

**SOMERSET COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL (HSAC)**  
**Minutes – February 24, 2021**

**In Attendance** Mark Avery, Michele Boronkas, Rajni Chopra, LuAnn Dias, Mary Jane DiPaolo, Lucy Forgione, Lauren Frary, Mike Frost, Nancy Good, Paul Grzella, Steve Nagel, Diann Robinson, Richard Schumann, Nicci Spinazzola, Jerry Starr, Andrea Strack, Tim Wolf, Commissioner Paul Drake

**Excused:** Joanne Kemp

**Absent:** Susan Bruder, David Walker

**NJ State Representatives:** Michelle Dufour (DCP&P), Jeff Kline (NJDCF), Nelson Troche (DCA)

**Guests:** Chris Blount (The Learning Gate), Mary Jane Canose (Bernardsville Mayor), Daniel Powell (Atlantic Health/VNA), Genna Rutka (BBBSCNNJ), Maria Marnell (HCEESC),

**Department of Human Services Staff:** Katie Brach, Sandra Escobar, Jen Guyette, Meg Isbitski, Rheanah Johnson, Ivana Martins, Johanna Moore, Marla Matthews, Monica Mulligan, Antonietta Phelan, Ellen Russo, Kristy Soriano

**Mission:** To provide county-based planning, advisory and advocacy as an organization dedicated to meeting the human service needs of the local community.

Agenda Item	Discussion	Outcome/Follow-Up
<u>Call the Meeting to Order and Introduction</u>	Mary Jane DiPaolo, HSAC Chair, called the meeting to order.	All participants know who attends meeting.
<u>Approval of 1-27-21 HSAC minutes</u>	Motion to approve minutes made and seconded.	The HSAC minutes were approved.
<u>DCF Needs Assessment Presentation</u>	<p>Johanna Moore, Human Services planning Administrator, delivered summary of 2020 NJ Department of Children &amp; Families' biennial HSAC Needs Assessment Report on Somerset County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100 participants reflected on surveys and focus groups (including four key informants).</li> <li>• Out of the six basic needs categories highlighted for consideration by DCF, top two for Somerset County were:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Food</li> <li>○ Housing &amp; Health Care tied</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Of the six specialized services for consideration, top two priorities:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Behavioral/ Mental Health Services for Children</li> <li>○ Substance Use Disorder Services (Adults &amp; Adolescents)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reviewed top five key barriers for each category with some supporting comments from participants.</li> <li>• Touched on some ideas for next steps: action items for HSAC and collaborations with other councils, committees and community stakeholders/residents to address needs and barriers.</li> </ul>	<p>PDF presentation to be shared with the group.</p> <p>Moore and Frost met with DCF staff last Friday, 2/19, as was told the complete Needs Assessment report from all counties will be posted on the State website. Frost noted the report will be available for review and downloading. (Moore will confirm with state on when okay to widely distribute report).</p>
<u>Executive Committee: Next Action Steps for the Council</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What can the role be to resolve the issues and bring people together?</li> <li>• Bylaws need to be updated               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Housekeeping</li> <li>○ Recommending new committees</li> <li>○ Need volunteers to revamp the bylaws</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Steven Nagel and Antonietta Phelan volunteered to assist on committee.</p>	By-laws committee convening to review and propose updates

<p><u>Big Brothers Big Sisters of Coastal &amp; Northern NJ</u></p>	<p>Genna Rutka, LSW- Program Manager for Somerset County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service areas: Monmouth, Middlesex, <b>Somerset</b>, Hunterdon, Warren, Morris, Sussex, Passaic, Bergen, and Ocean Counties.</li> <li>• One-to-one professional mentoring relationships for children facing adversity.</li> <li>• Community based program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Goal is to build a trusting friendship through positive guidance and support.</li> <li>○ Big at least 19 years old matched with Little ages 6-15.</li> <li>○ One year commitment of 4-6 hours a month</li> <li>○ Eligibility falls into wants and communication</li> <li>○ Child Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interview, training, background check, references</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Site Based Mentoring Programs (None in Somerset County as of yet) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ School Based</li> <li>○ Workplace</li> <li>○ College Based</li> <li>○ Bigs in Blue</li> </ul> </li> <li>• CARES Program-Creating Access to Resources, Events, and Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Events hosted by members of the community and open to all participants</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Impact-2019 Outcome Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 91% of Littles believed they would graduate from college</li> <li>○ 77% felt confident in social acceptance</li> <li>○ 96% were confident in avoiding risky behavior</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Contact</b>  Call 732-544-2224  Email <a href="mailto:grutka@mentornj.org">grutka@mentornj.org</a>  Website <a href="http://www.mentornj.org">www.mentornj.org</a></p>												
<p><u>Agency Highlights</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Michele Boronkas (Safe &amp; Sound Somerset)- Domestic Violence Housing First Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Funding of \$250,000 through a grant from DCJ until April 2021.</li> <li>○ Place survivors into mid- and long-term housing</li> <li>○ Placed about 20 survivors into stable housing.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Daniel Powell: VNA Somerset Hills Headquarters Opened a COVID-19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Vaccinating 200 people a day.</li> <li>○ Register at Atlantic Health System site or State COVID-19 site</li> </ul> </li> </ul>													
<p><u>State Department Representatives Report</u></p>	<p>Nelson Troche (DCA) gave his report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical COVID-19 childcare assistance program will continue through June 30, 2021</li> <li>• Attorney General – Requiring doctors to co prescribe naloxone to patients at risk of overdosing</li> <li>• Governor Murphy - \$1.2 billion initiatives for school districts and mental health initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Budget address was on Tuesday February 23<sup>rd</sup></li> <li>○ Talking points from budget-highlighted what has been done for the last three years</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Michelle DuFour (DCP&amp;P) gave her report. See below:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="526 1516 1088 1976"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="526 1516 844 1583">2020</th> <th data-bbox="844 1516 1088 1583">January</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="526 1583 844 1684"><b>Families</b></td> <td data-bbox="844 1583 1088 1684">315 (55% open in intake cases)</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="526 1684 844 1751"><b>Children</b></td> <td data-bbox="844 1684 1088 1751">585</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="526 1751 844 1852"><b>Children in Out of Home Placement</b></td> <td data-bbox="844 1751 1088 1852">48</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="526 1852 844 1919"></td> <td data-bbox="844 1852 1088 1919"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="526 1919 844 1976"><b>Referral Type</b></td> <td data-bbox="844 1919 1088 1976"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2020	January	<b>Families</b>	315 (55% open in intake cases)	<b>Children</b>	585	<b>Children in Out of Home Placement</b>	48			<b>Referral Type</b>		<p>Report to be given at next HSAC meeting.</p>
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<u>Human Services Director's Report</u>	<p>Michael Frost, Human Services Director, presented a report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County staff continuing to work on an A/B schedule</li> <li>• Working on a plan to vaccinate employee workforce</li> <li>• Hopeful that around May or June</li> <li>• Operations &amp; Planning is working on a few initiatives</li> </ul>																	
<u>Agency Announcements</u>	<p>Mary Jane DiPaolo reported that childcare assistance program will continue through June 30, 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children in remote learning with working parents will continue to receive full time care.</li> <li>• Providers will be reimbursed based on intended enrollment as opposed to attendance.</li> <li>• Extra supplemental payment for subsidized children will continue.</li> <li>• Tuition assistance program will continue</li> </ul>																	
<u>Meeting Adjournment</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.</li> </ul>	The next HSAC meeting will be on March 24 <sup>th</sup> at 1:30pm																