



February 19, 2025

Meeting Minutes

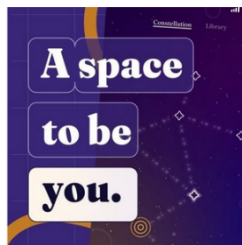
115 Budd Boulevard

West Deptford, NJ

Call to Order – Co-Chair Kathy Seibert called the meeting to order at 3:04 PM and read the Open Public Records Act statement.

Attendance – Linda Bizzelli, Lisa Cerny, Dr Becky DiLiscandro, LaJuan Gaines, Christine Graves, Gerald Hodges, Jim Jefferson, Emily Kohri, Ann Martinez, Natasha McCrae, Ken Ridinger, Jennifer Rodriguez, Kathy Seibert, & Alisha Thompson, **JJC:** Jessica Froba. **Staff:** Rudolph Aikens & Donna Pinto.

Guests: Brett Glutens (WIB), Chelsea Brown (Paulsboro), Robin Cohen (Soluna), Andrea Garcia (Maryville) Carlotta Jones (Success First), Gabby Sclocchin (Woodbury), Amy Swanson. Everyone went round robin around the table for introductions.



Presentation: Soluna – Robin Cohen introduced herself as the New Jersey representative for the Soluna agency.

Through a contract with DCF, they offer no cost service for youth 13-18 to support mental health. This includes one on one coaching and counseling, peer support forums, self-guided tools, and a directory of additional services. She distributed a colorful flyer, shiny stickers, and pen swag to the group.

Their App may be downloaded on Apple or Google Play. Social workers and school counselors need to know about these evidence-based pathways of care. There is no wait list, no referrals, and no insurance needed. Parental permission is needed if youth are under 16. They are anonymous but supervised. No direct messaging service is allowed between users.

This is in addition to school provided services not in place of. Kids need to know steps to navigate the system. Soluna also has therapists available. Kids can access it whenever they want. Peer guidance is part of the platform's success. They access it when they want but some services are only available after 4 PM. Online communications are anonymous and reviewed by licensed professionals. There is no personal identification to reduce safety risks. They utilize crisis support through the community.

UK provider Kooth is their parent company. California adopted them for CalHOPE in 2022 and they are expanding. Robin is the New Jersey point person (Director of Integrations & Partnerships) and available for trainings and presentations throughout the state. She has a demo and slide presentation if you contact her. Soluna is focusing on empowerment and autonomy and the App is live. They will turn no one away even in this pilot phase. Please share Soluna info with any worker involved with youth or contact her; call (570) 209-5869 or email rchhen@kooth.com.

Oath of Office - Jim Jefferson delivered the oath of office to those in attendance. Jim thanked everyone for lending their time and talent to the youth of Gloucester County. This work is so needed and life changing when it's done correctly. We work hard to meet all our challenges. Let him know if there's anything he can do to help.

Adoption of Agenda / Minute Review - Becky moved, Emily seconded and the agenda for today's meeting was approved. Gerald moved, Ken seconded, and the December 2024 meeting minutes were approved as distributed.

Administrator's Report – Rudy thanked everyone for their on-going assistance. All feedback is appreciated.

Contracts and Application - the majority of our contracts were just renewals. The three new ones include recreational scholarship at Acenda, Clayton's Alternative Evening Program, and Maryville slots. This will bring us up to 21 programs. As there is still funding, we are looking for new opportunities in unserved targeted areas like Elk Twp. and Franklinville. Innovations already was approved for probation enrichment, home supervision, and probation orientation. Contracts are in process.

Programming - YAP is not operating in our county so we have to determine what to do with that allocation. The Shelter will be RFP'd; we raised the allocation to keep pace with other shelter services. As far as the Boys & Girls Clubs, we have a \$22,000 contract with them for 20 youth in each location (Paulsboro and Glassboro). They are servicing 60-75 kids so we may raise it from to \$30,000.

Monitoring will start early; we will try to come out shortly after today's meeting. Some team members may be virtual. We want to talk to the youth and families who participate and review checks and balances regarding financial documentation.

JAMS is not for all providers but we will be making rounds to discuss it. We need to have programs step up as we have so many services. It's hard to pinpoint how many youth we serve yearly but he estimates about 320 kids in 2024. The heaviest load is prevention, then diversion, and detention alternatives. We

have three detention alternatives. April 15-20th is when we look for narrative reports. January 15th is the final close-out report. If you have any questions, let us know and we'll get out to your office or help.

JDAI – Emily reported subcommittee meetings were held in January. It was the first for over a year. The length of stay numbers are a concern. The kids on EM throw off our numbers. Do all the youth in detention belong? The answer is not always but the alternatives are not appropriate. Mental health placements are limited and take a long time. Shelter placement precludes violent charges. There are state-wide committees looking into the alternative between shelter and detention. Their next meetings are in April.

JJC – Jess said they are still waiting for approval for our 2025 State/Community Partnership Application. She clarified that JISP is a more serious disposition. If a kid is not competent, legal resolution is difficult. There were recent lawsuits to mandate the JJC to force the detention center to take the juvenile. We haven't tested it yet here. They had 23 kids in Cumberland detention in the fall, now down to eight so there are some beds available. We have kids in Camden, Essex and Middlesex.

PROVIDER REPORTS

ACENDA – Erin's email is eklein@acendahealth.org

Electronic Monitoring – no report.

FCIU/Mobile – services are stable with about 100 Gloucester County kids per month. They have no open family crisis petitions or youth in the shelter.

BOYS AND GIRLS' CLUBS - Gerald said they have 29 of the 30 slots filled for safe space. Events include recreation, education, entrepreneur, peer rap sessions, fun events, black history month, and Eagles rallies. He will have information about **summer camp** soon; they are planning it around April 1st. His email is ghodges@gcbgc.org

CENTER FOR FAMILY SERVICES – email Sierra at sierra.parks@centerffs.org

ACE – they have 24 coaching slots contracted but no youth right now. They have six kids for transport and four for incentive-only youth. They are planning fun enrichment trips. Few youth are being referred.

PASO – they have nine evaluation slots and nine counseling slots. So far in 2025, two evaluations have been done with one pending. There are five receiving counseling. No discharges so far. In person group is going well. They are hiring counselors.

Stationhouse Adjustment – they are contracted for 48 youth a year and currently have two active cases, one closing soon, and one referral pending intake. Referrals resources have been great. They still have telehealth as an option besides in person.

CGS FAO Youth Partnership– Jennifer said they have 25 slots and already 16 are enrolled. Kids have set goals for the new year. They have craft days, movie nights, and a February focus on black history month. Soon they will have an overnight party and they'll be staying at the FSO office. Activities include video games, painting, watching movies, etc. NJ4S is coming out in March for a workshop on internet safety.

PROBATION

Parent Orientation Resource Nights – Ann said the next is March 12th (which is not a court date). The last orientation had only one youth and family come on December 4th. We have different aspects now so will do three a year spring summer and Fall. Family engagement nights will take place and we'll have activities like bowling, the ACE trip is being planned.

SCHOOLS:

Glassboro – Rudy said intermediate serviced 10-12 youth in the 4th quarter. The school board meets tonight and should finalize the new contract. They operate 2-3 times a week based on need. Projects include credit recovery and staying on track to graduate. Transition to high school is being discussed. Challenges include needing more teachers to help during the after school hours.

Paulsboro – they have eleven kids in the **alternate education program**. Five of them are seniors and we being guided to graduation. Two kids earned a renaissance card for the second marking period. They had to make honor roll with all As and Bs with good attendance and no behavior issues. Problems are tardiness and attendance. There are two twin girls on home-bound as one had a baby and her sister is skipping school to help out with the baby. We want them to graduate in June.

Woodbury – GALS and BLUES Brothers are 3rd , 4th and 5th grade students in three elementary schools. Gabby reported BLUES have been working with east sports for competitive gaming. GALS are utilizing Rutgers' Cooking Matters including how to set a table self-confidence activities, guided meditations, and a lovely tea party for the girls.

Success First –Last year it was Paulsboro High. We want to tie activities towards the Success First pledge. They had crocheting at the library with two parents. They encourage youth volunteers and

have virtual volunteering. Woodbury meetings have had 18 kids. Last month's focus was taking care of mind, body, and spirit. This month they are doing a project around "I" to see their future. They have three programs in flight including science of singing for teenagers 12-18 at the YMCA in Woodbury, the Diamond Art project with parents and kids for dinner, pictures, doing an art project at Rowan in Sewell. They charge \$5 each person but that is negotiable. Voicing Our Story has word rhythm and sound on songwriting. There are two parts on Zoom with two experienced musicians. The third part is at Rowan and consists of the recording experience with sound equipment etc. it will all be put on one track and will be posted after mastering. They are always looking for new and different opportunities. April 5 is the showcase with Mr. E, the Carlos O'Reilly Jazz Quartet, and students from the Woodbury. Arts and Appetizers will also be going on from 12-2 with the showcase from 3-4. Rudy will forward event flyers.

UNITED ADVOCACY: contact Natasha at natasha@unitedadvocacygroup.org

Employment and Education - Natasha said they have a LOS of 20 but there are two right now. **FAHS** highlight is the youth not incurring any additional charges while on the electronic monitoring in 2024. **Employment and School Advocacy** has seven kids from last year and no new referrals. Incentives for employment include a \$100 gift card, work boots, shoes, uniforms, etc. They had a meeting with probation and have five youth in currently.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rutgers Bridges – Ann said they are restructuring and dismissed their staff. Probation felt that impact. Ann said they haven't been relied on it lately but it is being included in court orders so the

discussion needs to take place regarding the lack of funding. Lydia was great with the kids especially acquiring needed documentation and things like that too were helpful

DHSS – Lisa said **Narcan** training is resuming again the last Monday of the month Monday; next is the 24th at Rowan Living Proof Recovery Center at 6 PM. Student doctors will provide the training, the WOW van will be in the parking lot, and there is a Narcan kit. You must register ahead of time; email Carmen at ctrifiletti2@co.gloucester.nj.us

Mega Job Fair – Alisha said it is March 7 from 9 AM to Noon at Rowan College of South Jersey in their Sewell gym. There will be 90 employers (who are hiring) and 27 resources there. They have prep workshops too.

[**COUNTY EMAIL** – will change in March; emails to the old address @co.gloucester.nj.us will be forwarded to the new @gloucestercountynj.gov]

ADJOURNMENT – Ken moved, Gerald seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 4:05 PM.

2025 Schedule: April 16, June 18, August 20, October 15, December 17

Thank you,

Donna Pinto, *Senior Community Services Aide*


Gloucester County Dept of Health & Human Services

dpinto@gloucestercountynj.gov

Division of Human & Special Services, Youth Services Division

115 Budd Blvd * West Deptford, NJ 08096

(856) 384-6923



MEGA JOB FAIR & RESOURCE EVENT

Connect with local employers and resource agencies

MARCH 7*
9 A.M. - 12 P.M.
ROWAN COLLEGE OF SOUTH JERSEY - GYMNASIUM
1400 TANYARD RD. SEWELL, NJ

*In case of RCSJ Closure, the MEGA Job Fair will be held March 28 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

JOB SEEKERS- Register NOW

Scan the QR Code or visit www.gloucestercountynj.gov

QR Code is for job seeker registration only.

Workshop Information

Prep before the fair! Our workshops are free but we do ask for registration. Spots are limited! Register with the QR Code or visit www.gloucestercountynj.gov

February 20
10 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Rowan College of South Jersey- Economic Development Center
1482 Tanyard Rd., Sewell

February 24
6 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Gloucester County Library- Mullica Hill
389 Wolfert Station Rd, Mullica Hill

February 26
6 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Rowan College of South Jersey- Economic Development Center
1482 Tanyard Rd., Sewell

February 27
10 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Virtual

Workforce Development Board
GLOUCESTER COUNTY

Rowan College
SOUTH JERSEY

GLoucester County LIBRARY SYSTEM

James R. Hogan
Gloucester County Clerk's Office
James Hogan, County Clerk

Gloucester County Board of Commissioners
Frank J. DiMarzio, Director
Jim Jefferson, Deputy Director
Joann Gattinelli, Liaison


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