



COUNTY OF SOMERSET DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES



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LISA ROTHENBURGER

Veterans Services
PETER NIEMIEC

Volunteer Services
WILLIAM F. CROSBY

Youth Services
LINDA M. PORCARO

HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL

Wednesday, June 22, 2022 Meeting Minutes
Meeting held via Zoom

Council Members Present:

Chair Mary Jane DiPaolo, Community Child Care Solutions
Secretary Diann Robinson, Adult Day Center
Andrea Strack, Legal Services of Northwest Jersey (LSNWJ)
Joanne Kemp, Board of Social Services
Dr. Mark Avery, Zarephath Christian Church
Lucy Forgione, Bernards Township Health Department
Michele Boronkas, Safe + Sound Somerset
Mike Frost, Director of Human Services
Paul Grzella, The Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board (GRWDB)
Rajni Chopra, Martin Luther King Youth Center (MLKY)
Richard Schumann, Family and Community Services (FCS)

Council Members Excused:

Vice-Chair Pastor Tim Wolf, EmPower Somerset
LuAnn Dias, Catholic Charities Diocese of Metuchen (CCDOM)
Michelle Dufour, Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P)
Nancy Good, Alternatives, Inc.

Council Members Absent:

David Walker, Visions and Pathways
Daniel Powell, Community Visiting Nurse Association, (VNA)
Jerry Star, Jewish Family Services (JFS)
Lauren Frary, The Arc of Somerset County
Nicci Spinazzola, Richard Hall Community Health and Wellness Center

Council Officials and Liaisons:

Rick Hager, NJ Department of Children and Families (NJDCF)

Somerset County Department of Human Services (SCDHS) Staff:

Advisor Rheanah Johnson, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)
Angelica Sandi, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)
Henry Young, Office of Youth Services
Jennifer Guyette, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)

Kristy Soriano, Office of Youth Services
Marla Matthews, Family Crisis Intervention Unit (FCIU)
Meg Isbitski, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)
Monica Mulligan, Juvenile Institutional Services & Greater Raritan One Stop

Guests:

Alba Robles, Community Food Bank of NJ
Catherine Sackey, HOPES, Inc.
Danielle Schappert - Norwescap
Elaine Howe – School Based Supervisor
Ellie Santiago - Norwescap
James Parada, TriCounty Care Management Organization (CMO)
Maria Marnell, Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission
Renee Mercurio- Norwescap WIC
Semhar Gebregzabher, Legal Services of Northwest Jersey LSNWJ
Susan Bruder, NJ Department of Education

I. Call Meeting to Order & Introductions

Mary Jane DiPaolo called the meeting to order at 1:31 PM. A quorum was established.

II. Approval of the April 27, 2022 Minutes

Motion to approve the April 27, 2022, meeting minutes was made by Richard Schumann and seconded by Michele Boronkas. Motion carried.

III. Presentation: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) - Danielle Schappert, Regional ACEs Collaborative Coordinator - NORWESCAP Child and Family Resource Services

Norwescap Programming

Norwescap provides services such as homeless prevention, subsidies, and rental arrears for Somerset County. There is also a food and diaper banks, self-sufficiency services, and cancer screening and prevention.

RAC-Regional ACES Collaboratives

The Office of Resilience was established in 2020, led by an executive on loan which is funded by the New Jersey ACEs Collaborative, an alliance of three NJ philanthropic organizations, the Burke Foundation, The Nicholson Foundation and the Turrell Fund, in partnership with the NJ Department of Children and Families. There were three hubs that were established across NJ. Norwescap was awarded the central region, CUMAC was awarded the north region, and Acenda Health was awarded the south region.

The ACEs Study/Survey

The ACEs study was conducted in the early 1990's with Dr. Felitti and Dr. Anda, in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). They studied the relationship between ACEs and adult adverse health outcomes. From the study, it was revealed that high ACEs are often associated with chronic health conditions. Negative ACEs in the absences of positive ACEs and a loving supporting other, can impact neurodevelopment, social-emotional and cognitive impairment, and possible early death. The ACEs survey is not diagnostic or prescriptive. It is an opportunity to learn about a family and some of the experiences they

have had. The outcome assists with allowing professionals to provide the appropriate resources. Protective factors help to positively impact children to build resilience and trust in the community.

Grant Opportunity: Call for Ideas

There is a request for ideas from individuals and organizations to support children and families facing adversity. Agencies are ineligible if they have already been funded or working with Department of Children and Family (DCF) funds. The State has awarded each hub \$1 million to spend during the grant period. There is one year to spend \$850,000 in the central region which includes the following counties: Hunterdon, Somerset, Middlesex, Monmouth, Union, and Gloucester. The form to submit an idea is a Google form. There is no cap for funding, but submissions have ranged from \$10,000 to \$100,000. There are not many parameters, to remove bureaucratic barriers and encourage those who do not typically receive funds to apply. Initial call for ideas ends on June 30, 2022. The call for ideas will open again at the end of August 2022. Norwescap will directly be distributing the funds. Funding period is for one year and the outcome is for the end of June 2023. For more information contact racentral@norwescao.org.

IV. Committee Reports

a. Planning Committee- Michele Boronkas

The outcomes from the recent meeting are threefold. They include a survey, advocacy agenda, and workforce issues. The committee will be sending out a survey to agencies, to ask about capacity of organizations to serve clients. We want to get a sense of how we can make an impact. One goal is to create a letter regarding social work licensing. Another focus of the survey is to identify workforce issues. We are looking to identify how we can support organizations. We would also like to have a nonprofit job fair on the county level.

Monica Mulligan shared, business services representatives from the State will attend the July meeting as a support for agencies. Paul Grzella shared the Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board (GRWDB) provides on the job training, which is available to employers trying to house certain positions. There are lots of opportunities to work with sister partners.

b. Executive/Advocacy/Legislative Committee - Mary Jane DiPaolo

The committee is working on a couple of goals. First, to try to follow the American Rescue Plan (ARP) money. The aim is to identify potential gaps, leading to an advocacy strategy. We also moved on to the employment issue. These issues have been impacting all of us. Mary Jane DiPaolo shared that a recent job fair at Community Child Care Solutions, was not very successful.

c. Membership Committee- Lucy Forgione

Priorities for the committee are examining present members, making sure that members are attending and abiding by the bylaws. Members must recertify their membership at the end of their term online. We are seeking more community members. We have a one-page flyer that can be used to share our purpose. There was also discussion on having a meet and greet to introduce the community to HSAC. We are encouraging members to each invite five community members to attend. The committee would also like to gain new members through outreach to congregations.

d. By-laws Committee - No report

V. State and County Agency Reports

Department of Children and Families (DCF) - Rick Hager

Rick Hager commended the ACEs presentation and shared all staff are required to take a course called Understanding ACEs: Building Self-Healing Communities. As mentioned previously, DCF resources have been translated into various languages. Mr. Hager will share the information with Rheanah Johnson for distribution after the meeting.

James Parauda asked if the ACEs training is open for others. Mr. Hager reports that he will look into it and contact Mr. Parauda directly.

Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) –

(This information was obtained after the meeting.)

Families	339 (60% intake cases)
Children	622
Children in Placement	48
Referral Type	
Child Protective Service Referrals	132
Child Welfare Referrals	11
Allegation Type	
Neglect	140
Physical Abuse	49
Sexual Abuse	18
Emotional Abuse	0

Human Services Director’s Report – Mike Frost

- The County Budget was officially passed on June 21st.
- Shelter Task Force has met twice to work on improving processes around sheltering during disasters: Shelter Coordinator responsibilities have moved from SCDSOH to SCDHS, and OEM is meeting with municipal OEM coordinators to underscore roles and responsibilities going forward.
- Discussed the diversion of 38.5 million dollars from the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) which includes 1.4 million from the SW Licensing Board---full court press on advocating for a change on this to legislators prior to June 30th.
- Briefed the group on the county’s recovery from the late May cyberattack.

VI. New Business

Mary Jane DiPaolo asked if the DCF Needs Assessment has been cancelled for this year. Rick Hager confirmed the Needs Assessment would not be completed this year. Mike Frost explained that a formal presentation will be provided to the council on the decision, at a later date.

Rheanah Johnson shared the State HSAC meeting has been postponed from June 24, 2022, to July 8, 2022. Ms. Johnson reminded the council that there will be no meeting in August and the annual joint council meeting will be in September.

VII. Agency Highlights/ Announcements

Catherine Sackey shared that she wants to pursue a back-to-school activity on behalf of HOPES, Inc. There will be haircuts for students, back packs, and school supplies. The projected date is the last week in August. She is still putting things together and asked if anyone would like to collaborate. Ms. Sackey can be contacted at csackey@hopes.org.

Mark Avery shared Zarephath Christian Church has a food sourcing partner who has 93 pallets of various energy drinks available. They are a few weeks/months out of date but are still good for consumption. If any agencies are interested, transport can be arranged. There will need to be people available on the receiving end to obtain the drinks. Please email mavery@zcc.live to request the energy drinks.

VIII. Meeting Adjourned

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Rajni Chopra and seconded by Mark Avery. The meeting was adjourned at 2:31 PM.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 27, 2022, at 1:30 PM via Zoom. The link will be sent out a week prior via email.