

New York State (NYS)
 Department of State (DOS)
 Division of Community Services (DCS)
 Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)

**Advisory Council Meeting
 Minutes**

Meeting date: **May 19, 2022**, at 10:00 am. This meeting was conducted via WebEx Video Conference. Attendance was taken based initially on log-in information and later confirmed by verbal rollcall.

<p><i>Members Present:</i></p>	<p>Denis Wilson Executive Director/CEO Fulmont Community Action Agency, Inc.</p> <p>Dan Maskin, Second Vice-Chairperson Chief Executive Officer, Opportunities for Otsego, Inc.</p> <p>Tina Zerbian, First Vice-Chairperson Chief Executive Officer, Cattaraugus Community Action, Inc.</p>	<p>Andrea Ogunwumi Executive Director, EOP for Chemung & Schuyler Counties</p> <p>Charles Quinn Chief Executive Officer, Regional Economic Community Action Program, Inc.</p> <p>Alan Jones Chief Executive Officer, Adirondack Community Action Programs, Inc.</p>	<p>Margaret Evans Executive Director, Agri-Business Child development</p> <p>Michael Martin Executive Director, Native American Community Service of Erie and Niagara Counties, Inc.</p> <p>Mike Bobbitt Deputy Commissioner, NYC Department of Youth and Community Development</p>
<p><i>Guest Presenters:</i></p>	<p>Jackie Orr Executive Director/CEO New York State Community Action Association</p>		
<p><i>NYDOS Staff Present:</i></p>	<p>Manuel A. Rosa Director, Division of Community Services</p> <p>Nancy Pfohl Community Services Program Analyst 3</p> <p>Aimee Kollar Community Services Program Analyst 3</p> <p>Nikoletta Battistoni Community Services Program Analyst 4</p> <p>Matthew Ciotti Community Services Program Analyst 1</p> <p>Victor Carrera Community Services Program Analyst 1</p> <p>Jessica Lowell Community Services Program Analyst 2</p>	<p>Theresa Walsh Community services Program Analyst 2</p> <p>Jessica Garneau Community Services Program Analyst 1</p> <p>Amy Gonsalves Community Services Program Analyst 1</p> <p>Syed Ahmed Community Services Program Analyst 1</p> <p>Jessica Sweet Community Services Program Analyst 1</p> <p>Katy-Rose Hanson Community Services Program Analyst 1</p>	<p>Ayanna Hamby Office Assistant 1</p> <p>Katharine Furman Administrative Assistant II</p> <p>Jacob Fox Community Services Program Analyst 1</p> <p>Robert Vanderbles Senior Attorney, Office of General Council</p> <p>LuAnn Hart Director, Bureau of Fiscal Management</p>

<p><i>Executive Directors or Agency Representatives</i></p>	<p>Nancy Warnock Director of Career and Family Services, Washington County Economic Opportunity Council, Inc.</p> <p>Nicole Laurin Executive Director Joint Council for Economic Opportunity of Clinton and Franklin Counties, Inc.</p> <p>Jo Anne Hume Executive Director LifeWorks Community Action, Inc.</p> <p>Melinda Gault Former Executive Director Community Action Planning Council of Jefferson, Inc.</p> <p>Judy Yonkers Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc.</p> <p>Carolyn Brown Executive Director People's Equal Action and Community Effort, Inc.</p> <p>Maureen Abbott Executive Director Tioga Opportunities, Inc.</p> <p>Emily Fagle Finance Director Washington County Economic Opportunity Council, Inc.</p> <p>Mary Jo Terrance Executive Director Mohawk Indian Housing Corporation</p> <p>Daniel Bonnet Former Interim Chief Executive Officer Westchester Community Opportunity Program, Inc.</p> <p>Greg Richards Executive Director Cortland County Community Action Program, Inc.</p>	<p>Jeannette Spaulding Executive Director, Schoharie County Community Action Program, Inc.</p> <p>Laurie Piccolo Executive Director, Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency, Inc.</p> <p>Suzanne Shears Chief Executive Officer, Niagara Community action Program, Inc.</p> <p>Felicia Neahr Executive Director, St. Lawrence Community Development Program, Inc.</p> <p>Maureen Abbott Executive Director Tioga Opportunities, Inc.</p> <p>Danielle Harrington Interim Executive Director Tompkins Community Action, Inc.</p> <p>Isabell St. Clair Senior Accountant Regional Economic Community Action Program, Inc.</p> <p>Grizelle Garcia Regional Economic Community Action Program, Inc.</p> <p>Adrian Fassett President/Chief Executive Officer Economic Opportunity Council of Suffolk, Inc.</p> <p>Elizabeth Spira Former Chief Executive Officer Community Action Partnership of Dutchess County, Inc.</p>	<p>Nancy Turo Comptroller, People's Equal Action and Community Effort, Inc.</p> <p>Kelly Robertson Deputy Director Greater Opportunities for Broome and Chenango, Inc.</p> <p>Marie Montgomery Deputy Director Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency, Inc.</p> <p>Katrina Chaffee Director of Operations, Reporting and Community Services Community Action of Orleans and Genesee, Inc.</p> <p>Mary Randall Director, Grants & Programs PathStone Corporation</p> <p>Brandi Haynes Community Action Organization of Western New York, Inc.</p> <p>Mary Randall PathStone Corporation</p> <p>Cheryl Cohen Regional Economic Community Action Program, Inc.</p> <p>Kiron Dawkins Interim CEO Westchester Community Opportunity Program, Inc.</p>
---	--	---	--

The meeting began at approximately 10:05am, quorum was not established.

Manuel A. Rosa, Director, Division of Community Services (DCS)

Manuel Rosa opened the meeting by sharing a sentiment regarding the recent tragedy in Buffalo, NY. He read the note that the Secretary of State, Robert J. Rodriguez, emailed to the Department of State (DOS) network. Manuel Rosa thanked the Network for all the work that they do and will continue to do in the future.

He acknowledged that the Department of State (DOS) received its Notice of Grant Award for the remainder of the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2022. The award indicated almost a \$200,000 increase from the previous year's allocation (FFY2021). Manuel Rosa stated that due to the increase, amendments will have to be processed, this will ensure 90% of CSBG funds are distributed to the entitlement agencies.

He stated that the HR 5129 (the Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act), was passed on May 13th, 2022, by the U.S. House of Representatives and has now been forwarded to the Senate for consideration. He stated that within that authorization, there was a 200% increase to the FPL.

He stated that the week of August 22-26, 2022, the Office of Community Services (OCS) will be conducting a virtual monitoring visit for New York State, evaluating the Division of Community Services (DCS).

He reminded the Network that the CARES expenditures need to be completed by September 30, 2022, and if any agencies think that they are not going to spend 100% allocation of the CARES funds to let the Division of Community Services know.

May is the Community Action Recognition month, he acknowledged that the Secretary of State, Robert J. Rodriguez, as being an advocate for the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) since his arrival. The Secretary has issued proclamations and certificates of recognition to each individual Community Action Agency, for all of their hard work and dedication. Manuel Rosa presented proclamations to the Advisory Council and the New York State Community Action Association (NYSCAA).

Denis Wilson, CSBG Advisory Council Board Chairperson

Denis Wilson thanks Manuel Rosa for his presentation. He introduced Robert Vanderbles, DOS Senior Attorney, to discuss changes that have been made to the Open Meetings Law Firm.

Robert Vanderbles, Senior Attorney, DOS Office of General Counsel

Robert Vanderbles thanked Denis Wilson, and asked "if a quorum was determined?" Denis Wilson stated that a quorum was not established. Robert Vanderbles stated that the Advisory Council cannot take any formal action.

Robert Vanderbles stated that beginning June 2022, there are going to be some changes regarding:

1. A member of a public body attending a video conference from a location not available to the public will only be permissible in extraordinary circumstances.
2. Procedures are only going to be available if that public body holds a hearing, deliberates on public comments, and passes a resolution and procedures implementing that flexibility.

Robert Vanderbles stated that he and the Division of Community Services will be presenting a proposed resolution and procedures during the Advisory Council meeting. He will be including that hearing in the next meeting so that the Advisory Council can decide whether to adopt those procedures.

Jackie Orr, Executive Director/CEO New York State Community Action Association, stated that there was a question in the chat box that asked: "Do these rules pertain to community action board meetings?" Robert Vanderbles responded, "the answer depends on the community action agency and how they determine to address the issue. Best thing to do is for those community action agencies to consult their own counsel."

Denis Wilson, CSBG Advisory Council Board Chairperson

Denis Wilson thanked Robert Vanderbles for his presentation and introduced Jackie Orr, Executive Director/CEO of New York State Community Action Association.

Jackie Orr, Executive Director/CEO of New York State Community Action Association

Jackie Orr thanked Manuel Rosa and the Secretary of State, Robert Rodriguez, for the Proclamation.

Jackie Orr stated that she is going to give some highlights on NYSCAA's report, as Advisory Council members have the report. She stated that NYSCAA is still doing the E-Learning courses. There are now a total of 10 courses on that platform that are open to Community Action Agencies, staff, and board members. There are over 2,100 users on the platform. Jackie Orr stated that E-Learning still holds introduction to ROMA trainings, which is now being offered virtually. Jackie Orr stated E-Learning is continuing to do Adverse Childhood Experience (ACES) trainings. There were 25 Community Action Agency staff that were trained in 2020, 19 staff in the CSBG Network have become certified.

Jackie Orr stated that NYSCAA's Peer Group has grown. There is a Peer Group for frontline staff (which is staff that deliver direct services), and another Peer Group for Community Action Agency staff who work with senior related programs. The most recent peer group is for Executive Assistants.

Jackie Orr stated that NYSCAA is planning for the Annual Professional Development Conference at the Hyatt Regency in Rochester, NY.

Denis Wilson, CSBG Advisory Council Board Chairperson

Denis Wilson thanked Jackie Orr for her presentation and asked the Network if there was any old business. He introduced Dan Maskin, CEO of Opportunities for Otsego, Inc., to speak about Compensation for Community Action Employees.

Dan Maskin, CEO of Opportunities for Otsego, Inc.

Dan Maskin thanked Denis Wilson. Dan stated, "that the agencies are poverty fighting organizations, but the wages they pay employees might keep the employees in poverty or make them eligible for poverty programs." Dan Maskin introduced Charles Quinn, CEO of Regional Economic Community Action Program, Inc.

Charles Quinn encouraged the Advisory Council and the Department of State to move toward putting into the State Plan and working with NYS Legislature to set a floor for wages and funds that are used to pay staff.

Denis Wilson, CSBG Advisory Council Board Chairperson

Denis Wilson thanked Dan Maskin and Charles Quinn for their presentation and comments. Denis Wilson stated that that subject will stay on the Advisory Council agenda for future meetings. He then reintroduced Dan Maskin to speak about Discretionary Funds.

Dan Maskin, CEO of Opportunities for Otsego, Inc.

Dan Maskin stated that there are various problems facing rural communities and agencies that require a massive amount of resources. Dan stated in a previous meeting held discussion circled around delivering smaller and/or more localized initiatives in particular communities to impact results and address the needs.

Denis Wilson, CSBG Advisory Council Board Chairperson

Denis Wilson thanked Dan Maskin for his presentation and asked if there was any new business to discuss.

Charles Quinn, CEO of Regional Economic Community Action Program, Inc.

Charles Quinn brought up the tragedy that happened in Buffalo, NY. He stated that there was a discussion with Executive Directors before the Advisory Council meeting. Charles stated how the conversation acknowledged that the tragedy highlights the racism that exists in NYS. Charles acknowledged the great work that Jerome Underwood (President & CEO of Action for a Better Community, Inc.), has been spearheading in Rochester. He stated how Jerome Underwood has worked to get his local government to recognize racism as a public health crisis.

Charles Quinn advised the Advisory Council and the Department of State to start thinking about a plan on how to address racism and it being the root cause of poverty.

Mike Bobbitt (Assistant Commissioner for NYC Department of Youth and Community Development) discussed hosting their 2nd CBO/MWBE (Community Based Organization/Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises) Exchange. The event will be virtual, held on May 24th, 2022. Mike Bobbitt advertised this as a free event and an opportunity to meet and greet New York State certified MWBE vendors.

Michael Martin (Executive Director, Native American Community Services of Erie and Niagara Counties, Inc.) stated how he had 1 staff member that was directly impacted by the tragedy in Buffalo, NY. He stated that this is a racism issue as well as supremacy, that one is greater than the other and we must focus on our common humanity. Michael Martin stated how he encourages the work of the network of the organizations, and everyone involved to address the underlying issues that create separation and division.

Brandi Haynes, (staff from Community Action Organization of Western New York – located in Buffalo, NY) thanked everyone for their kind words, thoughts, and prayers. She stated that the grocery store where the tragedy happened is closed indefinitely and there is not another store for miles, creating a food desert for that community. She stated CAO is working with several other organizations to address the needs.

Denis Wilson, CSBG Advisory Council Board Chairperson

Denis Wilson thanked everyone that spoke. He stated that there still was not a quorum, and they will not be able to adapt the minutes or vote to adjourn the meeting. Denis Wilson thanked everyone for attending the meeting, he then closed the meeting.