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

CSBG Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, July 23, 2026

This meeting was conducted in person at the following locations:

- Albany: One Commerce Plaza, **99 Washington Ave, 15th Floor, Room 1510, Albany**, **NY** 12210
- Buffalo: **295 Main Street, 8th Floor, Suite 821 - Room 803, Buffalo, NY** 14203
- New York City: **123 William Street, 2nd Floor, Room 231 New York, NY** 10038
- and via Webex Video Conference

The meeting and recording began at 10:00 am. Transcription services provided by eScribers, LLC. The recording is made available on the Division of Community Services website the day after to conclusion of the meeting.

Members Present:		
Albany **Alan Jones,** **Vice-Chairperson,** Chief Executive Officer, Adirondack Community Action Programs, Inc **Charles Quinn** Chief Executive Officer, Regional Economic Community Action Program, Inc. **Denis E. Wilson** Executive Director/CEO, Fulmont Community Agency, Inc. **Jean Sexton** Advocate/Retired	**New York City** **Mike Bobbitt,** **Chairperson** Deputy Commissioner, NYC Department of Youth and Community Development **Yves Villus** Executive Director, Erasmus Neighborhood Federation, Inc. **Latressa Fulton** Director of Budget, City University of New York	**Buffalo** **Laura Rossman,** **First Vice-Chairperson** Chief Executive Officer, ProAction of Steuben and Yates, Inc. **Andrea Ogunwumi** Executive Director, EOP for Chemung & Schuyler Counties **Tina Zerbian,** Assistant Director, Institute on Trauma and Trauma Informed Care **Michael Martin** Executive Director, Native American Community Service of Erie and Niagara Counties, Inc. **Miguel Santos** Advocate/Retired

Guest Presenters:

Kimberly Maercklein, Consumer Education Community Liaison, Division of Consumer Protection
Tim Nichols, Executive Director/CEO, New York State Community Action Association

DOS Staff:

Jackie Orr, DCS Director
Nikoletta Battistoni, DCS Deputy Director
Aimee Kollar, DCS Associate Director
Rachel Eisenberg, DOS Office of General Council
Jessica Garneau, Program Analyst
Angelo Calbone, Program Analyst
Artemis Artoun, Administrative Assistant I
Syed Ahmed, Supervising Program Analyst
Alexa Roberts, Program Analyst
Sean Tulumello, Program Analyst
Colleen Bryar, Program Analyst
Dan McDonough, Program Analyst
Jessica Sweet, Program Analyst
Jill Peckenpaugh, Program Analyst
Katharine Furman, Administrative Assistant II
Mindy VanAlstyne, Supervising Accountant
Brendan Dunn, Associate Accountant
Paul Kinter, Fiscal Representative
Craig Howard, Fiscal Representative

Subrecipient Staff or Representatives:

Ann Black, Fulmont Community Action
Elizabeth Campbell, Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc
Frances Yen, NYC Department of Youth and Community Development
Shelley Smith, Washington County Economic Opportunity Council, Inc
Diane Hewitt-Johnson, Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc
Maureen Murphy, Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency, Inc
Nicole Laurin, Joint Council for Economic Opportunity of Clinton and Franklin Counties, Inc
Mary Jo Terrance, Mohawk Indian Housing Corporation
Kaleb Wilson, Community Action Program for Madison County, Inc
Linda Haas Manley, Community Action Partnership for Dutchess County, Inc
Marisa McClinton, Ulster County Community Action Committee, Inc
Valerie Stock, Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc
George Hurst, Economic Opportunity Commission of Nassau County, Inc
Kevin Dean, Oswego County Opportunities, Inc.

Other Attendees:

Angela Formica, Reporter, ESCRIBERS, LLC
Elizabeth Meeker, Coordinated Care Services, Inc.

I. ROLL CALL

Nikoletta Battistoni read general announcements and conducted Roll Call at 10:03 am.

- 10 Advisory Council members were present.

At 10:05 am an additional Advisory Council member joined the meeting.
At 10:17am an additional Advisory Council member joined the meeting.

Quorum was established at 10:17am, with 12 present members.

II. WELCOME

Mike Bobbitt, CSBG Advisory Council Board Chairperson
Chairperson Bobbitt opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.

III. PRESENTATION

Division of Consumer Protection (DCP)

Kimberly Maercklein presented an overview of the outreach, education, and additional services the Division of Consumer Protection (DCP) provides to help empower and protect New York State consumers from economic harm. DCP includes the following units:

- Consumer Assistance
- Utility Intervention
- Investigations
- Education and Outreach
- Consumer Policy

Kimberly Maercklein described how identity theft is on the rise, as well as how she and her team work with community-based organizations to educate New Yorkers through free educational events both in person and virtually.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from the September 2024 meeting were approved.

V. New York State Community Action Association (NYSCAA)

Tim Nichols, Chief Executive Officer, gave the following updates:

- **Regional Meetings held in partnership with the Department of State –** Denise Harlow, CEO of the National Community Partnership, and Corine Frank, Acting Director, Office of Community Services, presented at both meetings.
- **Emerging Leader Institute (ELI) –** The second virtual training is taking place today, 7/23/26.
- **Annual Conference –** The registration is strong. Tim Nichols encouraged folks to attend. National Partners will be in attendance to provide legislative updates.
- **Executive Directors Seminar –** The seminar will be held in early November, in Glens Falls, NY.
- **ROMA Trainings –** A three-day virtual training will take place next week. There is also a training scheduled for September and again before the end of 2026.

- **Affinity Groups –** Some groups are more active than others. NYSCAA is communicating and troubleshooting issues and will follow up with updates.
- **New staff member –** Emily Hampton, Communication and Events Coordinator, started recently.

Mike Bobbitt asked for more details on Affinity Groups. Tim Nichols clarified that the HR, Executive Assistants, and Finance Groups are most active. There is also a Community of Practice Data Group, which Tim would like to talk with DCS Director Jackie Orr about further.

Motion to accept NYSCAA's report passed.

VI. DIVISION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

Jackie Orr, DCS Director, and **Aimee Kollar**, DCS Associate Director of Contracting

- **CSBG Annual Report –** The 2025 Cleaning Memo was returned to OCS for a final review. To date, DOS has not received further feedback from the Office of Community Services.
- **2027 Contracts and timelines –** The contracts will be released to the entitlement agencies later than planned. They are anticipated to be released the week of August 18, 2026. DOS will provide a training in conjunction with Fiscal, as has been done in years past.
- **CSBG Work Plan (Attachment C) –** DOS has been working on an updated Work Plan, Attachment C. It will not be released with the 2027 Entitlement Contracts.
- **CSBG Budget (Attachment B) –** The budget work plan is under internal review; there are no major changes.
- **Annual Report Meeting survey –** This spring, DCS changed the process for Program Analysts reviewing the Annual Report information with the 47 Entitlement subrecipients. These have all been completed, and DCS sent a survey to all Entitlement subrecipients for their feedback. 42 responses from 33 individual Entitlement Subrecipients have been received. The responses will be reviewed, summarized, and sent out to all Entitlement subrecipients.

Niki Battistoni, DCS Deputy Director:

- **Community Relationships and Linkages Work Group –** DCS started an internal work group to build partnerships with other New York State offices, including the Department of Agriculture and Markets, Office for the Aging, Division of Consumer Protection, and Office of Children and Family Services, to benefit the Community Action network. DCS will send a survey to ask the CAA Executive Directors for suggestions.

Charlie Quinn suggested reaching out to the Department of Health as well and asked if there were members of the CAA network in the workgroup. DCS confirmed that the goal is to involve NYSCAA and CAA staff in the workgroup.

- **CSBG State Plan Overview –** Battistoni described information required in all sections of the 2028-2029 State Plan, gave a brief overview of timelines and activities in preparation for drafting the 2028-2029 NYS CSBG State Plan. DOS submits the state plan every two years, with the next plan due to HHS, Office of Community Services, by September 1, 2027.

VII. Old Business

Jackie Orr gave an update on filling the remaining Advisory Council vacancies.

- **Assembly Candidates**:
  - **Brenda Soto Colon** – PathStone, waiting for Assembly Speaker's letter

- **Gubernatorial Candidates:**
  - **Nicole Laurin,** Chief Executive Officer, Joint Council for Economic Opportunity of Clinton and Franklin Counties, Inc. received appointment paperwork.
  - **Andrea Hayes,** Chief Executive Officer, West Harlem Community Organization, Inc. Head Start, Early Head Start, and Family Care Network

VIII. Challenges

Jackie Orr asked Advisory Council Members to share any challenges they are experiencing.

Mike Bobbitt brought up the Federal Government's definition of Public Charge; please keep the network updated. DCS Director Orr confirmed they will.

Miguel Santos mentioned he attended a meeting hosted by ENLACE (formerly known as the Western New York Coalition of Farm Working Serving Agencies) in the Finger Lakes area, which has a large Latino/ Native American population. Many of the individuals are undocumented, and they live in rural areas. They speak indigenous (Native American) languages, but not Spanish, at home. Mr. Santos wanted to take the opportunity to bring it to the attention of the Advisory Council.

Charlie Quinn brought up the issues of late contracts with multiple New York State agencies, which makes it challenging for organizations to maintain services. Jackie Orr and Tim Nichols will look into any updates on previous legislation.

Mike Bobbitt announced Dads Take Your Kids to School Day, scheduled for September 17, 2026. It's the 20th Anniversary of the event. There will be an information session on July 30, 2026, and statewide registration will launch. Tim Nichols shared that NYSCAA has reached out to organizations that have participated in Fatherhood Initiatives in the past.

Laura Rossman asked if there were updates from the September 2024 meeting resolutions, including the use of other buildings for CSBGAC members' attendance locations. Deputy

Director Battistoni stated there are Community Action agencies willing to host these meetings. Battistoni will consult with DOS legal team regarding locations.
Regarding exploring the requirements to consider members' remote participation in extraordinary circumstances and meeting attendance to meet a quorum, Director Orr read the motion from the September 2024 minutes:

> "I resolve that we as a body encourage New York State to continue to explore ways to make the effective meeting of quorums for doing the business of the people including exploring the quorum standards as currently defined to potentially considering other options such as majority of members seated rather than member council which would then take out those vacancies and or exploring further the requirements of what would be needed to include remote participants under extenuating or extraordinary circumstances to be included as part of quorum and further to review their process for filling vacancies to try to find efficiencies to achieve that in a more expedient manner."

Jackie Orr confirmed she spoke with the Department of State, Executive Office, who in turn passed the information on to the Governor's office; however, no written letter was sent. Jackie Orr suggested that the CSBG Advisory Council could draft a letter to send to the Governor's Office.

Charlie Quinn made a motion to allow Chair Mike Bobbitt, Alan Jones, and Laura Rossman to sign the letter.

An amendment to the motion from Chair Bobbitt requesting that the letter be signed by the Chair and DCS Director. Jackie Orr will check if that is acceptable.

Charlie Quinn restated his motion to allow a letter to be approved by Chair Bobbitt, Alan Jones, Laura Rossman. The letter may be signed by Chairperson Bobbitt, along with DCS Director Orr, if allowed. Approved.

Tina Zerbian asked if there are additional meeting spaces available to CSBG Advisory Council members, they are shared with the members as soon as possible. Jackie Orr clarified that DCS will research other locations and share those locations with the Advisory Council at the next meeting.

Miguel Santos brought up the issue of incarcerated individuals being held after their release date because there is limited housing available in some communities. He saw this when he worked at NYS DOCCS, as well as the fact that he was the only Spanish-speaking employee at the Henrietta facility outside Rochester. Director Orr stated that she or Niki Battistoni will follow up with Mr. Santos.

IX. New Business:

Next Meeting:
Thursday, October 8, 2026, at 10:00 am

2027 Meeting Schedule – will be drafted and discussed at the next meeting

Adjournment
The meeting concluded at 11:40 am.