the December 2020 report to Council:

> *The Village staff will prepare a report which identifies social trends and issues facing the Village by reviewing and analyzing data. From this analysis, service gaps should be identified and strategies for addressing gaps will be presented. This report will be prepared once the referral service program has been operating for a few months. The report will be presented to the Human Service Commission for their review and comment. The HSC may be asked to make recommendations about social service needs priorities and strategies identified in the report. The HSC will forward their comments and recommendations to the Village Council for consideration.*

Scope

At their April 19, 2022 meeting, the Village Council established the following scope of the report:

- Identify and quantify gaps in social services determined by the Village through the operation of the social services referral program
- A "Gap in Service" is defined as: *The inability of the Village to successfully refer a resident to a social service agency which provides the requested service*
- A Gap in Service exists when:
    - A resident is not aware of the availability of the social service provider or the Village's social service referral program (*Awareness Gap*)
    - A resident does not accept a valid social service referral provided by the Village (*Acceptance Gap*)
    - The Village is unable to identify and contact an agency that provides the requested service and can provide the service in a timely manner (*Availability Gap*)
- Recommend strategies to address the identified gaps

Social Services Referral Program

The Village developed the social services referral program from August 2021 through January 2022 and publicly launched the program in February. The program is designed to connect individuals in need of service with the agencies that provide the services. The program consists of multiple methods for individuals to contact the Village including in-person, by phone and on-line. Individuals who contact the Village receive personal referrals to specific social service providers. Further, the Village actively seeks to identify and contact individuals who may be in need of services.

> **Social Services Referral Program Goals**
>
> ● Connect Individuals in Need of Services with Agencies that Provide Services
> ● Increase Public Awareness
> ● Increase Access to Resources and Opportunities

Each resident who requests referral services or who is identified by staff as described above is contacted by a professionally trained staff member. Upon completion of a discussion, the staff member refers the resident to the appropriate service providers.

Social Service Gap Identification & Analysis
A "Gap in Service" is defined as: *The inability of the Village to successfully refer a resident to a social service agency which provides the requested service.* For purposes of this report, three types of service gaps have been identified.

> *Awareness Gap* - A resident is not aware of the availability of the social service provider or the Village's social service referral program.
>
> *Acceptance Gap* - A resident does not accept a valid social service referral provided by the Village.
>
> *Availability Gap* - The Village is unable to identify and contact an agency that provides the requested service and can provide the service in a timely manner.

Awareness Gap Identification
An *Awareness Gap* exists when a resident is not aware of the availability of the social service provider or the Village's social service referral program

In 2020, the Human Service Ad Hoc Committee considered presentations by entities currently providing services in the community. Presentations were made by:

● The Village of Downers Grove
● Community High School District 99
● Downers Grove Grade School District 58
● Downers Grove Public Library
● Downers Grove Township
● DuPage County
● NAMI DuPage
● Youth Outlook

Each of these entities summarized the social services they provide and the challenges they face in providing these services. Based on the presentations from the social service providers, the

HSAHC found that many social services provided by government agencies and not-for-profit organizations are available to Downers Grove residents but there appears to be a general lack of awareness by the general public and individuals in need of services that social services are available to them.

The Village publicly launched the social service referral program in February 2022. While the Village publicly announced the program on the website, social media platforms and at Village Council meetings, a complete public awareness campaign has not been undertaken.

The Village is not currently collecting data about the public's awareness of the availability of social services of the social services referral program. Based on the previous findings of the Human Service Ad Hoc Committee, staff is operating under the assumption that public awareness is generally low.

Reducing the awareness gap by implementing the strategies noted later in the report may help to improve the acceptance rate.

Acceptance Gap Identification

An *Acceptance Gap* exists when a resident does not accept a valid social service referral provided by the Village. The Village has been collecting data on the acceptance of social services referrals since the program's inception in August 2021. The Social Worker requests that residents who receive referrals voluntarily report back whether they accepted the referral. Based on the results of the voluntary reporting, the acceptance rate has been strong. The current measurement relies on residents self reporting the results. Therefore the acceptance rate may be overstated.
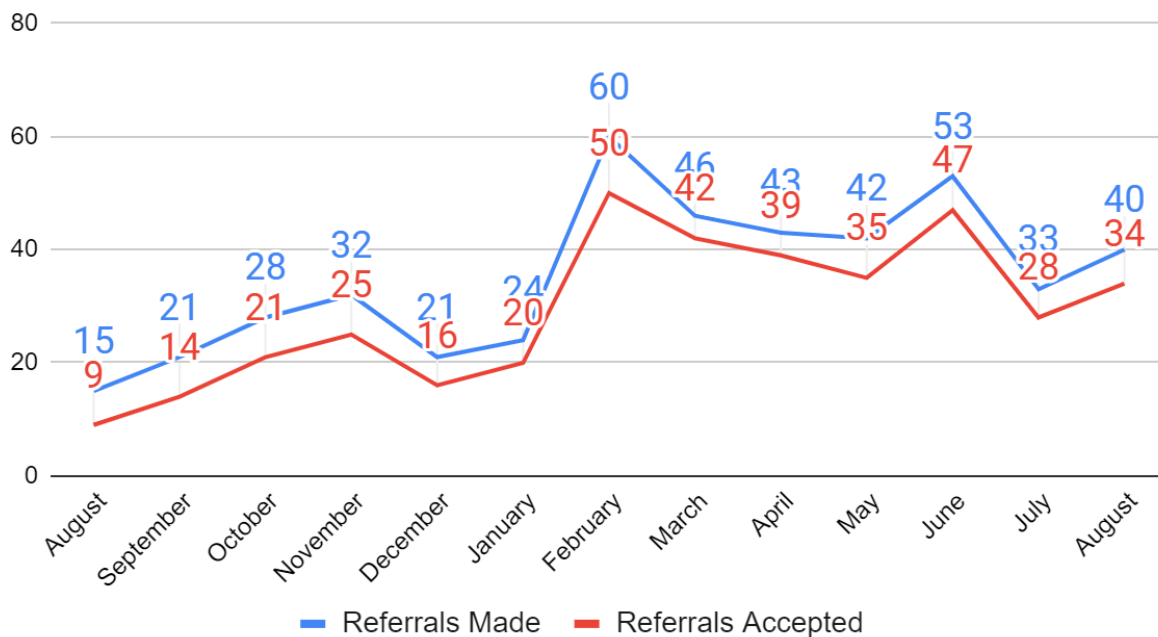
Referral Acceptance

Month	Total Referrals	Referrals Accepted	Percent Accepted
Aug 22	40	34	85.0%
Jul 22	33	28	84.8%
Jun 22	53	47	88.7%
May 22	42	35	83.3%
Apr 22	44	39	88.6%
Mar 22	46	42	91.3%
Feb 22	60	50	83.3%
Jan 22	24	20	83.3%
Dec 21	21	16	76.2%

Nov 21	32	25	78.1%
Oct 21	28	21	75.0%
Sep 21	21	14	66.7%
Aug 21	15	9	60.0%
Total	**459**	**380**	**82.8%**

Referrals Made and Referrals Accepted

Many of the residents who may be in need of social services are identified by police officers. These officers contact the Social Worker and recommend that the resident be contacted for a potential referral. The acceptance rate of these types of referrals appears to be higher when the police officer informs the resident that they may be contacted by a Village Social Worker in the coming days. The notification appears to result in a higher likelihood that the resident will speak with the Social Worker and ultimately accept a referral.

Availability Gap Identification
An *Availability Gap* exists when the Village is unable to identify and contact an agency that provides the requested service and can provide the service in a timely manner. The Village is currently tracking the number of times that the Village is unable to identify and contact an agency that provides the requested service. Since the launch of the referral program, the Village has identified a service provider for each of the requested or recommended services. To date,

the Village is not tracking the extent to which the requested service can be provided in a timely manner.

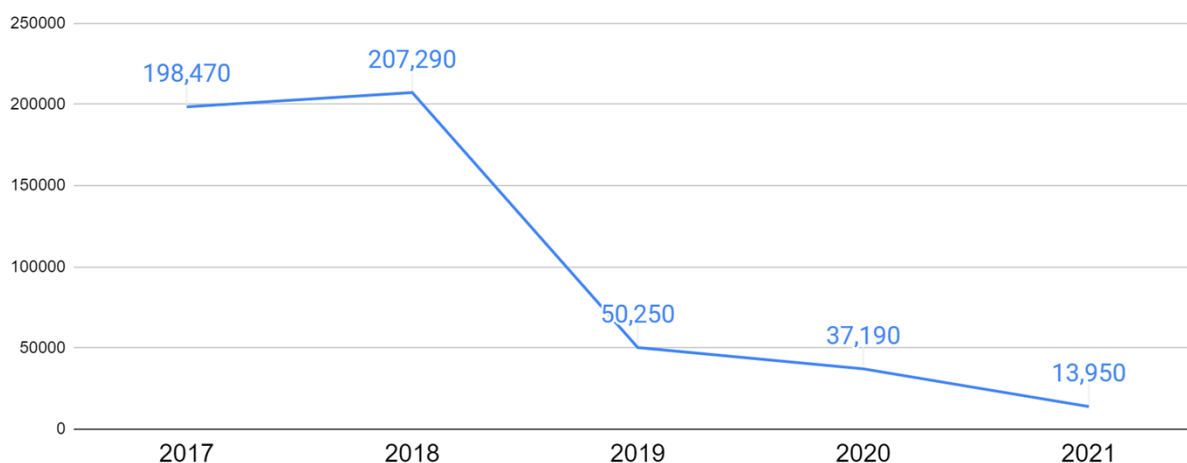*Transportation Services for Senior Residents*
The Village operates a Taxi Coupon Program to assist residents aged 65 years and older and residents with disabilities with their transportation needs. The Village provides a 50% subsidy to offset the cost of taxi services. Participants use coupons in place of cash to pay for taxi fares. In the past several years, participation in the program has declined significantly.

Taxi Coupon Program, 2017 to 2022

Year	Coupons Sold	Coupons Redeemed	Participants
2022 YTD	2,520	1,403	330
2021	12,624	2,966	326
2020	18,324	7,519	278
2019	46,188	18,962	253
2018	65,136	26,339	315
2017	74,628	30,444	350

Residents are reporting that the number of taxis available is also declining. Based on figures provided by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, there has been a dramatic decline in the number of people employed as taxi drivers.

Number of Taxi Drivers in U.S., 2017 to 2021

Source: United States Bureau of Labor Statistics

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Based on the above information, it appears that there may be an availability gap in senior resident transportation services. To further assess and address this gap, staff has contacted Downers Grove Township to discuss how their Dial-a-Ride program may be of assistance.

Strategies to Address Identified Gaps
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  - Partner with Other Governments, such as Downers Grove school districts to Provide Information Using Their Communication Platforms
  - Highlight the Referral Program in Police & Fire Public Education Programs
  - Arrange for the Social Worker to Present Information at Local Community Organizations
  - Explore Partnering with Downers Grove schools to Promote the Social Services Referral Program as Part of the Learning Curriculum.
  - Obtain Data and Information to Quantify the Extent of the Awareness Gap
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  - Explore Partnering with Local Community Groups, Local Medical Service Providers and Not for Profit Organizations to Provide Rides to Senior Residents