

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

**Advisory Council Meeting
 Meeting Minutes**

Meeting date: **October 27, 2021**, 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, Chairperson Executive Director, Fulmont Community Action Agency, Inc.</p> <p>Dan Maskin, Vice-Chairperson Chief Executive Officer, Opportunities for Otsego, Inc.</p> <p>Tina Zerbian, Second Vice-Chairperson Chief Executive Officer, Cattaraugus Community Action, Inc.</p> <p>Alan Jones Chief Executive Officer, Adirondack Community Action Programs, Inc.</p>	<p>Jeffrey Lewis Senior Vice President of Direct Services, PathStone Corporation</p> <p>Laura Rossman Chief Executive Officer, Pro Action of Steuben and Yates, 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>Mike Bobbitt Deputy Commissioner, NYC Department of Youth and Community Development</p> <p>Maurice A. Reid President, KenJam Consultants, LLC</p> <p>Michael Martin Executive Director, Native American Community Service of Erie and Niagara Counties, Inc.</p> <p>Miguel Santos Customer Advocate, National Grid</p> <p>Margaret Evans Executive Director, Agri-Business Child development</p>
<p><i>Guest Presenters:</i></p>	<p>Christopher White Associate Commissioner for the Future of Work, Department of Labor</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 2</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>LuAnn Hart Director, Bureau of Fiscal Management</p>	<p>Theresa Walsh Community services Program Analyst 2</p> <p>Jessica Garneau Community Services Program Analyst 1</p> <p>Sayla Eisner-Mix Community Services Program Analyst 1</p> <p>Jacob Fox Community Serviced Program Analyst 1</p> <p>Amy Gonsalves Community Services Program Analyst 1</p> <p>Tina LaRocca-Marcellus 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>Kristopher Niehoff Office Assistant 1</p> <p>Ayanna Hamby Office Assistant 1</p> <p>Pratheep Sakas Administrative Assistant 1</p> <p>Katharine Furman Administrative Assistant II</p> <p>Cindi Denick Supervising Accountant, Bureau of Fiscal Management</p> <p>Vilda Mayuga Deputy Secretary of State for Economic Opportunity</p> <p>Joseph Ball Associate Attorney, Office of General Counsel</p>

<p><i>Executive Directors or Agency Representatives</i></p>	<p>Colin Dacres Chief Operating Officer, Westchester Community Opportunity Program, Inc.</p> <p>Nancy Warnock Director of Career and Family Services, Washington County Economic Opportunity Council, Inc.</p> <p>Wei Zhong Interim Director of Finance Albany County Opportunity, Inc.</p> <p>Lesley Gooch-Christman Executive Director Allegany County Community Opportunities and Rural Development, Inc.</p> <p>Nicole Laurin Executive Director Joint Council for Economic Opportunity of Clinton and Franklin Counties, Inc.</p> <p>Thomas Kim President & CEO Community Action Organization of Western New York, Inc.</p> <p>Eric Poulson Acting Executive Director Economic Opportunity Commission of Nassau County, Inc.</p> <p>Mary Beth Welch Director of Family Services People’s Equal Action and Community Effort, Inc.</p> <p>Justina Farris Finance Director Schoharie County Community Action Program, inc.</p> <p>Melrose Corley Deputy Director, Strategic Planning and Corporate Programs Economic Opportunity Commission of Nassau County, Inc.</p> <p>Michele McKeon Chief Operating Officer Regional Economic 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>Jerome Underwood President/CEO, Action for a Better Community, 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>Katherine Maciol President/CEO Commission on Economic Opportunity for the Greater Capital Region, Inc.</p> <p>Isabell St. Clair Senior Accountant Regional Economic Community Action Program, Inc.</p> <p>Valerie Stock Systems Compliance Coordinator Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc.</p> <p>Jenna Valentine Data & Assessment Coordinator Community Action Organization of Western New York, Inc.</p>	<p>Renee Hungerford Executive Director, Community Action Agency of Orleans and Genesee, Inc.</p> <p>Rosemary Shader Executive Director, Wyoming County Community Action, Inc.</p> <p>Nancy Turo Comptroller, People’s Equal Action and Community Effort, Inc.</p> <p>Dawn Meyer Finance Director Wyoming County Community Action, Inc.</p> <p>Lana Yuen Interim Assistant Director of Finance Albany County Opportunity, 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>Demetri Alberti Deputy Director/Personnel Director Delaware Opportunities, Inc.</p> <p>Mary Randall Director, Grants & Programs PathStone Corporation</p>
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Attendance: Total of 13 of 17 CSBG Advisory Council members in attendance, a quorum was established at 11:38am.

Welcome – Denis Wilson, CSBG Advisory Council Board Chairperson

Denis Wilson, Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Advisory Council Board Chairperson opened the meeting and welcomed the members and guest joining the meeting the CSBG Advisory Council meeting. He introduced Christopher White, Associate Commissioner for the Future of Work, Department of Labor.

Christopher White, Associate Commissioner for the Future of Work, Department of Labor

Christopher White provided a presentation regarding a survey conducted by the Department of Labor, focusing on business and job seeker, and spoke of the changing dynamics in the workplace and employment.

Part one of the survey discussed three central themes found in those surveys responded to by businesses: (1) a critical need for skilled and entry-level workers, (2) the need for stronger regional workforce connections, and (3) more support needed in the recruitment process. Key findings noted that businesses in the next 12 to 24 months, will be focusing on digital and robotic automation. This will necessitate additional training programs for existing and new employees. The survey identified positions/roles that are most difficult to fill, identifying the need for more entry-level and highly skilled positions. The survey identified reasons why these positions/roles are difficult to fill, and what causes that prevent hiring. Businesses were asked what methods of recruitment tools they found useful, word of mouth and networking through current employees had the highest percentage. The key finding from this question is to identify who is being left out of the recruitment process, specifically in areas of diversity and inclusion. The survey recognized common non-technical (communication skills, self-motivation, and problem-solving/critical thinking) and technical (computer literacy and software proficiency) skills as skills lacking among job applicants and new employees. These work skills typically have not been included as part of training curriculums. This problem poses challenges for employers in the recruitment of workers. There is a huge need for better connections to job referrals within the Workforce/Training Ecosystem. Businesses were asked when was the last time they heard from a local training provider, most businesses indicated 5 years or longer or in some cases, never.

Part two of the survey discussed three central themes found in those responded to by job seekers: (1) workers desires and expectations are shifting, (2) industry redeployment is underway, and (3) significant need for training and upskilling. The survey asked job seekers what kind of work is being pursued, about half were open to both the same types of work and or different work. The survey identified why job seekers are looking for different types of work, highest percentage being salary and work-life balance. The survey highlighted industry shifts in retail, food service, healthcare, and public administration. Today's workforce wants flexible schedules/remote work options and promotional opportunities. The survey revealed job seekers feel their age and believe having the needed the right education degree or credential, is a barrier to obtaining employment. Job seekers want more training in computer skills.

Lastly, the presentation discussed several Department of Labor initiatives that are in process to help businesses and job seekers. The Department of Labor can filter geographically job seekers by skill and send out job postings, hosting virtual Career Fairs, and building a Virtual Career Center. DOL has rolled out Coursera (on-line training tool), daily virtual workshops (resume writing and interview best practices). In addition, it can help access Tax Credits and Hiring Incentives; access Training Funds; fund Disability Resource Coordinator positions at the local workforce boards. Mr. White also informed the Council that DOL is partnering with the Gun Violence Prevention, initiative, as well as providing provide labor market trends information; DOL will be involved with forecasting Cannabis Workforce Development industry. He stated that he is willing to work with the CAA network to help meet the needs of employers and job seekers.

- Questions or comments received:

- Christopher White addressed the following comments/questions from the WebEx chat function:

- Mary Randall (Pathstone): Digital literacy doesn't mean that they have business skills. It is much more comprehensive. It will vary from industry to industry.
- Andrew: Noted the problem that new hires can ghost employers; they will disappear, and employers are forced to terminate them and then they file for unemployment benefits. Christopher White: indicated this has spiked during the Pandemic. He advises employers to report this to Department of Labor, as they are investigating these situations. The goal is to reengage with job seekers to find out why this occurs and help address with supports, such as childcare, financial, or assistance with legal issues. Having data has been helpful with planning the future.
- Thomas Kim: Is there a specific reason Coursera was chosen vs. EdX? Christopher White explained the process in choosing Coursera and developing the partnership. Data is showing that people are using it.
- Rosemary Shader: What DOL program area/department will the regional Disability Resource Coordinator be under? Christopher White: The program will be running locally, it is overseen by our Disability Office, as they have the expertise to offer services.
- Lesley Gooch-Christman: Community Action Agencies usually employ entry level staff, train and development, the employees then move to public jobs due to pay and benefits. We really are an amazing training opportunity and wonder if there is any way we can get compensated for this? Christopher White: Any of those training opportunities are great. CAAs should see if there are funding opportunities available. Data has shown that all industries are experiencing companies are hiring and staff leaving for bigger companies that hire at higher wages and benefits. The bigger question is, how can smaller companies identify and elevate what is working and replicate the successes.
- Maurice Reid: How can community colleges, CUNY and SUNY benefit from your survey follow up? Christopher White: DOL has been engaging SUNY and CUNY, have number of different initiatives in the works. CUNY/SUNY has partnered with DOL and Coursera and has helped look at infusing the professional skills needed to be successful, as a holistic approach.
- Jeffrey Lewis: How much of an impact was childcare on people not going back to work? Christopher White: Huge, and still is. Especially gender wage gap, there a several conversations and initiatives at the federal and state level to address the issue.
- Michelle McKeon: Now that we know the reasons why people are leaving or not working, what are the solutions? Christopher White: Business groups are interested in pushing their members to be more involved and interested in understanding of the needs of job seekers. There is no single answer. Solutions may be as individualized as the job seeker. Businesses seem to be working harder to attract job seekers. Businesses are changing their traditional practices to be as flexible as possible. This is a global wide issue affecting every industry.
- Charles Quinn: Found it interesting that employees listed age discrimination but no mention of gender and/or racial bias. Were those options given to answer the questions? Christopher White: The options were given; however, the results were so low they were not statically relevant. It was a surprise not to see disabilities as a barrier.
- Charles Quinn: The report indicated 9% of employers stated wages are not high enough, and over 30% said unrealistic wages is a hurdle to hiring. Those seem to be wrong, low wages are one of the drivers that impacts the labor market. The Advisory Council should be addressing what can be done, centered around CSBG, in helping the network to retain and hire employees, possibly by setting a floor salary and access to state benefits. Christopher White: DOL has not done a survey this extensive before, it has helped to reflect based on actual data.

Denis Wilson, CSBG Advisory Council Board Chairperson

Denis Wilson thanked Christopher White for his presentation. Christopher White offered to circulate resources based on what he covered, with all the survey data that provide the details of the presentation. Denis Wilson introduced Manuel A Rosa, Director, Division of Community Services, for updates in the Division.

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

Manuel Rosa thanked all of the Executive Directors for taking the time to meet individually, the conversations have been informative toward better serving the network. DOS recently met with New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), who informed DOS of a series of workforce development opportunities. Primary opportunities include clean energy, internships, efficient heating systems, HVAC, and building operations and maintenance. There will be more information coming from NYSERDA, they are interested in partnering with the CAAs.

The 2022-2023 NYS CSBG State plan was accepted by HHS on September 28, 2021, which is effective October 1, 2021, through September 30, 2023. The recent update from Office of Community Services (OCS) regarding the Continuing Resolution (CR), DOS is expecting funds and waiting for the Notice of Grant Award (NGA). Under the CR the 200% Federal Poverty Level (FPL) is in effect for CARES and regular CSBG until December 3, 2021. More action will be required by Congress to extend the 200% FPL beyond December 3, 2021. A reminder to submit CARES amendments if needed, there is a hard deadline of September 30, 2022, to spend the CARES funds. Reach out to your Program Analyst for assistance.

He concluded by thanking Jackie Orr, Executive Director of New York State Community Action Association, and the members of the network that participated in the Monitoring Workgroup. The first meeting was held on, October 26, 2021. The intent of the workgroup is to examine how DCS monitors using a holistic approach. The workgroup will be meeting monthly through June 2021, looking at the continuation of the monitoring tools used by DCS (TRACS, ACROS and the GSCR's). The next meeting will be November 8, 2021.

Denis Wilson, CSBG Advisory Council Board Chairperson

Denis Wilson acknowledged there were no follow up questions or comments for Manuel Rosa and introduced Nikoletta Battistoni, Community Service Program Analyst 4, Division of Community Services.

Nikoletta Battistoni, Community Service Program Analyst 4

Nikoletta Battistoni updated the Advisory Council that DOS is looking at a training calendar for 2022. Training provided will have a DOS centric approach. On November 4, 2021, a calendar invite has gone out to the network for a training on the Unaudited Financial Statement process. Other trainings will include Language Access, Diversity and Inclusion, and Fiscal Best Practices. Any other ideas for needed training should be sent to the DOS shared mailbox.

Denis Wilson, CSBG Advisory Council Board Chairperson

Denis Wilson acknowledged there were no follow up questions or comments for Nikoletta Battistoni and introduced LuAnn Hart, Director, Bureau of Fiscal Management.

LuAnn Hart, Director, Bureau of Fiscal Management

LuAnn Hart acknowledged DOS has not received the 2022 Notice of Grant Award (NGA), as of yet. Once DOS receives the NGA, it will take a couple of days to process for the contracts that have been executed in proportion to the funds made available through the NGA. She anticipates it being around 15% but will have a better idea once the NGA is received. In addition, fiscal is in the field and monitoring expenditures over the past year. They will be working with the grantees to review contract and conduct further reviews.

Denis Wilson, CSBG Advisory Council Board Chairperson

Denis Wilson acknowledged there were no follow up questions or comments for LuAnn Hart and introduced Tina Zerbian, Executive Director, Cattaraugus Community Action, and Jackie Orr, Executive Director, New York State Community Action Association for an update on the Fatherhood Project.

Tina Zerbian and Jackie Orr: Fatherhood Project

Tina Zerbian (Chief Executive Officer, Cattaraugus Community Action, Inc.) and Jackie Orr (Executive Director, New York State Community Action Association) gave a presentation on the pilot Fatherhood Project, involving 3-counties in NYS: Cattaraugus County, Allegany County, and Steuben County. The pilot aimed to prove that a Fatherhood Program belongs in the Community Action network. The intended goal of the pilot was to examine how the Fatherhood Connection curriculum could expand beyond the 3 counties and to research the efficacy of the curriculum. The Fatherhood Project focused on a two-generational and multi-generational approach, addressing the causes and conditions of poverty. The research has shown Fatherlessness impacts the child's education, mental health, contact with the justice system and the likelihood to continue in poverty.

Specific to the pilot Fatherhood Project, in terms of sustainability, the Fatherhood Connection set out to train local providers to deliver the curriculum. The curriculum, developed by Reginald Cox, would be delivered in several 13-week sessions across the 3 counties, while engaging local social service providers and probation/court system. The goal was to establish an evidence base toward program outcomes, such as improved parenting and co-parenting, improved employment and money management, and improved healthy relationships, from a holistic, wrap around referral approach. The pilot project partnered with Dr. Christopher St. Vil, Assistant Professor, University at Buffalo, School of Social Work, to analyze the data and establish an evidence base that could be expanded utilizing other trainers delivering the Fatherhood Connection curriculum.

The work of the Fatherhood Connection has been recognized by the Council on Children and Families and has provided a grant for the Fatherhood Connection to connect the community action agencies, identify regional and state trends, provided support to fatherhood programs, and conduct an annual state fatherhood convening. New York State Community Action Association (NYSCAA) took the lead in the Fatherhood Coordination Initiative, which consists of ten community action agencies across NYS. This is modeled after the NYS Birth Through Five Home Visiting Coordination Initiative. Each community action agency involved will be conducting a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis, to look at fatherhood resources in each region and work toward building relationships with those resources and identify priorities across NYS.

Fatherhood is identified in the NYS 2022-2023 CSBG State Plan as a priority, which would provide Department of State (DOS) an opportunity to connect with other state agencies and move the Fatherhood Initiative across the state, by supporting the efforts to develop programs in the community action agencies.

- Questions or comments received:
 - Maureen Abbott: How were the ten community action agencies selected? Tina Zerbian indicated the agencies selected already been involved in locating and engaging fatherhood initiatives and expressed an interest in participating in initiatives that could serve individuals beyond their service county.
 - Miguel Santos: How do men get referred and under what circumstances would they be referred? He suggested some referrals be sent from Catholic Charities. He is located in Erie County and interested in the Facilitators training. He would be able to assist with the Spanish speaking population, not only in Buffalo but also in Dunkirk, which is heavily populated with individuals whose primary language is Spanish. Western NY, Buffalo, Niagara Falls and the surrounding areas are, and will continue, to receive a large number of refugees. He

stated that in his church, there are fathers that have problems and end up in the family court system because of the way they rear children. Given the high number of immigrants, who may not understand the laws that govern parenting, Mr. Santos recommended providing parent education. Miguel suggests taking a look at how this can be introduced to Native American (fathers) reservations in NY. Tina Zerbian responded to Miguel Santos regarding referral, fathers are referred in several different ways for example word of mouth, and some referrals come from Department of Social Services, Child Protective Services, Probation, and local jails. Cattaraugus Community Action has connection to the Seneca Nation and provides fatherhood group on the Allegany territory. Regarding interest in becoming a trainer/facilitator, Tina will connect Miguel with Reggie Cox. Tina agrees offering these services to the refugee population would help them integrate. Miguel would like to explore how the men at the county jails would be referred and welcomes the opportunity to expand.

Denis Wilson, CSBG Advisory Council Board Chairperson

Denis Wilson acknowledged a very insightful and informative presentation, there were no further follow up questions or comments for Tina Zerbian and/or Jackie Orr on the Fatherhood Project. Denis reintroduced Jackie Orr, to present an update from NYSCAA.

Jackie Orr, Executive Director, New York State Community Action Association

Jackie Orr referred to the report given to the Advisory Council and wanted to highlight the following updates:

- E-learning platform on the NYSCAA website has 8 courses are available. NYSCAA is currently working on building a course for the Community Action Plan. This has been in collaboration with Jessica Lowell, from DOS, and community action staff from the network. This will guide agencies how to complete and build their Community Action Plan. Also, currently working on an interactive ACES Training, with certified Master ACES Trainers, projected to be completed at the end of the month. There are over 1500 active eLearners using the courses provided and have completed at least 1 of the eLearning courses.
- Updates provided on the List-Servs (Affinity groups), the Human Resources and Finance group has been re-energized by using the email groups. NYSCAA is look at offering different types of professional development opportunities for those groups.
- NYSCAA competed their Annual Conference: October 6th, 12th and 14th. There were 250 attendees for the conference, 3 keynote speakers, 19 sessions that NYSCAA coordinated. Overall comments for the conference were positive about the virtual experience.
- Completed Emerging Leaders Institute (ELI), this is a 2-year commitment, engaging the participant in a project at their agency involving the ROMA Cycle.
- Completed Executive Director seminar, in person, although there is technology available to conduct portions remotely.
- NYSCAA received CARES funding from DOS to prepare, prevent and/or respond to COVID. NYSCAA has partnered with University of Buffalo to provide Motivational Interviewing course. It is anticipated to train 40 participants. NYSCAA has completed a series of webinars center around COVID, focusing on mental health, managing stress, addressing health disparities in communities of color. The webinars will resume in 2022.
- NYSCAA is the lead for Region II (New York, New Jersey, and Puerto Rico), is planning to hold a Regional Convening on February 15, 2022; highlights will include Human Capacity and Community Transformation (HCCT) Initiatives across the region. Keynote speaker will be Dr. Lanikque Howard, Director, Office of Community Services, Administration for Children and Families. NYSCAA continues to hold regional webinars with NY, NJ, and Puerto Rico, to look at what needs, and trends are for the region. Puerto Rico Association has hired an Executive Director and has brought engagement back to the regional meetings.

- Questions or comments received:
 - Miguel Santos asked who is the representative for Puerto Rico? Jackie responded the Normary Silva, and she can share the contact information if interested.

Denis Wilson, CSBG Advisory Council Board Chairperson

Denis Wilson acknowledged there were no further follow up questions or comments for Jackie Orr. Denis asked if there was any old business to be addressed? Manuel Rosa acknowledged a quorum was established and indicated the Advisory Council could review and approve the minutes from the May 20, 2021, and July 29, 2021, Advisory Council. Denis asked for a motion to approve both the May 20, 2021, and the July 29, 2021, minutes. Motion made by Advisory Council member, Jeffery Lewis (Senior Vice President of Direct Services, PathStone Corporation), offered a motion to approve the minutes from May 20, 2021, and July 29, 2021, as presented, Advisory Council member, Michael Bobbitt (Deputy Commissioner, NYC Department of Youth and Community Development) second the motion. There was unanimous consent to approve the minutes from May 20, 2021, and July 29, 2021, motion carried.

Denis asked if there any old business or new business needed to be discussed and acknowledged none of the Advisory Council members brought any items up for discussion. The next meeting is to be determined. Everyone will be notified when it is scheduled. Denis thanked everyone for showing up and thanked all the presenters and asked for motion to adjourn the meeting.

Tina Zerbian made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Andrea Ogunwumi second the motion. There was unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting, motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45AM