



**Chafee Advisory Group Meeting  
June 4, 2024**

**Minutes**

Attendees: Niambi London, Jonathan Marsh, Nancy Andre, Tanya Berry, Anthony Cameli, Mary Coogan, Arian Craig, Hailey D'Elia, Filomena DiNuzzo, Josefina Ewins, Patricia E. Jordan, Randi Mandelbaum, Stephanie Mills, Kelly Nestor, Kasey Vienckowski, Rachel Barth, Alicia Ramirez, Ifeanyi Pole, Safa Simmons, Candice Webb, Emel Altomari, Tourae Freeman, Barbara Washington

Absent: Konniesha Moulton, Dan Rhoton

- I. Welcome & Introductions
- II. Meeting minutes approval
  - a. No edits to March 2024 CAG Minutes
  - b. CAG approved revising the CAG Bylaws
- III. Agency Spotlight- Hailey D'Elia

NYTD Reviewer Role:

- Hailey serves as a National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) Reviewer for the United States Children's Bureau (Children's Bureau). To qualify to serve as a NYTD Reviewer you must meet specific requirements.
- NYTD Reviewers are trained by the Children's Bureau.
- NYTD Reviewers visit designated states to conduct onsite reviews of NYTD files and interviews/focus groups with stakeholders.
- NYTD Reviewers also author NYTD briefs and lead NYTD Trainings.
- NYTD Reviewers draft the NYTD reports for states' reviews.

Strategic Sharing:

Through Hailey's work with the Urban Institute in Washington, D.C., she is developing "Strategic Sharing" videos.

- The opportunity for including youth with "lived experiences" is in high demand.
- These Strategic Sharing videos would contain relatable dialogs so people would be able to view scenarios that young people may be asked to talk about.
- More awareness is needed for the researcher and practitioner. Hailey often says youth with lived experience need to be a part of the research project at every level.
- Hailey asked us to consider foster youths' stories can be used in an ethical way.

- Once the Strategic Sharing video project is funded, Hailey will conduct a focus group.
- The Strategic Sharing video project is still under development.

#### IV. Adolescent Program Overview and Updates

##### a. LifeSet – Rachel Barth and Alicia Ramirez

- LifeSet
  - LifeSet was created by Youth Villages. LifeSet Program started in NJ in 2020 as a pilot for youth 17-21. LifeSet now serves youth ages 17-23.
  - LifeSet is an intensive case management service.
  - LifeSet Specialists meet weekly with youth in supporting their need/s.
  - There are four LifeSet providers.
    - Acenda
    - Preferred Behavioral Health
    - Catholic Charities of Metuchen
    - CarePlus
  - LifeSet is located in other states (i.e. New York, Philadelphia, Seattle Washington)
- Evaluation – Young Adult Services Study (YASS)
  - Randomized controlled trial (RCT) evaluation led by The Urban Institute.
  - The study began in the fall of 2021 and will end in 2026.
  - A total of 661 youth were randomized to participate in YASS between 2021 - 2023 and those youth were asked to complete a survey soon after they were selected.
  - Follow up survey collection just started in March 2024 and will continue through May 2025.
  - Full Evaluation report will be completed in the Fall of 2026.
- Data
  - Demographically, LifeSet youth are very similar to NJ youth open with CP&P.
  - Most Young Adults who enrolled were 18 years old.
  - Educational attainment, access to community resources, banking & money management, and developing healthy relationships were the most common needs of Young Adults who were referred to LifeSet.
  - LifeSet uses a unique screening process in speaking with youths' CP&P workers.
- Program Model Fidelity
  - Overall, services are currently meeting program fidelity expectations and services are being delivered with high quality.
  - Program Model Review

- Youth Villages conducts these reviews annually with the LifeSet providers.
- Providers services are being provided with fidelity to the program model.
- Quotes
  - What do you like most about LifeSet?
    - ““It's a caring program that helps you with what you need help with.”
    - “I like how eager they are to help you. They're not pushy and actually listen to you. When it comes to my case, she helps with that, too.”
  - What goals are you working on this month?
    - Getting a Driver's License- “She's helping me get my license back after court. She helped me understand tickets, since I don't usually get pulled over. She helps me with anything I need.”
    - Getting a Job-“ I'm working on getting a job. She's been helping me find places, doing applications, and offered to also bring me in person to follow up with them and ask about the jobs.”
  - What do you think your biggest accomplishment has been while being in the LifeSet program or what have you learned while being in LifeSet
    - “I am proud that I am still in school. I was going to leave school but, with her help and talking through it and chatting, I decided to stay in.”
    - “Really starting school. I'm the first in my family to actually commit to going to school!”
- Outcomes
  - The LifeSet Model looks at the following 4 Key Performance Indicators at the time of discharge:
    - Housing Status
    - Education Status
    - Employment Status
    - Avoidance/Reduction in Arrests
  - Additionally, NJ is reviewing outcome related to youth having increased social connections.

b. NJ Foster Care Scholars (NJFCS) – Safa Simmons

- NJFCS Program is contracted with the agency, embrella.
- NJFCS Program provides funding for eligible foster, adoptive, kinship, and homeless youth to pursue a post-secondary education.
  - This program is reviewed annually and therefore is subject to change.
  - Updated information is always available on the embrella website.
- Funding Sources
  - Federal Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program (ETV)/\*State Option (SO)
    - Can be used at any U.S. schools that accept Federal Financial Aid (Title IV Funding).
    - Students may receive Educational Supports for:
      - Tuition & Fees
      - Transportation
      - Room & Board
      - Books & supplies
- NJ State Tuition Waiver Program
  - Tuition & Fees ONLY after grants & scholarships have been applied
  - Does not include Room & Board
  - Full-Time at a NJ Public School
  - No dollar cap amount
  - Limited to 5 years of use
- Eligibility Criteria-5 areas
  - CP&P Out-of-home Paid Placement
    - 9 months or more after 16th birthday
    - 18 months or more after 14th birthday
  - Adoption & Kinship Legal Guardianship
    - Adopted through CP&P after age 12
    - Entered KLG after age 16
  - Youth Experiencing Homelessness
  - Reside or have resided in a Transitional Living Program or independent living arrangement (TW only)
- General eligibility requirements
  - Be between the ages of 16 and 25
  - Have a High School diploma or certificate of High School equivalency (GED)
    - Graduating High School Seniors may apply, but award is contingent on graduation.
  - Be granted admission to a college or vocational program
    - School must accept Federal financial aid
- NJFCS Application timeline and requirements
  - NJFCS Application Timeline
    - Student submits completed application.

- Application forwarded to DCF (OESP) and eligibility is determined.
  - Eligible students are mailed a Welcome Packet containing their funding type and further information.
  - Inquiry Forms are sent to schools requesting information about student's account and academic progress.
  - Schools return completed inquiry forms with registration and account information.
  - Required Documents
    - Completed and Signed Application Waivers
    - Proof of Completed and Submitted FAFSA/Dreamers
    - Most Recent Transcripts (returning applicants only)
    - Proof of Acceptance or Enrollment
    - Email Verification
- NJFCS application
  - Only the application for the academic year the youth is planning to attend will be accepted. All students are required to complete a new application each academic year.
  - Application Deadlines for the 2024-2025 Academic Year:
    - July 1st, 2024 Priority Deadline for Fall & Spring Semesters
    - September 1st, 2024 for Fall & Spring Semesters
    - February 1st, 2025 for Spring Semester
- NJFCS Academic Policy
  - The NJFC Scholars program does not have a GPA policy to be accepted into the program.
  - Once accepted, a student must meet the NJFC Academic Policy every semester they are active with the program.
  - Students must also be mindful of the GPA policies at their respective post-secondary schools. Loss of financial aid, or academic dismissal from their school will also impact their standing with NJFC Scholars.
- i. Gap Housing
  - All NJFC Scholars are eligible to apply for Gap Housing
    - Students can request housing on campus, or off campus, during breaks
      - Winter, Spring, Summer Breaks
    - Students must request this through embrella directly: applications are through student portal.



- V. Office of Applied Research and Evaluation Updates-Jon Marsh
- a. The Child Welfare League of America had a conference this April and Jon presented on DCF's Enlightenment Program. The Enlightenment Program was developed by DCF's Youth Council; they picked the model that was adapted from the NY State Brave Life Program and applied it to fit those who enter placement. This program was launched in December 2022.
    - How to implement the program and how to evaluate it.
    - A Peer Navigator presented the info at this conference.
  - b. Jon will be connecting with these youth to share research.
  - c. Jon submitted a Proposal for DCF's Parenting Young People In Care (PYPIC) survey for a 2025 conference.
- VI. Family and Community Partnerships Presentation-Emel Altomari
- a. Prevention Program Goals
    - Preventing child maltreatment and maltreatment related fatalities,
    - Preventing unnecessary use of the child protection system to address family system challenges that can safely be assisted through health, social service, and community programming,
    - Preventing the use of foster care as a safety intervention, and
    - Preventing reentry to foster care.
    - Identification of opportunities to evolve or build service capacity and use of clear operational plans.
  - b. DCF Process Goals
    - Creating Departmental infrastructure to ensure high quality implementation of all purchased services
    - Strengthened stakeholder collaboration and state and local level public and community partnership
    - By adjusting organizational structure and Department capacity
    - Information management strategy
    - Quality improvement
    - Increased partnership
    - Community collaboration
  - c. DCF's Evolving Identify
    - Shifting the Department's identity from a system with a predominant focus on traditional child protection services to a predominant focus on family strengthening efforts.
    - Will be achieved by operationalizing DCF's strategic plan using the core approaches.
    - Family and Community Partnerships (FCP) Programs and Offices
      - The Office of Early Childhood Services supports development and implementation of programs and activities related to

pregnancy and parent support for families with infants and children to age five.

- The Office of Family Support Services contracts and works in partnership with organizations throughout the state, including school districts, to build a continuum of family centered, holistic, and preventive services for New Jersey's children and families that touch across the lifespan.
- The Office of Housing works to ensure DCF's network of housing and related services are accessible, high quality, culturally competent, and effectively meet youth and family needs.
- The Office of Family Preservation and Reunification is committed to providing an array of high quality, evidence informed, family, child and youth services to promote stability, permanency and wellbeing for our most vulnerable children and families. This office services family and youth who are currently or formerly DCP&P involved.
- Exchange Parent Aide (EPA)
  - EPA is evidence supported service model forming part of a comprehensive, statewide family support services continuum.
- A DCF RFP notice went out about DCF's Supportive Visitation Services (SVS).
  - DCF's Office of Housing (OOH) and Office of Family Preservation and Reunification were established in July 2021.

d. Office of Housing (OOH) – Barbara Washington

- DCF's OOH sits within the Department's Division of Family and Community Partnerships (FCP).
  - OOH coordinates DCF's response to constituent housing needs.
- OOH recently implemented the My First Place Program.
- OOH started a Housing Liaison pilot in some DCF local offices.

VII. CAG Strategy Teams

- a. CAG will add this to the CAG September meeting Agenda.

VIII. Additional Information sharing and updates

- a. None shared



- IX. Closing
- a. Volunteer for Agency Spotlight
    - None shared
  - b. Announcements, resources, etc.
    - None shared

2024 Chafee Advisory Group Meeting Dates:  
March 19<sup>th</sup>, June 4<sup>th</sup>, September 17<sup>th</sup>, and December 3<sup>rd</sup>

*All ideas reflected are not endorsed by the agency.*