



NMCAA Policy Council Meeting Minutes
Thursday August 14, 2025
10a.m.-12p.m.

Welcome and Call to Order-Melanie Chaney, Policy Council Chair

- Roll call (establish quorum) Grace Ogden, Melanie Chaney, Ivy Thompson, Rosalynn Alfsen, Kayla Cook, Brittney Burke,
- Review of agenda (Melanie Chaney reviewed the agenda)
- Approval of minutes from last meeting Kayla Cook Motion to Pass, Grace Ogden 2nd Motion to Pass, voted, all in favor, motion passed.

Agency Connection- Kerry Baughman, NMCAA Executive Director

- Northern Express interview with Melanie C. and Judy Abernathy. Keep a look out for it.
- Community Needs Assessment (CNA) from 2024 completed to better understand how NMCAA can meet the needs of each locality. NMCAA adjusts and or develops programs based on the CNA to meet those needs.
 - Two things have come to the top.
 - **Transportation** needs. The agency will continue to work on ways to address this need. Though today we are focusing on the second one, **Food Insecurity**
 - NMCAA has some food programs such as Meals on Wheels, and commodity programs (food box deliveries).
 - Kerry reviewed Quantitative vs Qualitative Findings handout (Stats and data vs feedback from client surveys)
 - Kerry would like to add to the CNA process by collecting feedback from Policy Council families. See link or handout to share perspective on food challenges: <https://forms.office.com/r/7yCLt89UK8?origin=lprLink>
 - The 3 questions she has for the group are:
 - What kinds of food do families in your community have a hard time getting?
 - Without vehicles, limited to walkable locations, dollar general, etc.
 - Meat, limited selection at smaller locations. Need to drive to another town to get a wider variety.
 - Only one pantry or market in some areas to use. Antrim
 - What makes it hard for families in your community to eat healthy food?
 - Lack of resources, knowledge, or experience eating healthy.
 - Mental health, physical health barriers.
 - What family members will eat.
 - What would help families in your community get more good food?
 - May not know how to cook, handouts or recipes are helpful.
 - Garden classes. Offer education on topics around nutrition, farming, cooking, gardening. Someone to call on when you have questions.
 - Start a coalition.
 - Locating where the gardens are and building advocacy networks with Community gardens or farms.
 - Other barriers discussed:
 - The warmth of the staff/volunteers at the food distribution sites.
 - Judgement of whether or not you belong, what you drive, how you dress. It seems like you need to look like you have nothing to be welcomed.



Supplemental Nutrition Grant thought Sharing

- Due August 20th. Information needs to be ready by this Friday...tomorrow August 15th.
- The grant will connect to the CNA with focus on areas with greatest needs. We can also generalize things across all 10 counties too.
- More farm to table in the classroom.
- Recipes for the smoothies were really helpful.
- Make sure that families are interested in specific opportunities and then diversify what is offered.
- Purchase blenders, crockpots to do specific workshops with families that are interested in learning more about meals to use those items.
- Picking a location and using those funds for a pilot opportunity. Possibly Kalkaska county connection from Melanie Chaney. Need to know if they are interested and what they would need.
- Nutrition education – WIC has an online learning course (MSU Extension?) to help families learn portions and balanced meals.
- Kingsley farm market \$20 from EBT
- [Microsoft Word - ECE Eat The Rainbow.docx](#)
- Mileage to attend nutrition workshops
- Please email Shannon other ideas as you think of them.

Program Information Summary- Mini Management

- Monthly Updates
 - Will be operating a HS classroom in a temporary classroom (Lincoln St, until we are able to move it to a permanent location (Marty Paul)
 - First Steps closed their child care programming in Spring 2025, impacting 8 EHS families and slots. Pitter Patter Interlochen has welcomed those 8 slots into their infant toddler programming beginning this fall.
 - **Advocacy**
 - Refer to Program Information Summary, Federal Immigration Status Verification Policy
 - July 10th, OHS public notice to require anybody who enrolls to provide legal status for this country.
 - Head Start is not a public benefit. NMCAA submitted public comment to withdraw.
 - NMCAA is a nonprofit and as such do not appear to fall within the parameters of this requirement. No changes to current processes at this time.
- Budget, enrollment and attendance reports
 - Flat funding for 2025, no COLA from the Office of Head Start. Budgeting is tight, but solid through the end of the year. Agency was able to provide staff with small increase in wages.
 - Please help with recruitment across all 10 counties. Especially Wexford, Emmet, Kalkaska for home based programming.



By-Laws Review

- PC reps took time to review the bylaws
- Section 2 1 a-c Selection of Members. Change will to may
 - Discussed how families learn about it. Parent Meetings, ask for volunteers, parent handbooks.

Member Sharing/Other Discussion

- Policy Council SharePoint Page
 - What's working, what can be improved?
- Policy Council Open House in the afternoon, after work schedules. In-person meeting seems to have a better turnout (Melanie). Mandatory for PC reps, optional for others.
 - End of September
 - Location: Churches, Kalasium, Kalkaska, Traverse City, The Wex.
 - 5ish...to 7? 4 to 7?
 - Kids are welcome
 - Include an RSVP to plan accordingly.
 - Survey the attendees for the how to make it work for families to join or be more involved. What time of day, day of the week, week of the month, in person, virtual, hybrid.

Personnel

- **Refer to Personnel for Policy Council Document**
 - Amanda Black, Lori Smith, Shannon Fisk, Jordyn D'Hondt, Grace Cederberg, Megan Gardner, Rachel Stirrett, Jessica Booms, Cheyanne Skaggs, Tabitha Helsel, Cortney Lipar-Cook, Tristina Stahl,
 - Grace Ogden Motion to Pass, Ivy Thompson 2nd Motion to Pass, voted, all in favor, motion passed.

Grounding Activity- Family Engagement Specialists

- Wellness Vision Board making with Kim Micham

Adjourn

Meeting Objectives

1. Better understanding of NMCAA and Head Start locally and nationally
2. Discuss Supplemental Nutrition Opportunity
3. Consider advocacy opportunities

Next Meeting September 11, 2025

Chair – Melanie Chaney; Vice Chair – Kayla Cook; Secretary – Samantha Haggerty; Treasurer – Brigitte Matzke; Parliamentarian- Grace Ogden; State Delegates –Brittney Burke, Rosalyn Alfsen; Alternates-Brigitte Matzke, Open