

COUNTY OF MORRIS
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF COMMUNITY & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES
P.O. Box 900
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HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL (HSAC)

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 25, 2025, Hybrid

- I.** Members convened at the Interfaith Food Pantry at 1 Executive Drive, Morris Plains, at 5:15 PM for a guided facility tour. The tour included several key areas that support the Pantry's mission to provide nutritious food and education to those in need.

Attendees visited the newly constructed dry storage warehouse, designed to enhance inventory capacity and efficiency. The group also explored the Nutrition Education Kitchen, which serves as a space for cooking demonstrations and classes that promote healthy eating habits. Additionally, the tour featured the Healthy Choices Marketplace, a client-choice shopping area that empowers individuals and families to select foods that best meet their dietary needs.

A notable feature of the facility was a large mural in the waiting area, shaped like a tree extending across two and a half walls. The mural showcased colorful leaves and birds, each representing different donation levels, symbolizing the community's generous support and partnership in the Pantry's work.

II. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

Ms. Roers, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:45 pm. A quorum was established, and attendance was as follows:

Board Members:

Pam Bennett-Santoro, Citizen Representative
Joann Bjornson, Family Promise – Vice-Chair
Donna Boyce, Citizen Representative (virtual)
Elaine, Muller, Citizen Representative
Kenneth Oexle, Citizen Representative

Joseph Pawelczyk, Citizen Representative (virtual)
Michelle Roers, United Way of Northern New Jersey – Chair
Diane Williams, JBWS

Board Liaisons:

Leena George, Morris County Division of Child Protection & Permanency
Kayla Gieger, Child & Family Resources (virtual)

Morris County Staff:

Amy Archer, Division Director of Community & Behavioral Health Services
Shawwna Bailey, Office of Aging, Disabilities, & Community Programming
Anna Marie Hess, Division of Community & Behavioral Health

Community Members:

Lorraine Hubbard, NORWESCAP
Kelsey Reenstra, NORWESCAP
Jeffrey Bashe
Shayne Daly, Township of Long Hill
Shannon Muti, Homeless Solutions
Steven Nagel, HomeSharing (virtual)
Sarah Rubinstein, Atlantic Health
Emily Savino, Mental Health Association

- III. Presentation** – Interfaith Food Pantry Network (IFPN) – Ms. Carolyn Lake
The Interfaith Food Pantry Network (IFPN) defines food insecurity as the lack of consistent access to sufficient, nutritious food, a problem affecting 7.8% of Morris County residents despite the area's wealth. Founded in 1994, IFPN is the most significant emergency and supplemental food provider in Morris County, offering innovative programs that connect clients to food and nutrition education and support services. Their mission focuses on improving health and well-being, educating the public about hunger, and forming strategic partnerships to address root causes. IFPN's Mobile Pantry Network serves 38 locations across the county. At the same time, other programs include senior deliveries, free farmers markets, food recovery partnerships, and special initiatives like Thanksgiving meal distributions and school supply drives. In 2024, IFPN distributed 2.3 million pounds of food and supported 41,000 household visits, relying on the help of over 300 volunteers. Clients are primarily working families and seniors, and intake processes ensure services reach those most in need. The facility features a new dry storage warehouse, a Nutrition Education Kitchen, a Healthy Choices Marketplace, and a vibrant mural symbolizing community support. Please see the presentation slides attached.

A. Questions & Answers

1. Is the 41,000 household visit figure duplicated or unduplicated clients?
 - a. The 41,000 household visits are duplicated. Every visit by the same household in different months is counted separately. IFPN serves about 5,000 unduplicated households each year.
2. What qualifies someone as demonstrating a need for the food pantry?

- a. If a person's income is equal to or below 185% of the federal poverty level, they automatically qualify. However, IFPN also accepts clients who may not meet that threshold but demonstrate need through their expenses versus income. No documentation is required; a general conversation about income and expenses assesses the need. Many clients are ALICE families (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) who do not qualify for government programs but still struggle to meet basic needs.
- 3. How would proposed federal budget cuts affecting USDA food support impact IFPN?
 - a. About 12-15 % of IFPN's food inventory comes from USDA programs. Loss of this funding would require IFPN to compensate for that gap. Smaller food pantries rely more on USDA food and could be more heavily impacted, possibly leading to reduced services or closures and increasing demand for IFPN.
- 4. Is there any coordination between IFPN and other local food distribution programs, like Nourish NJ or Senior Meals on Wheels?
 - a. Yes, but it is informal. IFPN and other groups coordinate referrals based on client needs. IFPN handles supplemental groceries; other agencies like Nourish NJ provide prepared meals. IFPN coordinates closely with 12 community pantry partners to avoid duplication.
- 5. Are people staying in hotels, like Code Blue shelter participants, eligible for IFPN services?
 - a. Yes, hotel guests are eligible. IFPN has special processes for hotel/motel residents and sometimes partners with Hope One and other agencies to deliver or arrange food pickup.
- 6. Does IFPN get their food directly from the state food banks?
 - a. IFPN is a member agency of the Community Food Bank of New Jersey based in Hillside. They receive two trailers of food from the food bank weekly.
- 7. How does IFPN handle the Thanksgiving food distribution with so many people?
 - a. Clients usually pick up Thanksgiving food (turkeys and trimmings) during their regular pantry visit to avoid extra trips. Special drive-through distributions were done during and after COVID-19, but standard practice now combines regular pantry visits and Thanksgiving pickups.

IV. Approval of February 25, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Mr. Oexle motioned to approve the February 25, 2025, meeting minutes, which was seconded by Ms. Bjornson. All were in favor, with no opposition and one abstention. Motion carried.

V. Open to the Public

- A. Mr. Bashe provided an update on a recent symposium hosted by the Housing Alliance of Morris County. The event was designed to support municipalities with information and resources for fulfilling their state-mandated affordable housing obligations. Although municipal turnout was lower than anticipated, the event was considered valuable, and efforts to assist municipalities with compliance and implementation of affordable housing requirements will continue. Mr. Bashe emphasized municipalities' ongoing challenges in addressing the housing crisis and reaffirmed the importance of continued advocacy and support.

VI. Chair Report – Ms. Roers

- A. There will be no HSAC meeting in April.
- B. The May meeting will feature a Child & Family Resources presentation focused on the current state of childcare services, including service availability and ongoing challenges in the field.
- C. State HSAC Meeting was held on March 7, 2025.
1. The Division of Children and Families highlighted statewide issues impacting children and families, including Medicaid coverage concerns. It was noted that approximately 50% of children currently served are supported through Medicaid funding, making national-level changes a local concern.
 2. The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Belonging provided updates on its continued efforts since its establishment in 2021. The department remains committed to promoting inclusive practices and service delivery.
- D. The next State HSAC meeting will be May 2, 2025, and there will be a presentation from the Office of New Americans.

VII. New Jersey Department of Human Services (NJ DHS) – no report

VIII. New Jersey Department of Children & Families – no report

IX. Division of Children Protection & Permanency – Ms. George

A. Morris East Local Office

Criteria	February 2025
Children <5-years old, Mother <30 -years old	4
Substance Affected Newborn Cases (aka Safe Care)	4
New	23
Reopens	36
Active	14
CPS	73
CWS	9

Domestic Violence	13
Sex Abuse	7
Unhoused	5
SPRU	17
Spanish Speaking	12
< 90 Day Re-opens	9
Substance abuse	18
Child on Child Sex Abuse	0
Unaccompanied Minors	0

B. Morris West Local Office

Criteria	February 2025
Children <5-years old, Mother <30 -years old	0
Substance Affected Newborn Cases (aka Safe Care)	2
New	44
Reopens	53
Active	15
CPS	102
CWS	17
Domestic Violence	24
Sex Abuse	3
Unhoused	0
SPRU	23
Spanish Speaking	17
< 90 Day Re-opens	8
Substance abuse	30
Child on Child Sex Abuse	0
Unaccompanied Minors	0

X. Staff Reports:

A. Human Services – Ms. Hess

1. Attended the MC Provider Resource Committee Meeting on March 12th.
 - a. There was a presentation by Ms. Janet Boetticher, NORWESCAP, Financial Empowerment Programs and Workshops they provide.

- b. Community Announcements
 - i. Dove Public Schools, Dover Liaison Department Presents: Getting to Know Dover
 - ii. Affordable Housing Opportunity – The Forum at Madison
 - iii. Vision Loss Association of New Jersey – Mental Health & Wellness Day
 - iv. Morris County Sexual Assault Center Support Groups
 - 2. HSAC Subcommittee Meeting planning has started. Doodle polls have been emailed to all appointed members. If you haven't responded, please do so by Friday, March 28th.
- B. Human Services – Ms. Archer**
 - 1. Applications for the HOME, Emergency Solution Grant (ESG), and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs are due by April 3, 2025, at 4:00 pm.
 - a. Submissions after the deadline will not be accepted.
 - b. Applicants are encouraged to use the office drop box; however, if items do not fit, they may call the office for assistance with hand-delivery.
 - c. Guidelines previously included in the ESG application, which required applicants to present at a public HSAC Meeting and obtain a signature from the Chair, are no longer in effect and have not been required in recent years.
 - d. ESG applications are reviewed directly by the HSAC and recommended to the CDRS committee for final decisions, avoiding conflict of interest.
 - 2. Ms. Mackenzie Fosco, formerly the Addictions Coordinator, has been reassigned as the Youth Services Coordinator. She will continue to fulfill duties in the Addictions role until a new coordinator is hired.
- C. Advisory Council on Aging, Disabilities, and Veterans (ACADV) – Ms. Bailey**
 - 1. The Meet the Veterans Service Office event, held on February 7th, spotlighted what the Veterans Service Office provides.
 - 2. The Department of Human Services Division on Aging Services held a listening session yesterday. Seeking input from NJ residents regarding the State's plans for services to older residents and their caregivers for 2025-2029. State Units on Aging, including DHS, must submit service plans to the US Administration for Community Living every four years. State Plans on Aging detail service needs, establish priorities, and outline how each state plans to utilize the federal Older Americans Act and State funding.
 - 3. Three (3) new programs funded this year:
 - a. Atlantic Health – Adult Day Care Respite
 - i. Located in Basking Ridge but serves Morris County Residents. Short-term respite is provided at the Adult Day Care Center.
 - b. Jewish Family Services – Friendly Visitor Program. Matches volunteers with seniors/disabled adults to prevent isolation.

- c. Community Hope—Veteran Emergency Housing Assistance. “Last Resort” funding for housing crises and utility assistance for shut-off services.
4. March is “National Nutrition Month.” In partnership with Employment Horizons (culinary training with a grant from Morris County), the Nutrition Department is hosting cooking demonstrations at Congregate sites in Roxbury, Parsippany, and Mt. Olive. It is also providing “at-home kits” to the seniors who participate so they can make the meals at home—partnering with the Youth Shelter to assemble those kits.
5. United Way, NORWESCAP, and AARP offer free tax preparation throughout Morris County. NJ also provides free online tax filing. This is for NJ Resident Income Tax returns. Visit the Division of Taxation Website for more information.

XI. Old Business

A. Seeds of Change Award Ceremony

1. Ms. Boyce reminded the committee that the Seeds of Change Award ceremony will held at the Morris County Commissioners meeting on March 26, 2025, with attendees gathering at 4:30 pm at the Administration & Records building in Morristown. Members were encouraged to attend and support the honorees.

XII. New Business

- A. Mr. Nagel, Executive Director of HomeSharing, announced that Ms. Jill Stein resigned after eight years of service on February 28, 2025. Ms. Lina Swarez has joined as her replacement and is in the process of onboarding.

XIII. Subcommittee Reports

No subcommittee meeting had occurred at the time of the HSAC Meeting. Members were reminded to respond to scheduling doodle polls to coordinate April meeting dates.

XIV. Advisory Committee Reports

A. Morris Sussex, Warren HIV Advisory Committee – Ms. Hess

1. Focused on revitalizing member engagement, addressing the evolving needs of the HIV community, and updating the committee’s objectives and current challenges.
2. The next meeting will be virtual on April 21st at 1:30 pm.

B. Mental Health Addictions Services Advisory Board (MHASAB) – Ms. Archer

1. MHASAB received a presentation from NewBridge Services focused on gambling and sports betting trends in New Jersey.
 - a. The rise of micro-betting, which allows individuals to place frequent, small bets (e.g., on the next play to score in a basketball game), increases the risk of financial hardship.
 - b. The prevalence of gambling exposure among youth, with reported gambling activity as early as age 10.

- c. In-game purchases (e.g., gems or upgrades) in online games were discussed as early forms of gambling behavior.
 - d. NewBridge screens all callers to their access line for gambling issues, regardless of the primary reason for contact.
 - e. Support is also extended to affected family members, not just the individual experiencing gambling addiction.
 - 2. The board did not have a quorum and was unable to vote on a pending modification
 - 3. Former Chair Mr. Chris Chernick was nominated as Vice-Chair and is expected to be voted in at the May meeting.
- C. Youth Services Advisory Council – Ms. Fosco**
- 1. The meeting was held on Thursday, March 20th, at 9:00 a.m. at 1 Executive Drive, with a virtual option provided.
 - 2. The January and February meeting minutes were approved.
 - 3. Ms. Carly Sinnott, Prevention is Key, presented survey results on youth substance use in Jefferson Township. The survey showed low usage rates, with youth reporting alcohol as the most used and accessible substance.
 - 4. Legislation was signed into law by Governor Murphy to change the name of the Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) to the Youth Justice Commission (YJC). The language change is to remove the negative connotation of the word “juvenile.” No parent refers to their child as a juvenile.” It’s a term associated with legal status, which has become a negative label.
 - 5. Morris County's average length of stay for youth in detention increased, and the number of youth detained for new charges decreased in 2023.
 - 6. Discussion ensued, emphasizing the role of schools and parents in identifying and addressing behavioral struggles in children before they become involved with the justice system.
 - 7. The next YSAC meeting will be held on Thursday, April 17th at 9:00 am.

XV. Partnership Announcements

A. Child Care – Ms. Gieger

- 1. The total number of registered Family Child Care (FCC) providers for March is 36, with three (3) prospects
- 2. NJEDA Child Care Facility Improvement Program Grant Phase 2 for registered FCC providers is a pilot grant of \$5 million to support NJ-registered FCC homes with the purchase of furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FFE) that will contribute to health, safety, and accessibility and/or high-quality learning environments.
- 3. Offered the All Our Kin business series for FCC providers in English 10.10.2024 – 12/19.2024.
- 4. Offering the All Our Kin business series for FCC providers in Spanish 02.06.2025 – 04.10.2025.

B. Continuum of Care (CoC) – Ms. Archer

1. Coordinated Entry Update:

- a.** A new Coordinated Entry entity has been selected to oversee the coordinated entry system for Morris County.
- b.** In the coming months, planning meetings will be held with the new agency and NJ 211, which currently manages the system, to discuss the transition process.
- c.** Additional details will be shared with the committee once available.

2. The next CoC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 22, 2025; updates will be provided at the next HSAC Meeting.

XVI. Adjournment

Mr. Oexle motioned to adjourn, and Ms. Williams seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anna Marie Hess
HSAC Coordinator



Welcome!

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Defining Food Insecurity

Hunger

A physiological state of pain or discomfort due to lack of food.

Food Insecurity

Lacking consistent access to enough food to maintain an active, healthy life

- Food insecurity puts people at risk of hunger
- Can be temporary or persistent
- Contributing Factors: Lack of affordable housing, low wages, loss of wages, illness and lack of transportation

True food security exists when all people at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active, healthy life. (Committee on World Food Security)

In 2024, The USDA estimates that 47.4 million people were food insecure

- This is a 7% increase from 2022 levels
- 13.8 million are children
- 1 in 7 older adults are food insecure
- 49 million people turned to emergency and supplemental food programs in 2022
- In Morris County, NJ which is consistently ranked one of the nation's wealthiest, food insecurity affects 7.8% of the population, or close to 40,000 people

*Feeding America



Who we are

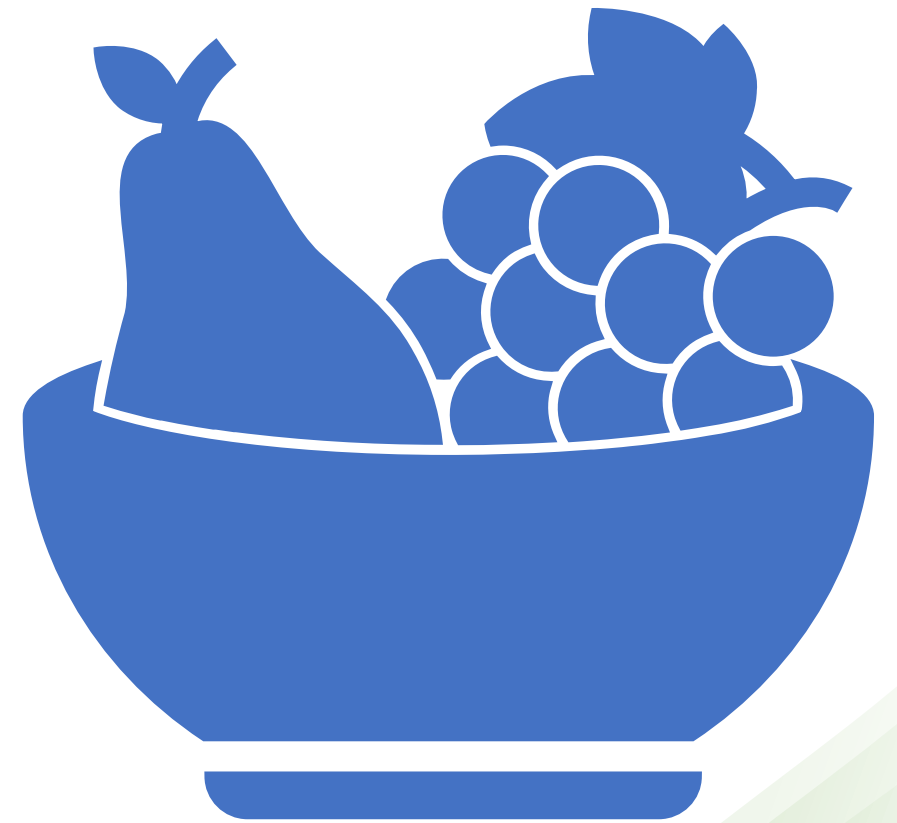


The Interfaith Food Pantry Network (IFPN) is the largest and most relied upon resource for emergency and supplemental food among Morris County residents in need. IFPN employs innovative approaches to hunger and food insecurity that improve the health and well-being of individuals and families by providing access to food, education, and related resources.



Our Mission

- To improve the health and well being of Morris County residents in need by providing access to food, nutrition education and related resources;
- To provide hands-on opportunities for neighbors to help neighbors;
- To educate the public about the issues of hunger in our area.
- To leverage strategic partnerships to innovatively address the root causes and impact of food insecurity



Mobile Pantry Network

- Our Mobile Network comprises 38 locations across Morris County that include community-based food pantries, senior housing sites, and food access sites operated by the County of Morris.
- In 20243 we continued to expand our mobile network and added new partners to increase access points. We partner with JBWS, Family Promise, Zufall Clinic, MCOHA, the Morris County Sherriff's Dept. Hope One, OTA, Navigating Hope, CCM, and Drew University.



Other programs we offer include:

Senior Programs: Home Delivery, SUN, Friendship Bags

Nutrition Education: Budget friendly recipes and nutrition information given to pantry guests, pantry partners, senior programs. On-site food demonstrations and videos for online delivery.

Free Farmers Markets: produce-only distribution sessions that take place in-between monthly visits at 2 Executive

Food Recovery: We partner with supermarkets to collect and redistribute food

Emergency Food: distributed to individuals and families sheltered in motels or experiencing homelessness

Thanksgiving: Holiday program providing more than 2,000 with turkeys and trimmings

We've Got Your Back: School supply program

Youth Education

2024 Statistics



2.3 million Pounds of Food Distributed (or the equivalent of 2.1 million meals)



41,000 Households visits to one of our pantries, home delivery or pantry partners

Referring Agencies

- Atlantic Health
- DAWN CIL
- Family Intervention Services
- Family Promise
- Head Start
- Homeless Solutions
- Hispanic Affairs
- Hope One (MC Sherriff's Dept)
- JBWS
- MHA Morris/Essex
- Morris County Housing Authority
- Morris County OTA
- NJ Aids Resources
- Navigating Hope
- Norwescap
- St. Clare's Behavior Health
- VNA
- Zufall Clinic

Volunteers

“neighbors helping neighbors”

- 317 volunteers contributed 20,607 hours in 2023.
- Their time is valued at valued at \$659,520 or the equivalent of about ten full-time staff people.
- We employ “staff” volunteers and one-time group volunteers





Mcifp.org