



COUNTY OF SOMERSET DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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September 12, 2019 Continuum of Care meeting minutes

The September 2019 meeting, which took place in the 1st floor conference room of the Human Services building (27 Warren Street) in Somerville, was called to order and began at 10:01 am. Everyone in attendance introduced themselves and the minutes from the July meeting were unanimously approved.

Michael Wojcik from Legal Services of Northwest Jersey (LSNWJ) was the guest speaker. LSNWJ has 5 offices in northwest New Jersey. The Somerville office is located at 90 East Main Street on the 3rd floor.

LSNWJ provides legal assistance in civil cases and generally represents clients in tenant court and disputes with landlords. They also provide assistance in the areas of: social services and healthcare, including the payment of healthcare bills; domestic cases (such as domestic violence and child support, including representing undocumented clients in domestic violence cases); garnishment and bankruptcy issues; and expungements. In addition, they will assist seniors with wills, advanced directives and powers of attorney. The greatest need among clients is funding to help pay rent.

All services at LSNWJ are free. Client eligibility is 250% of the poverty level, with no income limit for seniors (60+) and 500% of the poverty level for clients with HIV/AIDS.

The CoC Executive Committee is continuing to explore the 2020 Vision initiative. A questionnaire will be sent out to the full Committee to gather input on the CoC's strengths and weaknesses, and to help develop an action plan for the future.

The CoC Application was completed over the summer and sent to HUD for review.

An area of concern for the Future Focus initiative is that incorrect information may be keeping people from applying for assistance. There is a belief in some communities that if people accept assistance from the government, it could negatively affect their path to citizenship. There needs to be further discussion on how to better connect clients to the services they need, perhaps through the development of a universal referral form.

Announcements:

- The Human Services Academy will offer a training called *The Encouraging Listener* on October 15 from 10 to 11:30am.
- Alternatives has openings at their Franklin House residence (a total of 5 bedrooms) and in their transitional living facilities (4 vacancies – male or female).
- Alternatives will be holding their annual Dignity Run/Ride on October 13th in Bridgewater.

- Mission Statement -

The County of Somerset is committed to excellence and innovation in public service, promoting the well-being of all residents and communities by providing effective, efficient and responsive leadership.

Somerset County Is An Equal Opportunity Employer

- There are significant changes coming to HMIS – there will be a webinar on September 25th and a training in Sussex County on October 18th.
- Somerset County will host a Diversity Festival on October 12 from 11 am to 3 pm on Grove Street in the corridor in front of the County administration building.
- The Salvation Army has begun outreach for its Christmas gift program for children. If you want details about how to participate in the program please contact Isabella Porchetti via email at ling.porchetti@use.salvationarmy.org.
- The CoC Committee will need a new chairperson to take over in January 2020. Please let Kim Cowart know if you are interested.

The meeting adjourned at 11:14am.