



Human Services Director
MICHAEL FROST

Community Development Director
KIMBERLY COWART

COUNTY OF SOMERSET DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

27 Warren Street • P.O. Box 3000
Somerville, New Jersey 08876-1262
(908) 541-5756 • Fax (908) 575-3935
CommDev@co.somerset.nj.us
www.co.somerset.nj.us



Aging & Disability Services
JOANNE FETZKO

One Stop Career Center
Juvenile Institutional Services
MONICA MULLIGAN

Richard Hall Community MHC
NICCI SPINAZZOLA

Rutgers Cooperative Extension
DARYL MINCH

Veterans Services
PETER NIEMIEC

Volunteer Services
WILLIAM F. CROSBY

Youth Services
LINDA M. PORCARO

July 21, 2020 Continuum of Care meeting minutes

The July 2020 meeting, which took place virtually (due to the ongoing pandemic), via a Zoom conference call, was called to order and began at 11:02 am. Given the relatively unique nature of the meeting, Kim Cowart started with an overview of the way the meeting would be conducted. Then, the minutes from the March meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved.

Kasey, from Monarch, gave an overview of the HUD NOFA. The local selection timeline has been completed, all agencies have been monitored and applications have been accepted for new and renewal funding. HUD is still unsure what the NOFA will look like, or if there will even be one. HUD has petitioned Congress for more funding, but at the moment Congress is focused more on the COVID-19 pandemic.

The final Point in Time Count numbers are due out shortly. The emergency shelter numbers increased from 112 to 165. However, the overall numbers are relatively stable.

Kim Cowart led the Committee in a “Thankful Thoughts” exercise, where members could remark on things that they are thankful for during the ongoing pandemic. Some of the things that members were thankful for included: Extra funding for SSVF programs; \$100 million for the CARES Act (to help those affected by the pandemic); positive and helpful communication from and with HUD; no positive COVID cases at Agape House; successful experiences at the various local food banks, with no long lines and very helpful volunteers and clients.

The Committee then engaged in a “Reflections on Racism” discussion, giving members an opportunity to comment on the recent – and ongoing – racial tension in the country. Members were encouraged to be open and honest, and were advised that the discussion would be kept confidential and judgment-free. After a lengthy and productive conversation, it was decided to continue to have these discussions as part of future CoC meetings. The Committee will work on finding ways to bring resources to those who need them.

Tom Scherr gave a report on the Unmet COVID needs. Somerset County received almost \$650,000 in CARES Act funding in the first round and may receive more in future rounds. The funds must be spent on activities that “prepare for, prevent and respond to” COVID-19. These funds – designated as CDBG-CV – are through the CDBG program and must comply with CDBG rules and eligibility requirements, although the 15% cap on public services has been lifted for these funds. The County will be using the bulk of the initial round of funding for an Emergency Rental Relief (ERR) program.

- 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

Announcements:

- Soldier On is available to assist veterans in the community. Due to Covid-19, Soldier On is able to assist with emergency motel stays. If you know any homeless veterans in need of housing assistance, or non-homeless veterans who are behind on their rent, please have them contact the intake hotline at (866) 406-8449. They are also welcome to reach out to Mark Hastings directly if they have any questions by calling (413) 387-3512.
- Alternatives continues to offer mental health case management services through its Community Support Services program. Staff are meeting with individuals in person (following social distance guidelines) and virtually. Interested parties should contact Heather Bielefeldt via email at bielefeldth@alternativesinc.org or by calling 908-685-1444 ext 279.
- The Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board is looking for interested employers to help provide paid internships for 30 young people in Hunterdon and Somerset counties. If your organization would like to participate, please submit a response to the Request for Applications that is posted at the following link:
<https://www.co.somerset.nj.us/Home/ShowDocument?id=38386>
- Norwescap has funding for its HPRP2 and HPP programs in Somerset County. Please reach out to Norwescap at (908) 454-7000, ext. 1118.
- Alternatives is seeking female applicants for its HUD 811 permanent housing program. There are openings for adults that are single, have low income and have a mental health diagnosis. Interested parties should contact Heather Bielefeldt via email at bielefeldth@alternativesinc.org or by calling 908-685-1444 ext 279.
- Although May is recognized for understanding the prevalence of people with mental health and substance use disorders and supporting their recovery, July examines some of the more specific needs and experiences of underserved populations, including BIPOC (black, indigenous people, and people of color). Here are just a few free resources, courtesy of Meg Isbitski, to start the conversation:
 - The US HHS Office of Minority Health (OMH) offers its free e-learning course: [Improving Cultural Competency for Behavioral Health Professionals](#)
 - Mental Health America's BIPOC toolkit and resources: [Mental Health America BIPOC Month](#)
 - NAMI NJ's 4 Multicultural Initiatives and links to resources and support groups. The initiatives include: AACT-NOW (African American), CAMHOP (Chinese), NAMI En Español (Latino) and SAMHAJ (South Asian) [NAMI NJ Multicultural](#)

The meeting adjourned at 12:15pm.