



# COUNTY OF SOMERSET DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

## OFFICE OF OPERATIONS & PLANNING

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Mental Health Administrator  
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MEG ISBITSKI  
Addictions Services Director  
LISA FEDERICO

Aging & Disability Services  
JOANNE FETZKO  
Community Development  
KIMBERLY COWART  
One Stop Career Center  
Juvenile Institutional Services  
MONICA MULLIGAN  
Richard Hall Community MHC  
NICCI SPINAZZOLA  
Rutgers Cooperative Extension  
LISA ROTHENBURGER  
Veterans Services  
PETER NIEMIEC  
Volunteer Services  
WILLIAM F. CROSBY  
Youth Services  
LINDA M. PORCARO

## HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL

Wednesday, January 26, 2022 Meeting Minutes  
Meeting held via Zoom

### Council Members Present:

Chair Mary Jane DiPaolo, Community Child Care Solutions  
Vice-Chair Pastor Tim Wolf, EmPower Somerset  
Secretary Diann Robinson, Adult Day Center  
Andrea Strack, Legal Services of Northwest Jersey (LSNWJ)  
David Walker, Visions and Pathways  
Jerry Star, Jewish Family Services (JFS)  
Joanne Kemp, Board of Social Services  
LuAnn Dias, Catholic Charities Diocese of Metuchen (CCDOM)  
Lucy Forgione, Bernards Township Health Department  
Michele Boronkas, Safe + Sound Somerset  
Michelle Dufour, Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P)  
Mike Frost, Director of Human Services  
Nancy Good, Alternatives, Inc.  
Nicci Spinazzola, Richard Hall Community Health and Wellness Center  
Paul Grzella, The Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board (GRWDB)

### Council Members Excused:

Rajni Chopra, Martin Luther King Youth Center (MLKY)

### Council Members Absent:

Daniel Powell, Community Visiting Nurse Association, (VNA)  
Lauren Frary, The Arc of Somerset County  
Dr. Mark Avery, Zarephath Christian Church  
Richard Shumann, Family and Community Services (FCS)

### Council Officials and Liaisons:

Nelson Troche, NJ Department of Human Services (DHS)

### Somerset County Department of Human Services (SCDHS) Staff:

Advisor Rheanah Johnson, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)  
Antonietta Phelan, Office of Youth Services  
Dameon Stackhouse, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)

Henry Young, Office of Youth Services  
 Jennifer Guyette, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)  
 Kim Cowart, Community Development Office  
 Marla Matthews, Family Crisis Intervention Unit (FCIU)  
 Meg Isbitski, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)  
 Monica Mulligan, Juvenile Institutional Services (JIS), One Stop Career Center  
 Sandra Avellan, Office on Aging and Disability Services (OoADS)  
 Sandra Escobar, Community Development Office  
 Zachary Berliner, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)

**Guests:**

Alba Robles, Community FoodBank of NJ (CFBNJ)  
 Alejandra Cruz, Zufall Health Center  
 Ashley Watson, Central Jersey Family Health Consortium (CJFHC)  
 Catherine Sackey, HOPEs, Inc.  
 Jeff Phillips, Collaborative Support Programs of NJ (CSPNJ)  
 Jenna Kim, Zufall Health Center  
 Maria Marnell, Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission (ESC)  
 Steve Katz, Food Bank Network of Somerset  
 Susan Bruder, NJ Department of Education

**I. Call Meeting to Order & Introductions**

Mary Jane DiPaolo called the meeting to order at 1:32 PM. A quorum was established.

**II. Approval of the December 15, 2021 Minutes**

Motion to approve the December 15, 2021 meeting minutes was made by Tim Wolf and seconded by Diann Robinson. All were in favor with no opposition or abstentions. Motion carried.

**III. New Human Services Coordinator**

Rheanah Johnson introduced herself as the new Human Services Coordinator and advisor for the council.

**IV. Presentation: Zufall Health Center Overview- Jenna Kim and Alejandra Cruz**

Zufall Health is a private, non-profit community health organization located in eight different towns that offers a broad array of medical, dental, and enabling services in hopes of providing care to NJ residents, under-resourced populations regardless of insurance or financial status, and bridging health disparities.

<b>Program/Service</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Health Services	Services include: Labs tests and screenings   Patient navigation and counseling   Behavioral health services   Chronic illness management   Treatment of illness/injury   Physicals and Well-child checkups   Reproductive health services   Specialist referrals   Health education	ZHC Somerville Clinic (908) 526-2335
Dental Services	Services include: Preventative care and cleanings   Exams   X-rays and partials   Dental treatments   Extractions   Crowns   Dentures   Dental education	ZHC Somerville Clinic (908) 526-2335

Ryan White Program & HIV/AIDS Services	Provides free, confidential HIV counseling & testing; pharmacy services; intensive case-management and linkage to care	Ryan White Team: 973-328-9100 ext. 1338
Somerset Maternal Recovery Services (SMRS)	Provides intensive case management services, support, and comprehensive plans to help pregnant and parenting women 18+ with all substance use disorders with linkages to community services.	Karla Espinoza: 908-526-2335 ext. 1149 862-219-0262 (cell) kespinoza@zufallhealth.org
Older Adult Services	Provides ongoing or one-time assistance including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helping with scheduling appts   Setting up transportation   Linkage to community resources</li> </ul>	Stephany Moldonado: 973-328-9100 ext. 1541 smoldonado@zufallhealth.org
NJSNAP-Ed	Helps low-income NJ residents make healthy food choices within their limited budget. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offers free nutrition education classes for children through senior citizens   Partner with local agencies such as schools and faith-based organizations   Work on policy, systems, and environmental changes</li> </ul>	Erica Goana: 201-230-2656 egoano@zufallhealth.org
Self-Monitor Blood Pressure Program	Provides integrative and team-based care upon provider recommendation to monitor blood pressure and promote whole-body healthcare	Matthew Cirillo mcirillo@zufallhealth.org
NJ Cancer Education and Early Detection Program (NJCEED)	Provides outreach, education, case management and screening services for breast, cervical/HPV, colorectal, and prostate cancers for financially eligible residents of Somerset County.	Anuja Bahulekar abahulekar@zufallhealth.org
Read Out and Read (ROR)	Provides young children a foundation for success by incorporating books into pediatric care and encouraging families to read aloud together.	Latiesha Exi lexi@zufallhealth.org
New Patient Assistance (NPA)	Provides case management and connects children and parents of unaccompanied minors to immigration legal services	Natasha Soesanto nsoesanto@zufallhealth.org

COVID-19 services can be booked by calling the main office or by visiting [zufallhealth.org](http://zufallhealth.org)

- Testing: Mon 9AM - 11AM | Wed 1PM - 3PM | Fri 1PM - 3PM
- Vaccines: Wed 9AM-12PM **Moderna 12+** | Thurs 1PM - 3PM **Pfizer 12+** | Daily 9-2PM Pediatric **Pfizer 5-11**

**Update:** Alejandra Cruz, a Somerset County outreach representative, will be leaving Zufall Health after having served the community for several years. She is much appreciated and will be very missed! All calls and correspondence for the Somerset County outreach department can be forwarded to Jenna Kim.

## V. State and County Agency Reports

### New Jersey Department of Human Services (NJ DHS)- Nelson Troche

Mr. Troche explained the State is in “phase 2” regarding COVID-19 and staff working from home.

The anticipation is for staff to begin returning to the offices in February. Mr. Troche further explained it appears COVID-19 has peaked a bit allowing staff to return. However, they are waiting for an official announcement from the Governor. Due to the current COVID-19 surge, DHS has decided to expedite the approval of emergency hires. They are “fast tracking” for better words background checks to get people back in the centers. Under NJ Family Care the state is covering eight over the counter COVID-19 tests. NJ Family Care participants can obtain tests through participating pharmacies. Mr. Troche discussed the council regulations, explaining the state HSAC group is reviewing the regulations right now. Within the next few weeks continued work will be done with the legal team. Acting DHS Commissioner Sarah Adelman will become the official commissioner.

**Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P)- Michelle Dufour**

Ms. Dufour reported the DCP&P staff will be returning to the office starting January 31, 2022. The Somerset Local Office of DCPP has a new local office manager (LOM) Ms. Iretha Nalls.

2021	December
<b>Families</b>	350
<b>Children</b>	665
<b>Children in Out of Home Placement</b>	52
<b>Referral Type</b>	
<b>Child Protective Service Referrals</b>	102
<b>Child Welfare Referrals</b>	10
<b>Allegation Type</b>	
<b>Neglect</b>	103
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	44
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	8
<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	3

Ms. Dufour explained that the statistics have not rebounded to where they were pre COVID-19, but they have gone up a little and have been holding steady over the last year.

Ms. DiPaolo asked if there were any questions and asked Susan Bruder (Department of Education) if she had anything to report. Ms. Bruder discussed how the districts continue to grapple with changing Department of Health guidance regarding the Omicron variant and COVID-19 in general. Ms. Bruder expressed that it is tough out there and recommended everyone commend educators.

**Community Development Office- Kim Cowart**

Ms. Cowart discussed the Annual Point in Time Count (PIT) which is the day of the year the county takes a count of the number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Ms. Cowart explained the count is a Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requirement and provides useful data. In 2021,

there were 226 individuals counted experiencing homeless. In 2020, 242 individuals were experiencing homelessness. A comparison document of the PIT results will be forwarded to the council following the meeting. Ms. Cowart explained that the expectation is for the number to decrease.

Housing and affordable housing continue to be a crisis in Somerset County, which has been made worse by Hurricane Ida. People with housing vouchers are facing barriers of securing housing within the fair market rental guidelines. Ms. Cowart explained the most affordable apartments were the ones hit hardest by the storm. Areas include Bound Brook, Somerville, Manville, and Hillsborough. The expectation and concern are once those units affected are renovated, the rent will increase. The Community Development Office received a \$2 million home appropriation. A big part went to Visions and Pathways who will be building a small garden apartment complex. A few other housing development projects have been supported as well. A 150-unit apartment complex and another 88-unit will be available in Branchburg soon. There is also another development in Hillsborough and a unit being finished up in Warren Township. Ms. Cowart went further to explain Blacks make up 12 % of the population for Somerset County but made up 48% of the homeless population in 2020 and 57% in 2021.

Ms. Cowart explained the Continuum of Care Committee created a racial disparities group because of the killing of George Floyd and others at the hands of the police. The group began to look at the data to prove the disparities. The committee has reflections on racism providing the opportunity to address these issues and invite conversation. Ms. Cowart stated the committee would like more nonprofits and those with lived experience to participate.

#### **VI. Human Services Director's Report – Mike Frost**

Mr. Frost stated the partnership with Zufall at Richard Hall Community Health and Wellness Center is to open medical and dental suites within the next few months. COVID related changes were discussed (protocols, etc.) as well as an exposition on an NJAC led discussion on EO283. Mr. Frost discussed timeline and decision-making process related to applications for NPPOS proposals as well as those for ARP funding. Mr. Frost encouraged agencies who applied for funding should be hopeful, as every effort will be made to fund quality programs as fully as is allowed by the RFP guidelines.

#### **VII. Appointment of Committees**

Ms. DiPaolo explained the executive committee met and the council must focus on abiding by the bylaws. Ms. DiPaolo shared the following members were reappointed

Mary Jane DiPaolo  
LuAnn Dias  
Lucy Forgione  
Nancy Good  
Nicci Spinazzola  
Tim Wolf

The standing committees were presented, and the duties were briefly discussed. Each appointed member is asked to serve on at least one of the following committees: Executive/Advocacy/Legislative, Planning, and By-laws. Ms. Johnson will send out more information for members to review and select a committee. The council will vote on reestablishing the nominating committee.

LuAnn Dias expressed the expectation and obligation is for members to serve on a committee and nonmembers can opt in to joining a committee.

**VIII. Open Discussion on Council Strategy and Vision**

Ms. Johnson explained the discussion on council strategy and vision will be postponed to the next meeting due to timing constraints.

**IX. Agency Highlights/ Announcements**

Ms. DiPaolo shared that each child receiving a childcare subsidy have been receiving an additional \$300 a month since the beginning of the pandemic. This benefit will continue through December 31, 2022.

Community Childcare Solutions will be having a virtual childcare job fair in partnership with the Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board and Middlesex County. The date has not been selected but will be provided. Ms. DiPaolo also stated the rates for reimbursement have increased 25%.

Ashley Watson, Community Health Worker at Central Jersey Family Health Consortium shared the staff is still working remotely. Ms. Watson explained there are townhall and webinars coming up regarding COVID-19 and pregnancy. The first will be held Thursday, February 15, 2022. The information will be shared once received.

Zachary Berliner, Planning Administrator for the Office of Operations and Planning requested that the group consider the ways the HSAC can be more useful and meaningful for the discussion next month. Mr. Berliner also asked that the group consider issues the HSAC should be planning and advocating for.

Alba Robles, Resources Access Manager for the Community FoodBank of NJ (CFBNJ) stated that she will forward information on the agency to Ms. Johnson. CFBNJ partners with agencies and schools to help residents in-person apply for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

**X. Meeting Adjourned**

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Wolf. Ms. Dias seconded the motion. All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 2:33 PM.

**The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 23, 2022, at 1:30 PM via Zoom. The link will be sent out a week prior via email.**