

Chafee Advisory Group Meeting December 2, 2025

Minutes

Attendees: Laura Albanese, Nancy Andre, Anthony Cameli, Mary Coogan, Hailey D'Elia, Filomena DiNuzzo, Patricia Jordan, Niambi London, Randi Mandelbaum, Jonathan Marsh, Kim Mason, Stephanie Mills, Kelly Nestor, Kevin Schafer, Ingrid Badilla, Rachel Barth, Alicia Frye, Eleanor Gilliam, Safa Simmons, Ifeanyi Pole, Candice Webb, Justin Wang, Barbara Washington

Absent: Tanya Berry, Josefina Ewins, Konniesha Moulton, Dan Rhoton, Kasey Vienckowski

I. Welcome & Introductions - Niambi London

II. Meeting Minutes Approval

- The Chafee Advisory Group did not request any edits to the September 16, 2025 Minutes; these Minutes will be posted on DCF's website.

III. Department of Education and CP&P Data Presentation - Jonathan Marsh

Student Population Trends

- Decline in the number of students in out-of-home placement over recent years.
- Many students in placement are in elementary school.

Chronic Absenteeism

- Absenteeism rates for students in out-of-home care compared to state and national averages.
- Variation in absenteeism by county.
- Some students are absent for a significant portion of school days.

Promotion & Grade Repetition

- Overall promotion rates for students in placement compared to national averages.
- Instances of 12th graders repeating the grade.

Special Education

- Higher proportion of students in placement receiving special education services compared to NJ students.
- Cognitive impairment services as a notable category within special education.

Gender Insights

- Gender distribution among students in placement.
- Comparison of absenteeism, promotion, and special education by gender.

Race and Ethnicity Insights

- Breakdown of racial and ethnic categories among students in placement.
- Comparison of absenteeism, promotion, and special education across racial groups.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

- Students in placement receiving LEP services compared to state and national averages.
- LEP service access among Hispanic and other racial groups.

Next Steps

- Plan to merge education data with NJ Spirit for deeper analysis.
- Ability to analyze duration in care for students receiving special education confirmed.

IV. Chafee Survey Review - Justin Wang

Survey Development

- NYTD+: Expanded version of the federal NYTD survey, incorporating lived experience expert feedback.
- Chafee Youth Survey: New tool for youth ages 14–26 who have been in foster care.
- Plan to merge NYTD+ and Chafee Youth Survey into one streamlined survey for longitudinal tracking via NJ Spirit IDs.
- Goal: Remove redundant questions, simplify language, and add skip logic for efficiency.

Administration Details

- Platform: SurveyMonkey (exploring auto-save feature).
- Incentives for youth participation.
- Completion rates in NY: 55% (recent), 60% (prior).
- Suggestion: Increase completion by hosting group events (e.g., “survey pizza party”).

Content Revisions Discussed

- Employment: Condense/remove unnecessary questions (Q7, Q12, Q13, Q14).
- Finances: Add credit score question; separate educational services questions; reword Q32.
- Education: Remove duplicate questions (Q26, Q27).
- Permanent Relationships: Remove Q33; keep Q34 & Q38 (condense options).
- Housing: Condense options; add “in danger of being homeless”; remove Q42, Q44, Q50.
- Family/Legal Status: Reword section title; revise Q57.
- Substance Use: Simplify; differentiate “abuse” vs. “exploring”; keep youth-added Q66 & Q67.
- Health Care: Combine Q73 & Q74; ask about coping mechanisms.
- Other: Remove Q80, consider removing Q83 & Q84; clarify foster care agency references; revise permanency planning language; change “foster care” to “out-of-home placement.”
- Scales: Include Brief Resilience Scale (optional); consider excluding additional scales to keep survey short.

V. DCF Updates

- Office of Housing - Barbara Washington
 - The FYI initiative is currently active in eight jurisdictions and working to expand in two additional (Brick Township-Ocean County & Montclair-Essex) over the next several months).
 - DCF OOH is serving over 150 youth with 90 housed.
 - DCF OOH was recently awarded FYI voucher via HUD in Atlantic County with the Pleasantville Housing Authority.

- Below list of Housing Authorities with active partnerships:
 - Camden
 - Newark (Essex County)
 - Monmouth
 - Asbury Park (Monmouth County)
 - Hunterdon
 - Jersey City (Hudson County)
 - Elizabeth (Union County)
 - Pleasantville (Atlantic County)
- DCF OOH's Connect to Home (CTH) Manual has been completed.
- The next DCF Statewide Housing Session is on December 9, 2025 at 2pm

- Enlightenment Program Update-Jon Marsh
 - Two studies have been approved by peer review studies and will be published.
 - Connects youth with a mentor that also has lived experience.
 - Jon will present this information at the March 2026 CAG meeting.

VI. Closing

- Announcements, resources, etc.
 - OAS will send a survey to the Chafee Advisory Members (CAG) to obtain their 2026 meeting availability. The first 2026 CAG meeting will take place in March 2026.

All ideas reflected are not endorsed by the agency.