

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

**CSBG Advisory Council Meeting
 Minutes**

Meeting date: **October 16, 2025**, at 10:00 am.

This meeting was conducted in person between sites in Albany, Buffalo, New York City, and via Webex Video Conference. Attendance was taken by verbal roll call.

<i>Members Present:</i>	<p>Albany</p> <p>Alan Jones, Vice-Chair Chief Executive Officer, Adirondack Community Action Programs, Inc</p> <p>Charles Quinn Chief Executive Officer, Regional Economic Comm. Action Program, Inc.</p> <p>Denis E. Wilson Executive Director/CEO, Fulmont Community Action Agency, Inc.</p>	<p>New York City</p> <p>Mike Bobbitt, Chair Deputy Commissioner, NYC Department of Youth and Community Development</p> <p>Yves Villus Executive Director, Erasmus Neighborhood Federation, Inc.</p>	<p>Buffalo</p> <p>Miguel Santos Advocate</p>
	<p>Virtual</p> <p>Laura Rossman, 2nd Vice-Chair Chief Executive Officer, Pro Action of Steuben and Yates, Inc.</p> <p>Michael Martin Executive Director, Native Americana Community Service of Erie and Niagara Counties, Inc.</p> <p>Tina Zerbian, First Vice-Chairperson Chief Executive Officer, Cattaraugus Community Action, Inc</p>		
<i>Members Absent:</i>	<p>Dan Maskin, Second Vice-Chairperson Chief Executive Officer, Opportunities for Otsego, Inc.</p>	<p>Andrea Ogunwumi Executive Director, EOP for Chemung & Schuyler Counties</p>	<p>Maurice Reid President, KenJam Consultants, LLC</p>

<i>Guest Presenters:</i>	Tim Nichols Executive Director/CEO, New York State Community Action Association		
<i>NYDOS Staff Present:</i>	Jackie Orr Director of DCS Nikoletta Battistoni Deputy Director of DCS Aimee Kollar Community Services Prgm. Analyst 3 Nancy Pfohl Community Services Prgm. Analyst 3 Sayla Eisner-Mix Community Services Prgm. Analyst 2 Katy-Rose Hanson Community Services Prgm. Analyst 2 Syed Ahmed Community Services Prgm Analyst 2 Jessica Lowell Community Services Prgm. Analyst 2 Theresa Walsh Community Services Prgm Analyst 2	Jessica Garneau Community Services Prgm Analyst 1 Dan McDonough Community Services Prgm Analyst 1 Colleen Bryar Community Services Prgm Analyst 1 Angelo Calbone Community Services Prgm Analyst 1 Jessica Sweet Community Services Prgm Analyst 1 Artemis Artoun Administrative Assistant I Kerry Shermer Administrative Assistant I	Anais Vasquez Associate Attorney, Office of General Counsel Jennifer Gallo Dir of Financial Admin Mindy VanAlstyne Fiscal Supervisor Paul Kinter Fiscal Representative Kathleen Richardson-Cross Fiscal Representative
<i>Executive Directors or Agency Representatives</i>	Ann Black Deputy Executive Director/CAE Fulmont Community Action Agency, Inc. Holly Green Schenectady Community Action Program, Inc	Nicole Laurin Chief Executive Officer Joint Council for Economic Opportunity of Clinton and Franklin Counties, Inc. Greg Richards Executive Director – Cortland CTY Comm. Action Program, Inc	Valerie Stock Chautauqua Opp. Inc. Jean Sexton Immediate Past Board President, Regional Econ. Comm. Action Program, Inc.
<i>Other attendees</i>	Kelley A. Roberson eScribers, LLC - Transcriber		

The meeting began at 10:04 am.

Artemis Artoun, Administrative Assistant 1, began the recording at 10:00 am. Transcription services provided by eScribers, LLC. The recording is made available on the website after the meeting.

I. ROLL CALL

Nikoletta Battistoni, Deputy Director of the Division of Community Services

Deputy Director Battistoni read the roll call and announcements.

8 members present at the beginning of the meeting, quorum was not established.

2 members expected.

II. WELCOME

Mike Bobbitt, CSBG Advisory Council Board Chairperson

Bobbitt opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Bobbitt expressed frustration with the lack of

quorum, thanked DCS Director Orr and Deputy Director Battistoni for tracking member attendance. Bobbitt acknowledged the Dept of State and NYS Secretary of State's presence at the recent NYSCAA Conference and his focus on CSBG and its network. Bobbitt noted the importance of CSBG funds during the current "interesting time nationally" [Federal Government Shutdown] and encouraged the Advisory Council to think and plan carefully. Bobbitt turned the meeting over to Orr and Battistoni.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Quorum was not established and the pending minutes from 9/12/2024 and 6/12/2025 were not approved.

IV. DIVISION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

Jackie Orr, Director, Division of Community Services

Orr gave an overview of the agenda for the Division of Community Services updates. (Slide 2 of the DCS Update PowerPoint)

- **CSBG FUNDING UPDATE**

Jackie Orr, Director, Division of Community Services

Orr noted that the federal government shutdown is in effect but noted that the HHS (Department of Health and Human Services) payment management system is still currently open. Federal Fiscal Year 2025 funds are being drawn down from the (FFY 2025) final notice of grant awards received in May 2025. (Slide 3 of the DCS Update PowerPoint)

- **STATE PLAN COMMENTS AND UPDATES**

Nikoletta Battistoni, Deputy Director of the Division of Community Services

Battistoni stated the Final State Plan and Monitoring Guide for 2026-2027 was approved by OCS (Office of Community Services) on Sept 29, 2025. Documents are posted on the website.

Battistoni thanked NYSCAA for putting together a workgroup for the Plan and Guide, which included Advisory Council members Denis E. Wilson, Charlie Quinn, Mike Bobbitt, as well as Anne Black, Nancy Turo, Liz Croft, Amy Turner, Lesley Christman, Corie Phetteplace.

Battistoni referenced the positive feedback and recommendations as listed on the DCs Update PowerPoint slides 4-8.

- **MONITORING: STAR**

Nikoletta Battistoni, Deputy Director of the Division of Community Services

Battistoni went over the State Triennial Assessment Review (STAR) updates. DCS will follow up with NYSCAA's monitoring workgroup after internal review with legal and executives. A training for staff and CAAs is expected in the Summer.

- **CONTRACTING UPDATES**

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

Kollar noted that DCS is wrapping up the final review of the 2026 contracts using the new review process.

DCS is looking for feedback from community action agencies on how new contract review process worked for them.

- **CSBG ANNUAL REPORT CHANGES**

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

Kollar shared the changes to the FFY (Federal Fiscal Year) 2025 CSBG Annual Report as outlined in PowerPoint slide 11. Kollar estimated there might be more changes before the next report.

Discussion clarified that these changes to the CSBG Annual report are from the federal Office of Community Services; Council members questioned if agencies should continue to collect data if CSBG is no longer collecting it, responses included that New York State collects certain data, and other grant opportunities use such data.

- **USING DATA**

Jackie Orr, Director, Division of Community Services

Orr presented on the NASCSP (National Association for State Community Services Programs) Data Collaborative with 5 other states, as shown in PowerPoint slide 12. The findings of the project were presented at the NYSCAA conference (October 7-10, 2025). Collected data and trends will be shared with the community action network and via the CSBG newsletter.

Bobbitt requested which other states are in the collaborative.
Orr replied, Kansas, Arkansas, Virginia, Wyoming, and one other.

V. NEW YORK STATE COMMUNITY ACTION ASSOCIATION (NYSCAA)

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

Nichols presented updates from NYSCAA on conferences, seminars, and staffing transitions. See the NYSCAA Report for further details.

Nichols noted that the NASCSP (National Association for State Community Services Programs) conference (September 24-26, 2025) allowed attendees to talk about the possibility of a government shutdown with national partners and how that might affect community action agencies. Nichols highlighted the presentation of NYS Secretary of State Walter Mosely at the NYSCAA conference (October 7-10, 2025) and the Secretary's sincere support of the work of community action agencies throughout the state. He included, NYSCAA will hold executive directors' seminar in a few weeks. The leadership will have the opportunity to strategize the priorities for 2026.

VI. Old Business

- **CSBG ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP UPDATES**

Jackie Orr, Director, Division of Community Services

Orr shared updates on membership

Resignations:

David Hahn-Baker

Dan Maskin – resignation effective as of 12/30/2025

Candidates In Progress-

Assembly Appointees:

Greg Richards, Executive Director – Cortland County Community Action Program, Inc
Brenda Soto Colon - PathStone

Gubernatorial Appointees:

Maureen Abbott, Retired Exec. Director of Tioga Opportunity, Inc.
Jean Sexton, Retired banking official and Regional Economic Community Action Program, Inc., immediate Past President of the Board.

A discussion was held regarding quorum, attendance, membership, and designation of delegates. Anais Vasquez, legal counsel, noted that these are state-wide issues affecting advisory councils.

VII. Current Challenges

- **PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND WORK OPPORTUNITY RECONCILIATION ACT OF 1996 (PRWORA)**

Orr noted that there have not been updates to the “preliminary injunction that pauses implementation of HHS’s (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) notice requiring verification of immigration status to determine eligibility for the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) and other programs” (PowerPoint slide 14).

Battistoni noted that (Advisory Council Member) MichaelMartin had joined the meeting, making member attendance 9, quorum not met.

VIII. New Business

No new business was discussed.

Follow-up questions and discussion regarding the data that is no longer being reported in the Annual Report. Orr responded that she would consult with NASCSP.

IX. Next Meeting:

Orr presented the next 4 meeting dates in 2026:

Thursday, February 5, 2026, at 10:00 am

Thursday, April 23, 2026 at 10:00 am

Thursday, July 23, 2026 at 10:00 am

Thursday, October 8, 2026 at 10:00 am

Bobbitt commended the discussion on quorum, and encouraged to give candidate recommendations to Orr, and suggested inviting partner organizations to present at Council meetings.

Miguel Santos followed up on a prior concern regarding incarcerated individuals remaining incarcerated when their sentence had ended due to not having a place to go after their term was completed.

X. Adjournment

The meeting concluded at 11:08 am.