

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, January 27, 2026, Hybrid

I. Call to order, Welcome, and Introductions

Ms. Hess, HSAC Coordinator, called the meeting to order at 5:18 pm. A quorum was established, and attendance was as follows:

Council Members:

Pam Bennett-Santoro, Citizen Representative (virtual)
Donna Boyce, Citizen Representative (virtual)
Elaine Muller, Citizen Representative (virtual)
Kenneth Oexle, Citizen Representative (virtual)
Joseph Pawelczyk, Citizen Representative (virtual)
Michelle Roers, United Way of Northern New Jersey – 2026 Chair-Elect
Diane Williams, JBWS

Commissioner Liaison:

Christine Myers, County Commissioner Liaison to Human Services (virtual)

Morris County Staff:

Amy Archer, Division Director of Community & Behavioral Health Services, Mental Health Administrator
James Dillon, Division on Aging, Disabilities, and Community Programming
Kasey Errico, Morris County Director of Human Services
Anna Marie Hess, HSAC Coordinator

Community Members:

Olivia LeValley, Community Hope (virtual)
Sara Rubinstein, Atlantic Health (virtual)
Emily Savino, Mental Health Association, NJ4S (virtual)

II. Nominating Subcommittee

Ms. Hess reported that the Nominating Subcommittee recommended that Ms. Michelle Roers serve as Chair and Ms. Joann Bjornson serve as Vice Chair for the 2026 term. No additional nominations were submitted. Mr. Pawelczyk made the motion to accept the nominations as presented, and Ms. Williams seconded. The motion passed without opposition or abstentions.

III. Approval of November 18, 2025 Meeting Minutes – tabled

IV. Chair Report – no report

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

VI. New Jersey Department of Children & Families

Mr. Hager provided the following two documents (see attached) prior to the meeting via email;

- A. Our “Healing and Resilient New Jersey” initiative provides trauma-informed healing resources. As stated in this announcement, the “Resilience Room” is a good place to start.
- B. The “Technoference” document addresses how technology can interfere with healthy family relationships and offers helpful resources on our webpages, as well as a Public Service Announcement.

VII. Division of Child Protection & Permanency

Ms. George provided the following information via email prior to the meeting.

A. Morris East Office

Criteria	December 2025
Children <5-years old, Mother <30 -years old	4
Substance Affected Newborn Cases (aka Safe Care)	2
New	37
Reopens	28
Active	9
CPS	67
CWS	17
Domestic Violence	22

Sex Abuse	5
Unhoused	3
SPRU	18
Spanish Speaking	12
< 90 Day Re-opens	7
Substance abuse	21
Child on Child Sex Abuse	4
Unaccompanied Minors	0

B. Morris West Office

Criteria	December 2025
Children <5-years old, Mother <30 -years old	2
Substance Affected Newborn Cases (aka Safe Care)	1
New	33
Reopens	56
Active	6
CPS	82
CWS	20
Domestic Violence	13
Sex Abuse	3
Unhoused	0
SPRU	28
Spanish Speaking	7
< 90 Day Re-opens	7
Substance abuse	18
Child on Child Sex Abuse	1
Unaccompanied Minors	0

VIII. Staff Reports

A. Human Services

1. Ms. Hess advised that the Department's Grant-In-Aid (GIA), Child Abuse Prevention (CAP), and Navigating Hope (NH) funding review and contract award amounts are moving forward as planned. The internal work continues to keep the 2026 funding cycle on track.
2. Ms. Archer advised that Morris County's Point-in-Time (PIT) Count activities were underway and that Project Homeless Connect was scheduled for Wednesday, January 28, 2026, to consolidate multiple services in one location for individuals experiencing homelessness, with PIT surveys also being conducted onsite. Outreach teams would additionally complete community-based PIT surveys in the field – including at known encampments and other locations – while simultaneously offering connections and referrals to services.
3. Ms. Errico advised that the Board of County Commissioners allocate \$300,000.00 through the Office of Temporary Assistance (OTA) to strengthen the County's homelessness response, divided into \$150,000.00 for homelessness prevention and \$150,000.00 for emergency response. Outcomes to date include 26 households assisted with back rent to maintain housing, 52 households assisted with security deposits to overcome a final barrier to housing, 5 households assisted with the restoration of electric service, and 210 households assisted with emergency housing funds for shelter.
4. Commissioner Myers highlights the significance of this investment and stresses the need for the County to consistently track and document the outcomes associated with the funds. She expressed her support for maintaining this approach and emphasized that having clear performance data is crucial for accountability, future budget decisions, and effectively communicating the impact to stakeholders.

B. Council on Aging, Disabilities & Veterans (ACADV) – Mr. Dillon

1. The ACADV will hold a public meeting on Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at 1:00 pm.
2. On January 23rd, Morris County Surrogate Heather J. Darling discussed the role of the surrogate and key information executors should know during a lunch-and-learn at the Morris County Library.
 - a. Look out for the Morris County Library Lunch & Learn events hosted by the Offices of Morris County Human Services, go to <https://www.mclib.info/Home>
3. NJSave is an online application to help low-income older adults and individuals with disabilities save money. <https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/doas/services/l-p/njsave/>
4. SHIP provides free help to New Jersey Medicare beneficiaries who have problems with or questions about their health insurance. <https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/doas/services/q-z/ship/>

5. Adult Protective Services (ASP) – Morris County: 973.326.7282. If someone you know is 18 years of age or older, living in the community, and is the subject of abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation, contact ASP office. <https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/doas/services/a-k/aps/offices.shtml>

IX. Old Business

- A. Ms. Roes provided an update on the Child Care Subsidy Funding Freeze Advocacy Letter. The letter remains on hold due to recent state-level movement allowing Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR & R) agencies to resume processing new applications. The Council agreed to continue monitoring funding availability and processing capacity, with the drafted advocacy letter remaining available for reactivation if conditions change. Ms. Roes also thanked Commissioner Myers for sharing the letter with the Board of County Commissioners when it was prepared.

X. New Business

- A. Ms. Roers announced the availability of Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) services to ensure that eligible residents, particularly seniors and low-income households, are informed about and can access free tax preparation support.
- B. Ms. Williams announced that February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. JBWS shared plans to provide a public awareness toolkit for distribution. The discussion emphasized JBWS's ongoing education and outreach efforts aimed at preventing and raising awareness about teen dating violence. This includes programs and training offered in various settings, such as schools and other youth-serving organizations. HSAC members were encouraged to share the toolkit and related resources with their partners to enhance prevention messaging and connect youth and families with support services.

XI. Subcommittee Reports

A. Subcommittee on Women – Closed Session

Seeds of Change Award recipient presentation and vote

Ms. Roers asked that all nonvoting members and the public leave the meeting. Ms. LeValley, Commissioner Myers, Ms. Rubinstein, and Ms. Savino left the meeting.

Mr. Pawelczyk motioned, and Mr. Oexle seconded to begin the closed session of the meeting. There are no abstentions and no opposition. Motion carried.

According to P.L. 1975 Ch. 231 of the Open Public Meetings Act, the board closed the open portion of the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Return to Meeting

The meeting reopened at 6:09 p.m. No one returned to the meeting.

Actions Resulting from Closed Session

Ms. Roers stated that the Committee on Women met, reviewed, and recommended the recipients of the Seeds of Change Award. Let the record reflect that the Board voted to approve the request in closed session. Therefore, we need a motion to approve it in open session.

Mr. Pawelczyk motioned to approve the recommendations as discussed in the closed session. Mr. Oexle seconded the motion. All were in favor, with one abstention and no opposition. Motion carried.

XII. Advisory Committee

A. Mental Health Addiction Services Advisory – Ms. Archer

1. Officer nominations were presented in January; however, the committee was unable to vote because a quorum was not present. As a result, the vote was postponed until the February meeting, with the expectation that the officers will be confirmed once quorum requirements are met.
2. State mental health contract award notices were released later than anticipated, resulting in compressed timelines for agencies with direct state mental health contracts. Agencies have been informed that completed contracts must be submitted in February. The committee emphasized the importance of timely submissions to prevent disruptions in program operations or reimbursement.
3. A presentation from NJ4S (New Jersey Statewide Student Support Services), Mental Health Association, reported that eight schools in Morris County have not yet engaged with NJ4S services. Efforts to build relationships and conduct outreach are ongoing to bring these schools into the program, which offers tiered prevention and early intervention supports.

Additionally, the report highlighted service activity from July 1, 2025, to the present. Tier 1 community prevention and education efforts reached approximately 3,900 individuals, while Tier 2 evidence-based prevention interventions and small groups served 618 unique individuals. This data provides a snapshot of NJ4S's reach as engagement continues to grow across the county.

Several emerging and recurring priority areas are being observed in school environments, including suicide prevention, anti-bullying efforts, youth mental health, and family wellness. These themes were identified as beneficial for shaping future programming, training priorities, and cross-system coordination.

B. Youth Services Advisory

Ms. Fosko provided the following information via email prior to the meeting.

1. The meeting was held on Thursday, January 15th at 9:00 am at 1 Executive Drive with a virtual option provided.
2. Ms. Margaret Pittaluga and Mr. Dave Johnston were nominated as Co-Chairs of the YSAC for 2026.
3. Ms. Jodi McCarthy, Executive Director of Bloom and Grow Coaching, presented to the YSAC information about the organization's services. Bloom and Grow Coaching is a non-clinical life coaching and mentoring agency providing services to at-risk youth (8+), young adults, and adults. The agency serves Sussex, Morris, Warren, Somerset, Hunterdon, Bergen, and Passaic Counties. Support is often coordinated with clinical providers, case workers, and probation officers, and appointments are scheduled 24-48 hours after receiving a referral. There are 20 life coaches/mentors on staff, with Spanish-Speaking support available. Common goals the agency supports include employment navigation, independence building, money management, community engagement, and volunteer involvement. Services include both 1:1 mentoring and support groups and are offered on a sliding scale.
4. The County was notified by the Youth Justice Commission (YJC) that the 2026 Comprehensive Plan and Application was approved with no revisions needed. The 2026 JDAI Innovation Plan and Application was also approved by the YJC.
5. The next YSAC meeting will be held on Thursday, February 19th at 9:00 am.

XIII. Partnership Announcements

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

1. The first Continuum of Care (CoC) meeting of 2026 will be held in February. In preparation, the CoC Leadership Committee is developing membership nominations to address current vacancies created by term expirations, with the goal of maintaining full representation and continuity in CoC governance and planning.
2. An update was also provided on the CoC NOFO process. The CoC Executive Committee voted to proceed with automatic renewals for currently funded CoC programs and not to reallocate funding at this time. Morris County is coordinating closely with Monarch (consultants) to monitor federal guidance, track key deadlines, and ensure submissions remain compliant and on schedule.

XIV. Adjournment

Mr. Pawelczyk motioned adjourn, and Mr. Oexle seconded the motion. All were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Marie Hess, HSAC Coordinator