



COUNTY OF SOMERSET DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

OFFICE OF OPERATIONS & PLANNING

27 Warren Street • P.O. Box 3000
Somerville, New Jersey 08876-1262
(908) 704-6300 • Fax (908) 704-1629
HumanServices@co.somerset.nj.us
www.co.somerset.nj.us



Human Services Director
MICHAEL FROST
Planning Administrator
ZACHARY BERLINER
Mental Health Administrator
AFN Coordinator
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 HWC
NICCI SPINAZZOLA
Rutgers Cooperative Extension
LISA ROTHENBURGER
Veterans Services
PETER NIEMIEC
Volunteer Services
LAURIE ROOME
Youth Services
LINDA M. PORCARO

HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL

Wednesday, February 28, 2024 Meeting Minutes
Meeting via Zoom

Council Members Present:

Chair Mary Jane DiPaolo, Community Child Care Solutions
Vice-Chair Pastor Tim Wolf, Pioneer Family Success Center
David Walker, Visions and Pathways
Herardine Lacrete, Board of Social Services
LuAnn Dias, Catholic Charities Diocese of Metuchen (CCDOM)
Mallory Dubuisson, Atlantic Adult Day Center
Michele Boronkas, Safe + Sound Somerset
Dr. Mark Avery, Zarephath Christian Church
Michelle DuFour, Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P)
Mike Frost, Director of the Department 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)
Richard Schumann, Family and Community Services (FCS)
Steven Nagel, HomeSharing

Council Members Excused:

Secretary Diann Robinson, Adult Day Center
Lucy Forgione, Bernards Township Health Department
Rajni Chopra, Martin Luther King Youth Center (MLKYC)

Council Members Absent:

Council Officials and Liaisons:

Nelson Troche, NJ Department of Human Services (NJ DHS)
Rick Hager, NJ Department of Children and Families (NJDCF)

Somerset County Department of Human Services (SCDHS) Staff:

Coordinator Rheanah Johnson, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)
Angelica Sandi, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)
Antonietta Phelan, Office of Youth Services

Dameon Stackhouse, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)
Ihinosen Akhagbar, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)
Johanna Moore, Office on Aging and Disability Services
Kristy Soriano, Office of Youth Services
Monica Mulligan, Juvenile Institution Services & Greater Raritan One Stop
Stephanie Billitz, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)
Zachary Berliner, Office of Operations and Planning (OAP)

Guests:

Allison Reinking, Central Jersey Family Health Consortium
Allizae Lyons, NJ Statewide Student Support Services (NJ4S)
Andrea Strack, Legal Services of Northwest NJ
Andrea Rodriguez, Zufall Health Center
Arnette Hannah, Community Child Care Solutions
Beth Kross, Community Child Care Solutions
Bernadette Knoll, McKinney-Vento Region I
Brendan Ward, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Coastal and Northern New Jersey
Briana Belcher, Princeton Justice Initiative
Cecilia Genao, Norwescap
Christina Martinkovic, The Learning Gate
David Martinak, Community in Crisis
Debra Crossman, Community Hope
Diahann DeRuggiero, McKinney-Vento Region 1
Erica Lockhart, Volunteer Guardianship One on One, Inc.
James Parauda, Tri County Care Management Organization (CMO)
Julie Hanley, Volunteer Guardianship One on One, Inc.
Lashonda Dumas, Division of Child Protection & Permanency (DCP&P)
Leslie Towns, United Way of Northern New Jersey
Liz Bilder, Shared Services, Somerset County
Maria Marnell, Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission
Maria Strada, Middle Earth
Nikki Bryant, Community Child Care Solutions
Patty Morton, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Coastal & Northern NJ
Saul Petersen, Princeton Justice Initiative
Shaina Sherman, Jewish Family Services
Steve Katz, Food Bank Network of Somerset County
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 January 24, 2024, Minutes

Motion to approve the January 2024 meeting minutes was made by Tim Wolf and seconded by Steve Nagel.

**III. Presentation from McKinney-Vento Region 1-Bernadette Noll, M.Ed.
Supporting Multilingual Learners: The New American Population**

- Goal: to eliminate barriers to education for temporarily housed children so they have the same educational opportunities as their permanently housed peers.
- Facts About McKinney-Vento

- Supports HUD definition of Homeless and/or any child who is lacking a fixed, regular, & adequate nighttime residence
- Every county has a liaison
- Every school district in the United States has liaisons. Contact State Coordinators for Support
- Somerset County is part of Region I McKinney-Vento (click here for our website)
- Bergen County Special Services was awarded the grant for the past 30 years to support McKinney-Vento work in our region
- A Note on Doubling Up
 - They may view the situation as not temporary as they see themselves “living there for a while until they can find a place due to the initial displacement,” yet be MKV eligible due to being displaced and not realizing that doubling up is considered homeless.
- Stay Connected
 - [McKinney-Vento List of Liaisons in New Jersey](#)
 - [McKinney-Vento List of Regional Coordinators for the United States of America](#)
 - [New Jersey McKinney-Vento Regional Directors](#)
 - [National Center for Homeless Education](#)
 - (800) 308-2145 homeless@serve.org
 - [Region I McKinney-Vento Program for Homeless Children and Youth](#)
 - 540 Farview Avenue Paramus, New Jersey 07652
 - (201) 343-6000 x6588

IV. Human Services Director’s Report – Mike Frost

- State budget address transcript is available.
- Sarah Adelman, Human Services Commissioner held an address on 2/27/2024
 - \$20 million for continued expansion of the Arrive Together program. Screeners paired with local police in designated counties. Under the direction of the county prosecutor’s office. This program is fully function in Franklin and will be rolling out in North Plainfield.
 - \$100 million for Cover All Kids Medicaid expansion
 - \$4.1 million increase for day rate for hotels for sheltering raises from \$62 to \$72
 - \$12 million toward increasing income eligibility for the parent and senior gold pharmaceuticals system programs
 - \$6 million to annualize the \$95 SNAP minimum benefit
 - Additional funding for mental health provider loan forgiveness
 - Improved access to deaf and hard of hearing mostly through the installation of hearing induction loops
- DCF meeting last month had a presentation from Keving Donahue on 211
 - NJ 211 has revamped their website
 - Can update provider information
 - We do not have enough resources in the county
- Somerset County does not have a full county shelter. Those seeking shelter can be brought to the Board of Social Services. However, after 4:30 pm they must call NJ 211.
 - Office On Emergency Manager, Board of Social Service and Human Services are working together to create a better system
 - Considering the faith-based network for assistance
 - No number to call between 4:30 pm and 6:30 pm.
- Discussions about food insecurity. Major issue for the state and County Administrator.
- Mental Health Administrator position posted.
- The county budget has not been approved yet. Hoping for April

V. State and County Agency Reports

NJ Department of Human Services (NJDHS) - Nelson Troche

- Shared the Fiscal Year 2025 State Budget
 - \$95 million was put into the opiate work
- Working on information regarding 211 and 988 to clear up confusion

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

2024	January
Families	330 (69% intake cases)
Children	648
Children in Placement	32
Referral Type	
Child Protective Service Referrals	131
Child Welfare Referrals	18
Allegation Type	
Neglect	182
Physical Abuse	60
Sexual Abuse	11
Emotional Abuse	1

VI. Committee Reports

Executive Committee– Rheanah Johnson

Regarding our efforts surrounding immigrant youth mental health, the executive committee met with Church World Service (CWS) on February 5, 2024. CWS is a faith-based organization transforming communities around the globe through just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement, and disaster. They provide support services to refugees, special immigrant visa holders, unaccompanied minors, and other eligible Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) populations.

Reported Trends

- Unaccompanied minors
 - Majority of the youth are ages 13-17
 - Reunification and attachment are a challenge because of the distance between guardians and youth
 - Trauma from the journey of migrating
- No substance abuse
- Vulnerability to exploitation
 - Inability to work due to documentation
- Stress from mixed status families
- Lack of education due to cultural norms
- Linguistic and cultural isolation
 - Some youth do not speak the main language of their country
- Violence is the first mode of response for some younger children (i.e., Afghan and Syrian)
- LGBTQ youth seeking services

We will continue gathering information from various organizations.

VII. New Business – None

VIII. Agency Highlights/Announcements

- Richard Schumann -Family and Community Services of Somerset County 12th Annual Comedy Night March 23rd at the Ridge Performing Arts Center 7 pm – 10 pm Tickets are available
- Lashonda Dumas- Free Workshop: Making a Difference: How to Become a Foster or Adoptive Parent on March 6, 2024 at 5:30pm at the Somerset Local Office, 92 East Main Street, Somerville, NJ.
- Erica Lockhart -Guardianship Volunteer Services Information Sessions February 29th 12 pm – 1 pm and 5 pm – 6 pm via Zoom

IX. The motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Tim Wolf and seconded by Luann Dias. The meeting was adjourned at 2:16 PM.

The next meeting will be held on March 27, 2024, at 1:30 PM via Zoom and in person. The link will be sent out a week prior via email.