

SOMERSET COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL (HSAC)

Minutes –December 15, 2021

In Attendance: Rajni Chopra, Luann Dias, Mary Jane Dipaola, Lucy Forgione, Mike Frost, Nancy Good, Paul Grzella, Joanne Kemp, Steven Nagel, Diann Robinson, Nicci Spinazzola, Andrea Strack, Tim Wolf

Excused: Mark Avery, Michele Boronkas

Absent: Paul Drake, Lauren Frary, Thomas O’leary, Daniel Powell, Shanel Robinson, Richard Schumann, Jerry Starr, David Walker

NJ State Representatives: Michelle Dufour (DCPP)

Guest: Chris Blount (The learning gate), Jeff Philips (CSPNJ), Joelle Piercy (Safe & Sound Somerset), Catherine Sackey (HOPES Cap)

Department of Human Services Staff: Antonietta Phelan, Alba Robles, Henry Young, Maria Marnell, Marla Matthews, Rheanah Johnson, Dameon Stackhouse, Linda Porcaro, Meg Isbitski. Monica Mulligan, Ellen Russo, Kristy Soriano, Zachary Berliner, Jennifer Guyette

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 the meeting.
<u>Approval of 10-27-21 & 11-24-21 HSAC minutes</u>	Tim Wolf moved to accept the October 27, 2021 minutes seconded by Michelle Boronkas. No opposes nor abstains. Paul Grzella moved to accept the November 24, 2021 minutes seconded by Joann Kemp. No opposes, Nancy Good, Diann Robinson & Michelle Boronkas abstained.	The HSAC minutes were approved.
<u>Overview of HCESC, with a focus on the Work First New Jersey Program</u>	<p>Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission Presented by Maria Marnell, WorkFirst New Jersey Mmarnell@hunterdonesc.org</p> <p>The Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission (HCESC) was organized under the Education Laws of the State of New Jersey in 1979.</p> <p>Services are provided to students of nonpublic schools that meet the eligibility requirements set by the New Jersey Department of Education.</p> <p>Services available include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Compensatory Education/Supplemental Instruction ● English as a Second Language ● Home Instruction ● Child Study Team Services ● Speech/Language <p>The HCESC provides part time and full time</p>	Alba Robles will provide the PowerPoint presentation via e-mail.

	<p>Teacher Assistants throughout Hunterdon and Somerset Counties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCESC provides bus and van transportation for both member and non-member districts throughout the state • Specialize in helping school districts and other community partners negotiate large purchase and facility improvement agreements. <p>Adult Programs & Services The mission of Thrive Day Habilitation is to provide an opportunity for individuals of differing abilities to continue to grow by developing skills that lead to self-advocacy, improved communication skills, greater independence and community membership. DDD fee for service program</p> <p>Work First New Jersey</p> <p>HCESC administers the WFNJ Job Readiness program for both Hunterdon and Somerset Counties (two locations)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor-led, month long workshop designed to prepare customers for a successful job search and job placement • Work closely with partner agencies that provide wrap-around support and training to our customers • Normally mandatory for those receiving TANF, General Assistance and/or SNAP benefits • Due to COVID, currently offering services on a VOLUNTARY basis <p>Luann Dias inquired on what soft skills are. Maria Marnell informed soft skills are basically a personal skill such as communication skills, self-management, time management, organizational skills and conflict resolution. They are skills a lot of us have developed over the years. Luann Dias asked a follow up questions if there are any role playing during the seminars where these skills are demonstrated. Maria informed they do use some role playing during the workshop. Luann also inquired what the average client/customer looks like. Maria informed the average consumers with TANF are young single mothers with transportation, education and childcare obstacles. While those with GA tend to be an older population with criminal, mental and substance abuse.</p> <p>Catherine Sackey inquired if they provide a satellite location. Maria requested for a separate email to be sent to her as this would be a question for her supervisor.</p>	
<p><u>Domestic Violence</u> <u>Safe+Sound Somerset</u></p>	<p>An Inside look at Safe+Sound Somerset Presented by Joelle Piercy, Community Outreach Coordinator Jpiercy@safe-sound.org</p> <p>Safe+Sound Somerset prevents and responds to domestic and sexual violence with programs that provide safety, support and education for</p>	<p>Alba Robles will provide the PowerPoint presentation via e-mail.</p>

individuals, families, and the community. Providing a holistic, wrap-around services that provide safety, hope, and healing to survivors of domestic and sexual violence in Somerset County, NJ.

Domestic violence (DV) and domestic abuse are the same thing. DV can include physical and non-physical types of abuse, which is why many in this field use the term domestic abuse instead.

Although anyone can be a target of abuse, people from different groups experience abuse and access services differently. One survivor's many identities may intersect to create a completely different experience from other survivors.

- Domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness for families with children
- 12-50% of pregnant women experience DV. Women experiencing DV are 2x more likely to miss prenatal appointments or put prenatal care off to 3rd trimester
- Witnessing domestic violence is considered an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) and may contribute to poorer health outcomes as adults
- Children who witness domestic violence are more likely to experience teen dating violence and domestic violence in their own relationships

Safe & Sound provides the following assistance:

- 24/7 call and text helpline
- DVL
- Legal Advocacy
- Emergency Safe House
- Family Advocacy
- Financial Empower center and DV Housing First
- DVRT & SART
- Counseling
- Speak Education

Ad Hoc Committee Update

The HSAC survey created with the ad hoc committee will end on December 16, 2021. We have obtained over 150 participant responses. On December 17, 2021 a winner's name will be selected at random for the \$250 Amazon gift card being provided by Zarephath Christian Church.

State Department Representatives Report

DCP&P- See below:

2021	November
Families	364
Children	712
Children in Out of Home Placement	56

Report to be given at next HSAC meeting.

		Referral Type	
		Child Protective Service Referrals	124
		Child Welfare Referrals	5
		Allegation Type	
		Neglect	154
		Physical Abuse	45
		Sexual Abuse	21
		Emotional Abuse	0

Human Services Director's Report

Michael Frost, Human Services Director reported:

- Office of Operations and Planning (OAP) new staff- Human Services Coordinator- Rheanah Johnson previously Human Services Specialist
- OAP opening- Human Services Specialist Encouraged members to spread the word or think about candidates who they have spoken to previously and inform of this opportunity.
- Rheanah Johnson explained starting in February 2022, the Department of Human Services' (DHS) monthly newsletter will include job postings. The opportunity will open to agency's and organizations who attend any Committee or Council meetings associated with the Human services department. The agencies/organizations will be able to forward a brief job description summary with the link to the actual job posting. Mike informed there has been some ask about this from the nonprofit community for a while and hopefully this will be helpful to everyone. Job posting summary should be sent to Rheanah Johnson at rjohnson@co.somerset.nj.us
- Nonprofit purchase of service- we have received this time around applications for 53 programs from 25 different organizations and that included several that have never applied with us before. The proposals have been read. There is a tremendous amount of creative proposals. Scoring has been completed for each of the programs. OAP staff is meeting on 12/17/2021 to finalize our recommendation which will go to the county administrator and ultimately to the commissioners. What makes this complicated this time around is that this is not just a proposal for standard nonprofit purchase of service funds, which traditionally have been roughly \$2 million dollars that the county has put out for this for the safety net. This time around there are asks that may not be appropriate for the

	<p>general safety net but may qualify for ARP funding in some way. What we will be doing is recommending several buckets. A bucket that is clearly recommended for nonprofit purchase of service safety net, another bucket that is clearly either nonprofit or ARP, a third bucket we recommend for ARP funding and finally a very small group of programs that did not make the passing score and cannot be recommended by our departments. The final decision of what gets funded and what bucket of money it comes from will be made by the commissioners. The timeline is that the recommendations will go forward next week but until the county passes its budget, none of these will be finalized. Those of you who are funded now will continue to receive your quarterly allocations.</p>	
<p><u>Agency Announcements</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alba Robles informed the council that her last day is Friday, December 17, 2021. Rheanah Johnson will be the new Human Services Coordinator and HSAC facilitator. • Alba also provided an update on 2022 Needs assessment informing that it has been postponed for at least six (6) months at this time. • Paul Grzella wanted to remind everyone that through the workforce board any agency can post their job opening through NLX and can work with workforce to have a virtual recruitment event. • Steve Nagel informed this would be his last meeting due to term ending and working outside the county now. • Lucy Forgione mentioned that her agency is seeing a lot more COVID-19 cases since the springtime. She reminded everyone to be careful, take care of themselves, and wear a mask when possible. • Meg Isbitski announced that the Rutgers UBHC has a call line called COVID Connect. They provide between 6-8 sessions of telehealth services aimed to bridge the gap due to long waiting lists. They either work with your insurance or try to help you enroll in Medicaid or charity care. The focus is really trying to do some preliminary substance use and suicide screening and then connect clients to services within their community. 	
<p><u>Meeting Adjournment</u></p>	<p>With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.</p>	<p>The next HSAC meeting will be held on Wed, January 26, 2022</p>