

HSAC Meeting Minutes March 20th, 2025

4pm at 115 Budd Blvd. Main Conference Room

Present: Calvin McFarland, Kimberly Gober, Jennifer Rodriguez, Gina Ridge, Michael Gower, Ingres Simpson, Joan Dillon, Susana Dias, Virginia Echevarria, Michelle Pandolfo

Meeting is called to order at 4pm

Open Public Meetings Act is read

Kim Gober asks for a motion to approve the February 20 meeting minutes, Michael Gower motions, Ingres Simpson seconds, Calvin McFarland abstains and minutes are approved.

Kim Gober asks for a motion to open the floor for public comment, Michael Gower makes motion, Jennifer Rodriguez seconds and floor is open for public comment.

Kim Gober asks for a motion to close, Ingres Simpson motions, Michael Gower seconds and floor is closed of public comment.

Subcommittee Reports

Childcare

- Michelle Pandolfo Reports on behalf of Elmoría Thomas, Not had any allocations since last meeting.

Appeals

- None at this time

CEAS – Kim Gober

- Met on March 18th received report from Christina Velazquez, the focus group and survey have been closed for the CDBG update.
- Budget passed for continuing resolution which means it carries forward the federal funding and programs through September 30th that were funded at 2024 levels. There was an increase for some HUD programs.
- Housing Authority was awarded an additional 40 VASH units that are for homeless veterans and it comes with supportive services for the VA. They currently have 34 and received an additional 40 effective June 1st.

COMA - Jennifer Rodriguez

- Have not met since last meeting still developing list of topics for speaker's bureau to be able to provide workshops for schools.
- April 8th next meeting

MART - Ingres Simpson

- Monitoring next month, team of two for every monitoring. Next month first visit will be at Joseph's House on April 7th at 11:30am. Josephs House provides emergency shelter to single

adults. Thereafter, will be visiting each contracted site wrapping up on May 7th with The Arc Gloucester.

Nominating

- No report.

Child Care

Michelle Pandolfo reports on behalf of Elmorina Thomas.

- DFD, Division of Family Development, reports it will be a tight budget in NJ. agencies have been asked to look at 5% cuts the final state budget which is expected to be agreed upon by June 30th. Several proposed budget sessions are planned, please look for upcoming notices.
- Childcare subsidies saw a small rate increase of 1% that will go into effect in March.
- From pilot program, menstrual products and diaper products in 2024 the state spent \$246,000. Families received \$30 monthly increase for diapers, individuals between ages 18 to 50 received an increase to purchase menstrual products.
- 2024 summer EBT program spent 85 million to feed over 700k kids. Planning for 2025 is now underway.
- New Jersey is in compliance with copays being below 7% of family's income and provider payments are based on enrollment not attendance. Related to spring 2024 CCDF final rule instruction was that states must convert childcare subsidy payments, currently on reimbursement system, federal direction is advanced payments.

American Job Center

Michelle Shirey not present, Michelle Pandolfo shared flyer on:

- Education series coming up on "Parenting a Child with Special Needs" this Monday March 24 at 6:00pm at RCSJ topics will focus on education, workforce training, medical needs, housing, and recreation.

DHS Staff persons report – Michelle Pandolfo

- Attended state HSAC meeting that had a presentation from the Department of Children and families, presented data on the child welfare system, gave an overview of what DCF provides as far as permanency, protection, and CSOC.
- Rate of children experiencing maltreatment in New Jersey is 5x lower than the national rate, average response time for NJ is within 22hours, compared to the national response time is which is 102 hours, placement for kin is at 51% and that has grown from the 30% it was in 2010.
- Discharge outcomes, 25% are adopted, 11% of kin become guardian, 8% reach age majority, and 7% live with relatives. Children that are in care have 39% between 1-5 years old, 30% between 6-12 years old, 24% are between 13-17 years old, there is a racial disparity where black children are 13% of the population but 39% of those in care. 62% of children in care have at least one health condition that requires special medical care.
- Second presentation from the office of diversity equity and belonging also shared some statistics New Jersey is 6th in the nation for placement disparity, 6th in the nation for

segregation, and have a race ratio of 18 to 1 for youth incarceration. Mission is to shorten those statistics to better outcomes.

- FEMA emergency food and shelter discussion – notice on Emergency Food and Shelter Program first “On January 27, 2025, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released a memorandum to federal agencies, requiring a temporary pause on all activities related to obligation or disbursement of all Federal financial assistance, and other relevant agency activities that may be implicated by the recent executive orders. OMB has rescinded this memorandum. The Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) National Board recognizes that the memorandum and the recent executive orders may have created a great amount of uncertainty and anxiety for the Local Boards and Local Recipient Organizations participating in the program. The National Board is working closely with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to better understand and respond to the anticipated impact on the EFSP and the program participants. EFSP staff will provide timely updates on the program’s web page as more information becomes available.” Discussion ensued regarding concerns for those in need of emergency shelter, temporary assistance with rent/mortgage, utilities, food.

State Representatives Report - Susana Dias Gloucester West DCP&P

- Office currently has 588 children under supervision, 69 children in placement, and latest numbers on intakes are at 173 which are good numbers.
- Moving towards evidence-based services and are moving towards services that have shown an impact along with results. Mission is to continue bettering the numbers as these services continue and grow and be provided.
- Danielle and Susana were a part of a parent council webinar today with parents who are involved currently or have been involved with DCP&P and from the webinar Danielle and Susana received productive feedback on what can be improved upon or done better. Things in particular to be improved upon was communication and services available sometimes some needs are not met through the services that are available. Also, the communication of rights for parents at time of removals. The council of parents is looking forward to help shape the future experiences of families who may find themselves in similar situations.

Public Comment

Michael Gower motions to open floor for public comment, Jennifer Rodriguez seconds and floor is open for public comment.

Luanne Hughes an executive board member has spearheaded the Faith and Prevention Network and that next meeting is on March 25th from 10-12. Michael Gower will be presenting at that meeting on grants and programs, Jeff Sanders from St. John of God will be talking about programs and collaborative opportunities, and Luanne will be speaking on food security and food pantries, everyone is invited, meeting will be held in person and flyer will be shared. Location is at the Shady Lane Complex in Clarksboro.

Joan Dillon working on Main Street Financial in Pitman and attends a monthly breakfast at Monarch, and Joan is now working on creating an opportunity for older residents which is sort of like an internship but is being called a returnship in terms of helping those who don’t qualify for the senior workforce community service program workforce 55+.

Catholic Charities announces that they have limited funding for rental security deposit and utility assistance, currently just screening at the moment until more funds are available.

Michael Gower motions to close public comment, Ingress Simpson seconds and floor is closed of public comment.

Old Business

Michael Gower thanks everyone who participated in the Gloucester County Cares about Hunger food drive it was the 20th year of the drive. They raised over 4,500 lbs. of food from donations which was distributed to 7 local pantries which equates to more than 3,800 meals and each pantry received at least 500lbs of food. 30 different business and local organizations participated.

Toys for Tots was able to assist 56,108 children in this year's toys for tots program, it is significantly up might be some duplication and also some programs that are assisted through could be see some duplications but overall that is a large number of children. Received over 300,000 toys that were brought in and distributed, over 44 community partners participated in the drive, and had over 75 collection sites for this year's program. These numbers are just for Gloucester County.

Kim Gober asks for a motion to adjourn meeting, Ingres Simpson motions, Michael Gower seconds and meeting is adjourned.

Next meeting is May 15th at 4pm at 115 Budd Blvd. west Deptford NJ 08096