

CMCA Board,

I look forward to seeing you in person at the April 28 board meeting. We will continue to have a Zoom meeting option for your convenience. The agenda is chock full of important information that requires your attention. The final FY2021 Audit is included in the board packet, and we have hard copies to distribute to you at the board meeting. Our auditor, Neil Phillips, will be presenting the audit to you via Zoom. Our CFO, Greg Shinn, presented it to the Finance Committee on April 7 and I am pleased to report that it is a clean audit.

In addition to several regular Head Start program reports and cyclical grant requests that require approval, we have a few significant proposals for you to consider. Our housing developer partner, HRM, will help me present an affordable housing development proposal that we would like to submit to the Missouri Housing Development Commission next fall. Our last two applications with HRM have been successful. We are nearly finished with the renovation of the Woodridge Apartments in Brunswick and we are getting close to closing on the property in Centralia to begin renovation. This new project will be for the construction of a new 48-unit apartment complex in Cole County.

I am always interested in creating the kind of work environment that is both rewarding and can be balanced with family and life outside of work. There is a growing [body of evidence](#) that suggests that shorter work weeks can lead to more satisfied employees without any reduction in productivity. That has never been a good option for CMCA because our Head Start program is such a significant proportion of our staff. However, the Head Start application that you approved for next year included the adjustment to have Head Start centers open four days a week instead of five. This opens the door to a conversation about the rest of our offices and I am going to propose shifting to a 36-hour work week (four nine-hour days) starting next fall. The Leadership Team has discussed this at length, and we believe this will be good for ongoing recruitment and retention. I also did a straw poll of my Community Action colleagues in Missouri and found that 10 of the 19 agencies have shortened their work week.

Last, Greg Shinn brought to my attention an opportunity to bring some unrestricted money back to CMCA via the Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC) program. Essentially this IRS program returns payroll taxes based on disruptions to our operations caused by the COVID pandemic. Your Treasurer, Stephanie Schmidt, sat in with us on a call with the tax consultant we'd like to hire to file our ERTC and the Finance Committee is recommending that the board approve our application.

Also, I'll mention this at the meeting, but it is time for the board to do its tri-annual board self-assessment. I'll send you a link next week to complete an online survey to get your perspective on the function of the board. Results will be discussed at a subsequent board meeting and included in our agency self-assessment.

As always, please let me know if you have any questions or comments about anything in the board packet. See you Thursday!

Darin Preis
Executive Director

