

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

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Advisory Council Meeting
Thursday, June 12, 2025

	ALBANY	BUFFALO	NYC	VIRTUAL
Members Present:	<p>Alan Jones, First Vice-Chair Chief Executive Officer, Adirondack Community Action Programs, Inc</p> <p>Dan Maskin Chief Executive Officer, ret. Opportunities for Otsego, Inc.</p> <p>Charles Quinn Chief Executive Officer, Regional Economic Community Action Program, Inc.</p> <p>Denis E. Wilson Executive Director, Fulmont Community Action Agency, Inc.</p>	<p>Laura Rossman Second Vice-Chair Chief Executive Officer, Pro Action of Steuben and Yates, Inc.</p> <p>Michael Martin Executive Director, Native American Community Service of Erie and Niagara Counties, Inc.</p> <p>Andrea Ogunwumi Executive Director, EOP of Chemung & Schuyler Counties</p> <p>Tina Zerbian Chief Executive Officer, ret. Cattaraugus Community Action, Inc.</p>	<p>Mike Bobbitt, Chair Deputy Commissioner, NYC Dept. of Youth and Community Dev.</p>	<p>Yves Vilus Executive Director, Erasmus Neighborhood Federation, Inc.</p>
Members Absent:				<p>David Hahn-Baker Activist</p> <p>Maurice Reid President, KenJam Consultants, LLC</p> <p>Miguel Santos Advocate</p>
Guest Presenters:	<p>Tim Nichols Chief Operating Officer New York State Community Action Association</p>			
NYDOS Staff present:	<p>Artemis Artoun Nikoletta Battistoni Colleen Bryar Angelo Calbone Sayla Eisner Mix</p>	<p>Leah Bartlo</p>	<p>Syed Ahmed Victor Carrera Alexa Roberts</p>	<p>Alisha Cooper-Wilson Jennifer Gallo Jessica Garneau Amy Gonsalves Dan McDonough</p>

	Jackie Orr Kerry Shermer			Jill Peckenpaugh Martha Pfohl Kathleen Richardson- Cross Jessica Sweet Anais Vasquez Theresa Walsh
Exec. Directors or Agency Reps present:	Greg Richards Executive Director Cortland County Community Action Program, Inc.			Linda Haas Manley Adelaide Haberbush Brandi Haynes Andrew Studley Jerome Underwood
Other Attendees present:				

The meeting began at approximately: 10:05 am

Transcription services provided by eScribers, LLC. Recording was made available after the meeting on 6/12/2025 at <https://dos.ny.gov/community-services-block-grant-advisory-council>.

I. ROLL CALL

Nikoletta Battistoni, Deputy Director of the Division of Community Services

Battistoni opened the meeting by reading the roll call of members. 10 members were present ; quorum (11 members) was not established.

II. WELCOME

Mike Bobbitt, Advisory Council Chair

CSBG Advisory Council Chair Mike Bobbitt opened by thanking all Advisory Council members and encouraged the members to continue to work with peers and Dept. of State to achieve the quorum at the next meeting.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes were not approved as no quorum was established.

IV. DIVISION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES (DCS)

Jacqueline Orr, Division of Community Services Director

➤ **CSBG FUNDING UPDATES**

Orr updated that CSBG third and the fourth quarter of 2025 funds were received on May 22nd. All agencies who sent in their 45% voucher have received their payments. The Fiscal office moved very quickly to get the funds sent out.

No updates were available for Federal Fiscal Year 2026.

➤ **STATE PLAN**

Nikoletta Battistoni, Deputy Director of the Division of Community Services

Battistoni reported on the five regional meetings that have been held across the state for the CSBG State Plan between May and June NYSCAA (New York State Community Action Association) coordinated a work group for discussing, crafting and drafting the new State Plan. The public hearing on the plan is scheduled for June 18 and comments about the plan are open through July 3. Once finalized, the State Plan will be uploaded into the HHS OCS (Dept of Health and Human Services Office of Community Services) system by August 25, 2025.

Battistoni also presented Statewide goals and updates on State use of funds, State trainings, and technical assistance. Battistoni shared DOS interest to increase collaboration with other state agencies and other providers of anti-poverty initiatives.

See Appendix 1 for more details.

Bobbitt inquired which State agencies were being included.

Battistoni replied that collaborations are planned with NYSEDA (New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, ONA (Office of New Americans) and OCFS (Office of Children and Family Services). Orr later followed up to add the Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence.

➤ **MONITORING UPDATES**

Nikoletta Battistoni, Deputy Director of the Division of Community Services

Battistoni noted program monitoring updates to improve monitoring efficiency. Monitoring assignments will be updated in October.

➤ **DISCRETIONARY FUNDS / CONTRACTING UPDATES / CSBG ANNUAL REPORT**

Aimee Kollar, Associate Director of Contract Processing, Division of Community Services

Kollar provided updates on discretionary funding, and new contracting processes was provided. Kollar highlighted the categories of services and the numbers of clients who have benefitted from CSBG funding per the 2024 Annual Report.

See Appendix 1 for more detail.

Charlie Quinn asked for clarification on contracts for 2026 as potential changes at the federal level may cause a deficit. Quinn inquired if the State would help make up any deficit. Orr replied that there had been no conversation with the State about making up any potential deficit of federal funding.

➤ **AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX (ACSI) RESULTS**

Jacqueline Orr, Division of Community Services Director

Orr presented the results of the American Customer Satisfaction Index Survey.

See Appendix 1 for information on the 2025 survey results.

The next survey is expected in two years (2027). In the coming year the Division of Community Services will receive a survey from the Office of Community Service on how well the national office monitors the state office including distribution of funds. Results will be shared when available.

V. NEW YORK STATE COMMUNITY ACTION ASSOCIATION

Tim Nichols, Chief Executive Officer, New York State Community Action Association (NYSCAA)

Nichols thanked the Department of State for hosting the meeting and for assistance in his onboarding as the new CEO of NYSCAA. Nichols presented highlights presented from the NYSCAA report (Appendix 2) including trainings, updates to NYSCAA Learn, and the upcoming October 2025 conference in Syracuse. No questions were asked.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

➤ **UPDATE ON FILLING VACANT ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Jacqueline Orr, Division of Community Services Director

Orr shared that there are two people, Greg Richards of Cortland County Community Action Program and Brenda Soto of PathStone are in the process of Assembly appointment.

Orr estimated that these candidates may be members by the upcoming October 2025 meeting.

Maureen Abbott, past CEO of Tioga Opportunities, is currently in the Governor's appointment process. The Advisory Council was invited to share any referrals of others who might be interested in joining the Advisory Council.

Discussion followed regarding ways to work with members with inconsistent attendance. It was suggested that council members connect with absent members to encourage attendance. Advisory Council bylaws were consulted about attendance rules. Tina Zerbian requested a list of attendance. Members agreed to look at meeting quarterly going forward.

➤ **NYS ANNUAL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE**

Jackie Orr Division of Community Services Director

Orr noted that The Annual Report is posted on the website. Orr explained that the Annual Report is done every year and highlighted how funds are budgeted and used. No questions were asked.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Micheal Martin opened discussion about the social care networks program, which aims to connect all social services and Medicaid in one central database. Some of the community action agencies in the (CSBG) network are part of it. Martin noted the opportunities the network may provide. Charlie Quinn added that the CSBG State Plan includes a desire to coordinate resources. and shared that the 1115 (Medicaid Redesign Team) Waiver is a place where the (Department of) State could get involved. Jackie Orr reflected on the history of NYSCAA conversations about the 1115 Medicaid waiver. Dan Maskin noted negative feedback about one of the organizers of the 1115 waiver. Greg Richards (of Cortland County Community Action Program, Inc.) shared his problematic experience with the Healthy Alliance database of the social care networks program and raised the issue of confidentiality and privacy for users.

No other new business was discussed.

VIII. NEXT MEETING THURSDAY OCTOBER 16, 2025

Nikoletta Battistoni, Deputy Director of the Division of Community Services

Battistoni confirmed the next meeting is Thursday, October 16, 2025, at 10:00am. DCS will work on preparing dates for 2026 quarterly Advisory Council Meetings.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting ended at 11:10 am.

Appendix 1

Division of Community Services presentation slides

Appendix 2

NYSCAA Report