

**Mercer County Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC) and
The Trenton/Mercer Continuum of Care (CoC) Youth Homelessness Subcommittee**

Thursday, November 9, 2015, 9:30am

AGENDA

- 1. Meeting Called to Order**
- 2. Approval of Meeting Minutes; October 15th**
- 3. Youth At-Risk of Homelessness (YARH) Grant Presentation –
Jessica Trombetta, LCSW, Director, Adolescent Services,
New Jersey Department of Children and Families**
- 4. Status/Discussion of the Recent Count on Youth**
- 5. Other Business**
- 6. Meeting Adjournment**

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Also, any **additions, deletions or changes** to the Youth Homelessness Subcommittee **email list** or **requests to resend subcommittee information**, please contact Stacie McGeehan at smcgeehan@mercercounty.org

Youth Homelessness Subcommittee
November 9, 2015
Meeting Minutes

I. Meeting Called to Order

This meeting was called to order by Chairperson Lori Morris at 9:35am.

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion: To approve the meeting minutes from October 15, 2015 as presented. Savage/Jardine. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Educational Presentation

Youth At-Risk of Homelessness (YARH) Grant Presentation – Jessica Trombetta, LCSW, Director, Adolescent Services, New Jersey Department of Children and Families gave a presentation about this grant; **some** of the information shared at this meeting was as follows:

- NJDCF – August 2010 to present
- Under this Department is:
 - The Division of Child Protection and Permanency
 - Children’s System of Care
 - Family and Community Partnerships
 - The Division on Women
 - Office of Adolescent Services
 - Office of Advocacy
 - Office of Education
 - Office of Licensing
 - Office of Performance Management and Accountability
 - Institutional Abuse Investigation Unit
- Mission: Office of Adolescent Services
 - Ensuring the services provided through the Department of Children and Families are coordinated, effective, meet best practice standards, are youth driven, and adapt to the needs of families and communities,
 - Developing linkages with other service providers in order to create a more equitable and seamless service system, and
 - Providing leadership and policy development in the field of adolescent services.
- You Thrive
 - Increase protective and promotive factors
- Reduce Risk Factors
 - Healthy development and well-being for youth
- OAS Strategic Plan Domains
 - Housing, education and employment, physical and mental health, general transition support, youth engagement, permanency and familial support and criminal justice/legal support
- Connecting YOUth (Is NJ’s Name for the grant)
 - YARH - Federal Project

- This grant has a Phase I and Phase II.
 - Implement a model intervention that will achieve outcomes such as: Stable Housing, Permanent Connections and Education/Employment.
- Project History and Purpose
 - Analyze data to better understand risk and protective factors.
- Planning Process and Overview
 - DCF continues to plan and partner with the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP), Child Trends, and the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) to implement this comprehensive intervention package.
- Needs Assessment Data Source
 - Systems Mapping (June 2014, 85 attendees)
 - Charrette (October 2014, 116 attendees)
- Surveys
 - Youth aging out events (227 completing survey)
 - Providers and staff (179 completing survey)
- Focus Groups
 - Youth (65)
 - Housing HUB providers (9)
- Rutgers Needs Assessment 2013 Report (draft)
 - Policy, Practice and Resource Review
- Administrative Data Sources
 - NJ Spirit 2008-2014
 - Youth demographics, case history, assessments, etc...
- CSOC (Children's System of Care) 2008-2014
 - Behavioral health services and assessments
- CHU (Child Health Unit) 2010-2014
 - Ever on Psychotropic medication
- Data Snapshot: Youth on overall sample who had reached age 18 and were not in a DCF supported placement in 2014.
- Which subgroups experience a higher rate of homelessness than others?

Demographics

- Females
- Non-Hispanic Black
- 18-21 (entered)
- 1st entry <age 14
- Mental /behavioral health
- Legal/police-involved referral
- Youth disability: behavior problems, drug abuse
- Psychotropic medication
- Ever in residential treatment
- CSOC service receipt
- Placements ended due to: risk to other children in RH, step-up
- Family relationship
- Removal reason: Parent absence
- Placement stability
- Multiple placements (5+)

- Permanency
 - Discharge to majority
- Which subgroups experience a lower rate of homelessness than others?
 - Demographics*
 - Male
 - Non-Hispanic White, Hispanic
 - Not in POP 2
 - Family Relationship
 - Ever placed with relative
 - Never in group care
 - Discharge to relative or reunification
 - CP&P assessment: Family relationships as strength
 - Placement Stability
 - <3 placements
 - No run-away
 - Permanency
- Other Important Qualitative Data Findings
 - 1. "Mental health" and "unresolved trauma" were two of the top four barriers for youth.
 - 2. Importance of connections to family and siblings as support system was frequently raised.
 - 3. Youth voice in case planning and goal setting.
 - 4. Concerns regarding placements stability.
 - 5. Housing options for high need youth.
 - 6. Focusing on education early and often.
- Selected Pilot Local Offices, related to the grant (will impact approximately 300 youth with experience in foster care.):
 - Burlington*
 - East
 - West
 - Mercer*
 - North
 - South
 - Union*
 - Central
 - East
 - West
- Phase II = Cooperative Agreement
 - ACF's anticipated substantial involvement
 - CB's review and approval of planning stages of the activities before implementation
 - CB and recipients' joint collaboration in the performance of key programmatic activities
 - Close monitoring by CB of the requirements
 - Close monitoring by CB during the performance

- The intervention strategy, implementation committees, and all partners involved in the project will also be required to implement this project through the following tenets of practice:
 - 1. Youth driven
 - 2. Youth Thrive framework lens
 - 3. Permanency at the forefront, always.
 - 4. Trauma informed
 - 5. Cultural humility/racial equity
 - 6. Local communities know their youth best
 - 7. Housing First
 - 8. Focus on needs not behaviors
- Component 1- Connect to Family (1A) and Connect to Well-Being (1B)
- Component 2-Connect to Achievement (2A) and Connect to Mentors (2B)
- Component 3-Connect to Home-Supportive Housing
 - 1. Housing Screens/Targeting and Assessment tool
 - 2. Housing Voucher Oversight (20 vouchers per pilot county) / Tiered Housing Model, youth 18-21
 - 3. Statewide Youth Housing Learning Collaborative
- Pilot Local Office Caseload County (Pop 1 and 2)
- County Based Implementation Committees
 - Creating a local network of community stakeholders that will help support, track and monitor the implementation of the pilot intervention components.
- Connecting YOUth Phase II Implementation Plan
 - 1. Partner with CP&P Pilot Offices and Community
 - 2. Develop County Based Implementation committees
 - 3. Develop programming
- Stay Connected
 - Follow up Meeting
 - Data Review and Service Development
 - YARH Orientation for DCF Staff
 - YARH Orientation for Stakeholders
- OAS Contact: Denise Massey, email: Denise.Massey@dcf.state.nj.us and her telephone number is 609-888-7615.

IV. Other Business

Count on Youth Discussion

Many subcommittee members worked hard on conducting the recent COUNT on YOUTH, which was held on November 4th. At this meeting we discussed this recent count; some of the information shared was as follows:

- We were able to distribute the surveys in the Trenton schools but we were not able to hand out these questionnaires in the Ewing Schools.
- A representative from this subcommittee will reach out to Ewing Schools in order to get them on board for the COY next year.
- Related to the COY in the Trenton Schools, one or two schools had an emergency so they could not pass the surveys out on November 4th.

- Forty percent of the youth who completed the count (on the street) had unstable housing.
- Several people who hesitated on taking this survey changed their mind and completed the questions.
- Ben Thornton did an excellent job obtaining t-shirts and hats which assisted us with getting youth to complete the survey.
- After having a conversation with the schools, we realized that many of the students were concerned that this survey was distributed by the Trenton Board of Education. In the future, we may want to make sure that the students are aware of where this survey originated from.
- As stated at past subcommittee meetings, the schools perform a youth count on their own but that one is related to funding.
- Concerning the following survey questions:
 - What are the first 2 letters of your first name?
 - What are the first 3 letters of your last name?
 - This subcommittee felt that the decision to include the two questions above on the COY survey should have had this group's input.
- We received close to 2,000 COY surveys which included the aging out population.
- Do we want to keep the aging out group surveys separate from the others?
- Were the surveys distributed to the twilight schools?

Next Meeting

Our next subcommittee meeting will be on December 14th at the Trenton Health Building at 9:30am. The main agenda item for our next meeting will be the sorting of the COY surveys.

Stretch Your Grocery Budget with SNAP

It was stated at this meeting, that Catholic Charities (through a grant from the Walmart Foundation) is able to perform outreach, education and enrollment assistance to residents of Burlington, Mercer, Monmouth and Ocean counties who are interested in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Also, enrollment is every third Thursday of each month at Catholic Charities, 132 North Warren Street, Trenton, NJ 08608.

V. Meeting Adjournment

This meeting was adjourned at 10:55am by Chairperson Lori Morris.

Attendance

Name	Affiliation
Tiana Savage	Isles
Beth Risoldi	MCDHS
Andrea Jardine	NJDCF
Lori Morris	CASA
Denise Massey	NJDCF
Ben Thornton	Anchor House
Ann Dorocki	MCDHS
Jim Cacace	MCBOSS
Shaquanna Frizzelle	NJDCF
Robert Taylor	MCDHS
Richard Ferreira	Catholic Charities
Jessica Trombetta	NJDCF
Vernett Sherrill	City of Trenton