

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

**Advisory Council Meeting  
 Minutes**

Meeting date: **March 30, 2023**, 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><b>Denis Wilson, Chair</b>          Executive Director/CEO,          Fulmont Community Action Agency,          Inc.</p> <p><b>Tina Zerbian,          First Vice-Chairperson</b>          Chief Executive Officer,          Cattaraugus Community Action, Inc.</p> <p><b>Dan Maskin,          Second Vice-Chairperson</b>          Chief Executive Officer,          Opportunities for Otsego, Inc.</p>	<p><b>Mike Bobbitt</b>          Deputy Commissioner,          NYC Department of Youth and          Community Development</p> <p><b>David Hahn-Baker</b></p> <p><b>Alan Jones</b>          Chief Executive Officer,          Adirondack Community Action Programs, Inc.</p> <p><b>Andrea Ogunwumi</b>          Executive Director,          EOP for Chemung &amp; Schuyler Counties</p>	<p><b>Charles Quinn</b>          Chief Executive Officer,          Regional Economic Community          Action Program, Inc.</p> <p><b>Laura Rossman</b>          Chief Executive Officer,          Pro Action of Steuben and Yates, Inc.</p> <p><b>Yves Villus</b>          Erasmus Foundation</p>
<p><i>Guest Presenters:</i></p>	<p><b>Jackie Orr</b>          Executive Director/CEO,          New York State Community Action          Association</p>		
<p><i>NYDOS Staff Present:</i></p>	<p><b>Zoila del Castillo</b>          Deputy Secretary of State for Economic          Opportunity</p> <p><b>Manuel A. Rosa</b>          Director, Division of Community          Services</p> <p><b>Jen Gallo</b>          Director, Division of Community          Services</p> <p><b>Nancy Pfohl</b>          Community Services Program Analyst 3</p> <p><b>Aimee Kollar</b>          Community Services Program Analyst 3</p> <p><b>Nikoletta Battistoni</b>          Community Services Program Analyst 4</p> <p><b>Matthew Ciotti</b>          Community Services Program Analyst 1</p> <p><b>Victor Carrera</b>          Community Services Program Analyst 1</p>	<p><b>Theresa Walsh</b>          Community Services Program Analyst 2</p> <p><b>Jessica Garneau</b>          Community Services Program Analyst 1</p> <p><b>Amy Gonsalves</b>          Community Services Program Analyst 1</p> <p><b>Syed Ahmed</b>          Community Services Program Analyst 1</p> <p><b>Jessica Sweet</b>          Community Services Program Analyst 1</p> <p><b>Katy-Rose Hanson</b>          Community Services Program Analyst 1</p> <p><b>Sayla Eisner-Mix</b>          Community Services Program Analyst 2</p> <p><b>Jessica Lowell</b>          Community Services Program Analyst 2</p>	<p><b>Ayanna Hamby</b> Office          Assistant 1</p> <p><b>Katharine          Furman</b> Administrative          Assistant II</p> <p><b>Robert Vanderbles</b>          Associate Attorney, Office of          General Counsel</p> <p><b>Paul Kinter</b>          Fiscal Representative</p> <p><b>Kathleen Richardson</b>          Fiscal Representative</p> <p><b>Mindy VanAlstyne</b>          Associate Accountant, Bureau          of Fiscal Management</p> <p><b>Belia Jimenez</b>          Empire Fellow</p> <p><b>Gregg Collar</b>          Division of Consumer Protection</p>
<p><i>Executive Directors or Agency Representatives</i></p>	<p><b>Aaron Wicks</b>          Action for a Better Community, Inc.</p> <p><b>Jessica DeJesus</b>          Director of Community &amp; Career Services          Albany County Opportunity, Inc.</p>	<p><b>Nicole Laurin</b>          Executive Director,          Joint Council for Economic Opportunity          of Clinton and Franklin Counties, Inc.</p> <p><b>Robert Mihal</b></p>	<p><b>Joya Gambino</b>          Regional Economic Community Action          Program, Inc.</p> <p><b>Grizelle Garcia</b>          Regional Economic Community Action</p>

	<p><b>Monica Rios</b> Albany County Opportunity, Inc.</p> <p><b>Whitney Verbridge</b> Cattaraugus Community Action, Inc. dba Connecting Communities in Action</p> <p><b>Valerie Stock</b> Systems Compliance Coordinator Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc.</p> <p><b>Elizabeth Crofut</b> Executive Director Community Action Program for Madison County, Inc.</p> <p><b>William Nicholson</b> Community Services Director Community Action Program for Madison County, Inc.</p> <p><b>Renee Hungerford</b> Executive Director Community Action Agency of Orleans and Genesee, Inc.</p> <p><b>Katrina Chaffee</b> Director of Community Services and Reporting Community Action of Orleans and Genesee, Inc.</p> <p><b>Daniel Antkowiak</b> Accounting Manager Community Action Organization of Western New York, Inc.</p> <p><b>Sharada Briggs</b> Chief Financial Officer Community Action Organization of Western New York, Inc.</p> <p><b>Dr. Patricia O'Connor</b> Board Chairperson Commission on Economic Opportunity for the Greater Capital Region, Inc.</p> <p><b>Gaige Bowman</b> Fiscal Director Community Action Planning Council of Jefferson County, Inc.</p> <p><b>Melrose Corley</b> Deputy Director of Strategic Planning and Corporate Programs Economic Opportunity Commission of Nassau County, Inc.</p>	<p>Chief Financial Officer Joint Council for Economic Opportunity of Clinton and Franklin Counties, Inc.</p> <p><b>Shelley Smith</b> Executive Director LEAP Services</p> <p><b>Nancy Warnock</b> Director of Career and Family Services, LEAP Services</p> <p><b>Mary Caro</b> LEAP Services</p> <p><b>Scott Mathys</b> Chief Executive Officer Lewis County Opportunities, Inc.</p> <p><b>Angelo Calbone</b> Director of Community Services LifeWorks Community Action</p> <p><b>Natasa Joldic</b> Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency, Inc.</p> <p><b>Maureen Murphy</b> Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency, Inc.</p> <p><b>Suzanne Shears</b> Chief Executive Officer Niagara Community Action Program, Inc.</p> <p><b>Robert Pecoraro</b> Niagara Community Action Program, Inc. Board Chairperson</p> <p><b>Jaquinda Smith</b> Family Development &amp; Nutrition Supervisor Niagara Community Action Program, Inc.</p> <p><b>Paul Wilson</b> Fiscal Director Niagara Community Action Program, Inc</p> <p><b>Isaac Heschel</b> Board President/Chair NYC Department of Youth and Community Development</p> <p><b>Ebony Jordan-Wilson</b> NYC Department of Youth &amp; Community Development</p> <p><b>William Kamen</b> NYC Department of Youth &amp; Community</p>	<p>Program, Inc.</p> <p><b>Cheryl Cohen</b> Regional Economic Community Action Program, Inc.</p> <p><b>Angela Locolano</b> PathStone Corporation</p> <p><b>Brenda Soto</b> PathStone Corporation</p> <p><b>Mary Randall</b> Director of Grants &amp; Programs PathStone Corporation</p> <p><b>Nancy Turo</b> Controller People's Equal Action and Community Effort, Inc.</p> <p><b>Mary Beth Welch</b> Director of Family Services People's Equal Action and Community Effort, Inc.</p> <p><b>Stephanie Bingham</b> People's Equal Action and Community Effort, Inc.</p> <p><b>Justina Farris</b> Finance Director Schoharie County Community Action Program, Inc.</p> <p><b>Maureen Abbott</b> Executive Director Tioga Opportunities, Inc.</p> <p><b>Danielle Harrington</b> Executive Director Tompkins Community Action, Inc.</p> <p><b>Glenda Abby</b> Tompkins Community Action, Inc.</p> <p><b>Carrie Johnson</b> Executive Director Wyoming County Community Action, Inc.</p> <p><b>Dawn Meyer</b> Finance Director/Chief Financial Officer Wyoming County Community Action, Inc.</p>
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	<p><b>Laura Cummings</b> Economic Opportunity Program, Inc. of Chemung County</p> <p><b>Tyler Galpin</b> Economic Opportunity Program, Inc. of Chemung &amp; Schuylers Counties</p> <p><b>Melinda Daniels</b> Executive Assistant Community Action of Orleans and Genesee, Inc.</p> <p><b>Adrian Fassett</b> President/Chief Executive Officer Economic Opportunity Council of Suffolk, Inc.</p> <p><b>Steven Turner</b> Managing Director, Youth &amp; Community Services Action for a Better Community, Inc.</p>	<p>Development</p> <p><b>Judith Sam</b> NYC Department of Youth &amp; Community Development</p> <p><b>Rong Zhang</b> NYC Department of Youth &amp; Community Development</p> <p><b>Charles Barbay</b> Project Manager New York State Community Action Association, Inc.</p> <p><b>Heidi Barcomb</b> Program and Communications Director New York State Community Action Association, Inc.</p> <p><b>Songhi Davis</b> Vice President/CFO Economic Opportunity Council of Suffolk, Inc.</p>	<p><b>Kiron Dawkins</b> Interim CEO Westchester Community Opportunity Program, Inc.</p> <p><b>Shay Castillo</b> Westchester Community Opportunity Program, Inc.</p> <p><b>Colin Dacres</b> Chief Operating Officer Westchester Community Opportunity Program, Inc.</p> <p><b>Benita Hamlett</b> Westchester Community Opportunity Program, Inc.</p>
<i>Other attendees</i>	<p><b>Anna Ireland Mongo, Ph.D.</b> Chief Program Officer Jericho Road Community Health Center</p>	<p><b>Paula Sarro</b> Associate Executive Director Mercy Center</p>	<p><b>Alyssa Besio</b> Grants Manager Neighbors Link Corp.</p>

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

**Roll Call:**

- Mike Bobbitt – here
- Margaret Evans – absent
- David Hahn Baker - virtual
- Michael Martin – absent
- Andrea Ogunwumi – virtual
- Maurice Reid - absent
- Miguel Santos – absent
- Alan Jones – virtual
- Laura Rossman – here
- Denis Wilson – here
- Dan Maskin – virtual
- Charles Quinn – virtual
- Yves Vilus – virtual
- Tina Zerbian – virtual

Roll call was taken, and a quorum was not established.

**Welcome**

**Denis Wilson, CSBG Advisory Council Board Chairperson**

Denis Wilson welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated that the minutes from the previous meeting could not be approved due to not establishing a quorum. Wilson welcomed and acknowledged Zoila Del Castillo, NYS Deputy Secretary

for Economic Opportunities, and Jennifer Gallo to the meeting. Jen Gallo is the new Director for Financial Administration.

### **Zoila Del Castillo, Deputy Secretary for Economic Opportunities**

Zoila Del Castillo thanked the members of the Advisory Council for their service. She thanked Denis Wilson, who serves as the Chairperson of Advisory Council and the Director of Fulmont Community Action Agency, Inc. Del Castillo also mentioned working closely with Jackie Orr as the CEO of the New York State Community Action Association. She acknowledged it is her pleasure to advance the mission of Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) programming, the Division of Community Services (DCS), and work in partnership with the Community Action Agencies (CAAs) to improve the lives of the communities throughout the state and people in need across New York State. Del Castillo thanked Jen Gallo (Director for Financial Administration, NYS Department of State) and Robert Vanderbles (Associate Attorney, NYS Department of State), for their work with DCS and CSBG.

### **Denis Wilson, CSBG Advisory Council Board Chairperson**

Denis Wilson thanked Zoila Del Castillo and introduced Manuel Rosa, the Director of the Division of Community Services.

## **Division of Community Services – Division Updates**

### **Manuel A. Rosa, Director of Division of Community Services**

Manuel Rosa welcomed everyone to the meeting. Rosa underscored the importance of the relationship between the council and Community Services as many things are happening, specifically the development of a new state plan. Rosa stated that DCS is in the process of drafting the 2024-2025 NYS CSBG State Plan. He expressed the importance of having an active Advisory Council and the importance of establishing a quorum, which has been an ongoing struggle for the past few meetings. Rosa then introduced Nikoletta Battistoni, (Deputy Director, Division of Community Services) for further

DCS updates

### **Nikoletta Battistoni, Deputy Director, Division of Community Services**

Nikoletta Battistoni stated that the DOS Memo regarding Determining Income Eligibility was updated based on the 200%. The Federal Poverty Guidelines has been extended until September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Battistoni stated that communication will be sent out to the Network regarding how the Division of Community Services will be monitoring for a written policy on Income Eligibility. The Division of Community Services has partnered with a NYSCAA (New York State Community Action Association) to form a workgroup to draft the 2024-2025 NYS CSBG State Plan. Discussion items for the draft State Plan have included updating the state goals, implementing the use of the database, and the use of the Discretionary Funds. The workgroup recommended several ideas including Mental Health Training Opportunities and Substance Abuse Training Opportunities. Monitoring practices are being discussed, in partnership with NYSCAA (New York State Community Action Agencies) to reduce redundancies and streamline processes. One part of this is the implementation of a new database. The drafting process of the 2024-2025 NYS CSBG State Plan will be through the end of July 2023. The Advisory Council members were reminded of the NYSCAA Regional Meetings that are planned for May, and June. The Public Comment period will be between June 1<sup>st</sup> and July 15<sup>th</sup> and the Public Hearing is scheduled for June 13<sup>th</sup>. Finalizing the State Plan for submission to the Executive Office will be mid-July through mid-August and there will be an Advisory Council meeting in July 2023 to solicit final comments for the final proposed plan. Nikoletta introduced Aimee Kollar (Associate Director of Contracting, Division of Community Services) to speak about the Annual Report.

### **Aimee Kollar, Associate Director of Contracting, Division of Community Services**

Aimee Kollar stated that the Division of Community Services is finalizing the submission of the CSBG Annual Report. She thanked the Network for their timely submissions of the smart forms. Aimee shared that Module 1 (of the Annual Report) includes a lot of repetition but that the report on the Organizational Standards changes, DCS has improved 100% compliance in 27 agencies. Kollar noted that the narratives highlighting agency achievements were very well done. The information has been inputted into the new database. DCS looks forward to the full implementation of the Database for next year to assist with the Annual Report process.

### **Denis Wilson, CSBG Advisory Council Board Chairperson**

Denis Wilson thanked both Nikoletta Battistoni and Aimee Kollar and asked if there were any questions.

Mike Bobbitt (Advisory Council member and Deputy Commissioner, NYC Department of Youth and Community Development) asked if the Public Hearing Meeting in July is in person or a hybrid meeting.

Manuel Rosa stated DCS will follow up with the Advisory Council if a hybrid option would be offered if available.

Jackie Orr (CEO of NYSCAA) inquired about the development of the Tripartite Board Policy.

Manuel shared that the Division of Community Services is still working on it.

No other questions were asked, and Denis Wilson introduced Jackie Orr (CEO of NYSCAA).

### **NYSCAA Update**

#### **Jackie Orr, Chief Executive Officer, New York State Community Action Association (NYSCAA)**

Jackie Orr presented updates regarding NYSCAA. NYSCAA Learn (website platform) has incorporated all the webinars that have been presented in the past, there are over 15 courses and 50 recorded webinars. As part of NYSCAA's strategic plan, there was talk about creating a "Poverty Academy" (in quotes because they are not sure they like the name), to inform staff of what poverty looks like in communities. This is in the planning phase.

Orr reminded the Advisory Council that NYSCAA is holding Network wide trainings, but it is based on recommendations of what the Network requests. Introduction to ROMA Trainings held every other month or quarterly, the trainings are held remotely.

The next NYSCAA conference is going to be held on September 19–21, 2023, at the Lake Ontario Conference center in Oswego.

Orr noted that the Poverty Report will be coming out in the next month or two. NYSCAA produces a Poverty Report every year. The training and technical assistance survey has been sent out to see what training and assistance needs there are within the network of agencies. An inaugural podcast has been produced, and received much positive feedback, and the next one is set up. The plan is to produce a podcast every month.

NYSCAA applied for funding through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for the affordable connectivity program and received \$500,000. NYSCAA will be working with 4 other agencies making sure that they're aware of and have access to broadband and internet services in their communities.

### **Denis Wilson, CSBG Advisory Council Board Chairperson**

Denis Wilson thanked Jackie Orr and asked if there were any questions. There were no questions.

### **Old Business**

#### **Denis Wilson, CSBG Advisory Council Board Chairperson**

Denis Wilson asked if the Advisory Council had any old business to discuss. Wilson spoke about not being able to establish quorum and the numerous vacancies on the Advisory Council that need to be addressed. He noted that the work of the Council cannot be done without a quorum. He expressed concern about members who do not attend meetings. Denis stated that himself, Dan Maskin, and Tina Zerbian had briefly spoken about bringing the topic to the Council.

Wilson stated that the Advisory Council should review the Bylaws, and the Advisory Council may need to amend them. He noted that Dan Maskin, Tina Zerbian, and himself concluded that a subcommittee needs to be formed including the Executive Committee, Manuel Rosa, Robert Vanderbles, and maybe other Community Action Directors, to speak about how to address attendance and establishing quorum.

Dan Maskin (Advisory Council member and Executive Director, Opportunities for Otsego, Inc.) asked if the Council members could receive a copy of the most recently approved Bylaws.

Tina Zerbian (Advisory Council member, Executive Director, Cattaraugus Community Action, Inc.) noted that her name had not been called during the roll call (note: added Tina Zerbian as 'here' for roll call). She inquired if the Council should review the appointment process and what it takes to become an Advisory Council member. Tina was not sure if others understand the process that individuals must go through. Tina inquired if there is a template to send out to missing Council members to inform them of their duties.

Manuel Rosa stated that establishing a quorum has been an ongoing challenge and has not improved due to the pandemic. He expressed appreciation for the productivity of the Advisory Council members. Manuel stated that the Department of State has raised the issue with Executive and the Deputy Secretary. DCS has not been ignoring this issue. Manuel shared that DCS, and the Council need to work together for possible solutions in order to fulfill the CSBG mission.

Charles Quinn (Advisory Council member and Executive Director, Regional Economic Community Action Program, Inc.) inquired if the current vacancies are causing the problem with establishing a quorum.

Denis Wilson stated that the vacancies are included in the issue of establishing a quorum. He noted the Bylaws need to be looked at and amended. Legislation requires that the Council meets, but the Bylaws should be able to be amended to work with the council.

Charles Quinn then inquired about the lack of community action agency representation at the meeting. Quinn inquired if the Advisory Council members who are CAAs are all in attendance.

Wilson replied that all Advisory Council members who are CAAs are all in attendance but does not think there is enough CAAs represented by Council members.

Quinn then stated the latest Bylaws were amended to establish the Executive Committee

Dan Maskin brought up that most of the Council members are used to non-profit Bylaws, but the CSBG Advisory Council is made up of legislative and executive appointees. He inquired if this, as an example, complicates the ability to remove a member. He inquired about clarity for who the governing body of the council is.

There was discussion about representation on the Advisory Council and how many members represented community action agencies and if the Executive council members had the ability to remove a member for non-attendance.

Laura Rossman (Advisory Council member, Chief Executive Officer, Pro Action of Steuben and Yates, Inc.) asked if there was any way to have standard meetings to address the absences. Rossman stated how being a CEO sometimes her schedule isn't clear enough for 3 weeks' notice to go to Buffalo for an in-person meeting. Rossman stated that if there were 3 Advisory Council meetings scheduled every year that might be better and may help establish a quorum.

Manuel Rosa iterated that DCS tries to do this and will continue to work on solidifying the schedule.

Robert Vanderbles (Associate Attorney, DOS Office of General Counsel) asked if some guidance on the issue would help? Robert indicated there are twenty members on the Advisory Council, and that is set by regulation. Quorum is set at 11. Vanderbles reminded the Advisory Council that there are three appointing authorities (the Senate, the Assembly, and the Governor's Office) that appointed members to the CSBG Advisory Council, and those authorities maintain the ability to remove and/or replace the non-active Advisory Council members. Action through Bylaws by the Advisory Council cannot change that authority. Vanderbles noted that public notice needs to be given whenever Advisory Council members meet to talk about Advisory Council business.

Dan Maskin suggested that council members themselves could call other council members to remind them that the meeting is approaching.

Mike Bobbitt agreed that having advanced notice can help remind members what the expectations are of Advisory Council members. He noted that if the appointing persons are given notice that there will be committee meetings about the poor attendance of their appointees or long standing vacancies, he sees no problem with alerting them and the public.

Vanderbles reiterated that public notice needs to be given of any meeting as the public has the right to attend.

Charles Quinn inquired if the Advisory Council members who have missed their multiple meetings have been notified and are still interested. Nikoletta Battistoni affirmed that Council members have been notified and reminded of meetings, and that attendance is encouraged to establish quorum. DCS sends emails, follow up and reminder emails, calls, and sends letters.

Mike Bobbitt inquired if the elected officials who made the appointments could be copied on these reminders to council members?

Nikoletta Battistoni replied that she would look into it.

Laura Rossman asked for clarification from the DCS presentation about policies for monitoring income eligibility.

Manuel Rosa noted, in answer, that about 95% of agencies do have such a policy. And Nikoletta Battistoni mentioned that the new guidance will have sample policy and a sample intake form,

## **New Business**

### **Denis Wilson, CSBG Advisory Council Board Chairperson**

Denis Wilson opened the floor for new business. There was no new business brought up. Wilson reminded the Advisory Council members that the next meeting would be determined in July 2023, notification would be sent out. No quorum was established, so there was no motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting ended at 11:01am.