



COUNTY OF HUNTERDON NEW JERSEY

HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ALCOHOLISM & DRUG ABUSE YOUTH SERVICES COMMISSION MENTAL HEALTH BOARD



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REFERENCE:

- ☒ Council
- ☐ Mental Health
- ☐ Youth
- ☐ Disability Services
- ☐ Substance
- ☐ Use Disorder
- ☐ Transportation

Approved October 17, 2022

COMPREHENSIVE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE SYSTEM (CEAS) COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting

Monday, March 21, 2022 2:00 p.m.
Via Webex

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

J. Gorman
S. Lax
B. Duncan

GUESTS

D. Prisco
R. Walls
M. Bate
M. Mattaliano
P. Briant
K. Blanda
M. Moore
D. Shappert
R. Wenrich

EX-OFFICIO

STAFF

L. Piazza Long
S. Nekola
K. Paulmeno
M. O'Reilly
K. Burghardt

*Designee

I. CONVENE:

Open Public Meetings Statement:

"This meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 – 10:4-21. Notice of this meeting has been provided in the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Courier News. A public notice announcing this meeting has also been placed in the lobbies of the Hunterdon County Department of Human Services, the first floor of the Main Street County Complex, 71 Main Street Building #1, Flemington, NJ; the first floor of the Route 12 County Complex, Building #3, 314 State Route 12, Flemington, NJ and County Clerk's Office."

Due the recent public health crisis, COVID-19, this meeting was a Webex/call in ONLY

II. MINUTES:

J. Gorman made a Motion and S. Lax seconded to pass the meeting minutes of January 10, 2022. All were in favor. The motion passed.

III. REPORTS:

A. Homeless Prevention Program – Family Promise of Hunterdon County: In A. Fields' absence, P. Briant provided an update. She reported that HPP is ongoing. Family Promise has funding available for families and individuals within a higher income bracket who are behind

in rent. The report had been completed for the EFSP grant and had helped 11 families with the grant monies. 11 adults and 12 children; totaling 23 people.

- B. HPRP Update – Family Promise:** In A. Fields' absence, P. Briant provided an update. She reported that the HPRP is ending. If there are any last-minute clients who can benefit from three months of rental arrears or security deposit, please send them this week. Family Promise is hopeful to hear something about the 2022 grant renewal funding in April.
- C. Tri-County Continuum of Care:** M. O'Reilly conveyed that at the last executive committee meeting, the group went over a timeline for 2022 regarding monitoring and also a potential date to release a RLI and RFP fiscal year 2022 funding. Additionally, all required documents were sent out to all of the funded agencies and are due back by April 22, 2022. The goal of the review committee is to get a RLI or RFP out in May of this year.

The RIS Subcommittee is really trying to engage people with lived experience with homelessness. They are reaching out in each county to find people who had experienced homelessness as well as reaching out to setup focus group meetings with them. S. Nekola conveyed the focus groups will be informed by the survey, so they are going to wait for the surveys to come in and will then formulate questions that will be used across the Tri-County CoC (Sussex, Warren and Hunterdon). Right now, they are identifying people who want to participate and seeing what type of information that will be received by the survey. The Tri-County CoC released a client survey that had been emailed out on March 21, 2022. If there are any questions, please contact to herself or Family Promise of Sussex County. Meave Sweeny is spearheading this effort. M. O'Reilly will provide M. Sweeny's information in the Chat Box. The survey is an online survey, and it is alright to print it out and give hard copies to clients. Staff must input this information into the online portal.

M. O'Reilly conveyed the state Department of Community Affairs has an Emergency Assistance Mortgage Program called ERMA. An email had been sent out.

The Department of Community Affairs announced a Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) that can be used for water and sewer arrears. The eligibility requirements can be located on the DCA website. The application can be found online and anyone requiring any assistance can either call 2-1-1 or can call 1-800-510-3102 to be referred to a local agency to help apply for that assistance.

The Division of Mental Health & Addiction Services released an RFP for emergency mental health. It is an urgent care for people who are experiencing mental health crisis that is called EISS. There are two applicants for Hunterdon County, therefore, these services will be available which will be huge and very beneficial.

One a side note, M. O'Reilly stated the proposed state budget has been released and there may be an opportunity for anyone to testify. She will find that information and share on the link. She stated that there is one proposal that will directly impact Hunterdon County which is a proposed \$10.00 increase per person for motel/hotel rates; this is positive news. A second proposal is if the state increases the SSH award. This is unsure at this time.

- D. EFSP Update – Family Promise: A. Fields:** No update at this time.

IV. OLD BUSINESS:

- A. Homeless Housing Voucher Requested by R. Todd-Marino** – L. Piazza Long commented that R. Todd-Marino requested the need for more Section 8 housing vouchers and an update to be discussed at this meeting. K. Burghardt commented that only three individuals responded to being homeless for this year's homeless prioritization. Therefore, he is willing and open to add an additional five people to the list. He will be working on the administrative plan because they are also getting a new type of voucher, and this will be done this year. The demand from the population on the waiting list must meet HUDs criteria. S. Lax inquired for greater details about this program. Discussion ensued.

K. Burghardt stated there are 147 individuals left on the 2018 Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program waiting list. Given this number and the history of the waiting list, a new list should be ready to open in 2023 which is the goal.

S. Lax inquired if the PIT Count had been received as of yet. M. O'Reilly replied that Ashley from Monarch and herself are working on the de-duplication process; this was sent to her the prior week. She is hoping to have some preliminary data by the next month or so.

J. Gorman asked how many people are residing in motels that are being serviced. L. Piazza Long replied this will be challenging to answer because it is how many rooms are available; this number changes daily. She continued that sometimes it depends on who it is because the motels have a very specific list of who they will not house. Also, a lot of the motels are being used by Sussex and Warren Counties in addition to Hunterdon. The Travel Inn will not work with DSS because they will not accept the amount of monies that can be paid within regulations. They will work with 211 in doing the initial placements for a client over a weekend or overnight but will not do it long term. L. Piazza Long believes the list is at 50 people and five children. S. Lax asked if the additional monies can pay help with the situations. M. O'Reilly stated yes, it's a part of the regulations and it will impact emergency assistance reimbursement, as well as the Division of Social Services for the homeless. L. Piazza Long believes The Travel Inn may only except \$70.00 - \$80.00 and the proposed \$60.00 would not be enough to cover. A hotel in Somerset County that want a deposit of \$180.00 before they take families. This is not feasible. L. Piazza Long conveyed that regulation does state that DSS can choose where it would be best for the families. In the past, families would be placed on the Family Promise's waiting list and require the families to register for that list then house them in the mean time because it is a better environment.

S. Nekola stated her division does not have anyone in a motel. There was a family over the weekend who needed some short-term assistance due to some repairs to their home. She conveyed last year the division supported 222 nights through SHH for about 34 people including four families which is very low for Hunterdon County. To date, 56 nights had been recorded. L. Piazza Long added she feels the numbers may be lower due to the eviction moratorium. In answering J. Gorman's question, L. Piazza Long believes there are more than ten individuals and/or families or as much as 15 housed at the Fountain Motel. L. Piazza Long stated she is also utilizing motels outside of Hunterdon County but the further they go, the more money it will cost. Other issues are people that are homeless have a lot of pets including dogs, cats and ferrets. Additionally, moving companies are difficult to work with and most only want a cash payment. L. Piazza Long added a lot of evictions are beginning, a lot of landlords are buying properties and improving them and telling the tenants they have to leave

and the FMRs did not increase enough but the landlords can get rents that are outrageous. A big issue in Somerset County is that a lot of hotels have stopped their rates being low enough to work with DSS. J. Gorman asked if additional required funding is needed for EA, can it be funded by a grant. S. Lax inquired about the impacts of Ida regarding the hotel/motel situation. Discussion ensued.

V. NEW BUSINESS:

VI. AGENCY NEWS:

Hunterdon Helpline – S. Lax shared an update on the Next Door Program and Code Blue Shelter. As much as it feels like Spring, it is anticipated to have Code Blue again. This season produced 28 un-duplicated clients that affects the hotel/motel issues which had just been discussed. Hunterdon Helpline had been able to get three people employment while they were utilizing the shelter. They had also got two people into transitional programs. This is very exciting, and they are doing very well! Hunterdon Helpline is also working with five people for long term housing. There were also three individuals with physical disabilities, and they requested a hospital-like recliner with a vinyl covering to make it easier to clean by wiping down. This had not happened as of yet, therefore, S. Lax is looking for someone to donate one for these folks to help with sleeping situations. S. Lax announced Hunterdon Helpline will have a training for agency volunteers in association with the Medical Reserve Corporation that will focus on crisis and disaster to be held on April 26, 2022. She will forward a flyer. This training will be offered twice on that date.

Norwescap – D. Schappert works with a behavioral health company and right now is a regional coordinator for the ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) HUB. She noted there will be significant monies of grants available within the next month or so. They are waiting for the parameters surrounding it but right now it is very loose and broad. There are three HUBS that were awarded; three non-profit organizations. For this particular grant, Norwescap services all of Central New Jersey. She will be attending the meetings regularly, providing details as they surface. D. Schappert will provide her email in the Chat Box. These grants are related to mental health, homelessness, anything related to family, youth, etc; anyone who is being impacted by or have had Adverse Childhood Experiences.

Harvest Family Success Center – M. Moore announced the center is offering an online program for expungement on Thursday. If anyone is interested, please advise. A flyer had been distributed with details.

Safe In Hunterdon – D. Prisco provided an update. The shelter is mostly full and is almost at capacity since it had been launched. Part of that challenge is the length of stay at the shelter because of the lack of transitional housing or affordable care options. It used to be 30 days/60 days, but it is now averaging between the 3-4 month range and sometimes increasing to 6 months. Safe In Hunterdon is experiencing the same issues as discussed earlier in this meeting regarding use of hotels/motels inside and outside of Hunterdon County. Safe In Hunterdon currently has a wait list for counseling needs and are in the process of working on adding a third counselor to help with the needs. They also have a new office space thanks to Hunterdon Healthcare. It will be at a discrete location and available for direct services in-person; emergency services team, legal advocacy and a few other counseling hopefully available very soon. As of last week, the crisis intervention teams are conducting in-person activations. There will be a new volunteer training session starting shortly. There are ten trained volunteers

already and have an additional eight signed up for this cycle. If anyone is interested, to please reach-out to D. Prisco. He noted that this year might be too soon to start up a transitional housing effort.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:49 p.m. J. Gorman made a Motion and K. Burghardt seconded. The Motion passed. The next meeting will be Monday, June 20, 2022 at 2:00 p.m. via a virtual meeting.