



## Chafee Advisory Group Meeting June 8, 2023

### Minutes

***In Attendance:*** Alice Garcia, Amanda Martinez, Arian Craig, David Rosen, Hailey D'Elia, Janel Winter, Kelly Nestor, Kimberly Gutierrez, Randi Mandelbaum, Dan Rhoton, Niambi London, Rachel Barth, Ifeanyi Pole, Chelsea Sutphin, Safa Simmons, Jonathan Marsh, Vanessa Hosei, n Maria Cavallaro-Minutes

***Absent:*** Suzanne Kreie, Dr. Steven Kairys, Mary Coogan, Tybesh White, Tosca Blanford-Bynoe, Patricia Jordan, Konniesha Moulton

- I. Welcome & Introductions-Niambi London
  - a. Staffing/CAG Member Updates-Niambi London
    - i. Chelsea Sutphin is leaving DCF on 6/9/2023.
    - ii. Alice Garcia is retiring in 8/2023.
- II. Meeting minutes approval
  - a. CAG members did not have any edits to its drafted 3/9/23 meeting Minutes; they will be posted on DCF's website.
- III. Agency Spotlight – Montclair State University Red Hawk Fellows Program (RHFP), founded 2018 – Arian Craig
  - a. Program assists students who have been in resource/foster care to provide them with additional resources. Eligibility: Students 24 years or younger at time of application, who experience food/housing insecurity.
  - b. Reviewed Services Provided at Montclair-Serviced by RHFP
    - i. Food
    - ii. Clothing
    - iii. Housing
    - iv. Technology
    - v. Transportation
    - vi. Financial Assistance
    - vii. Health Care
  - c. Montclair State University Red Hawk Fellows Program has a food pantry and clothing closet on campus and provides a shuttle to Shoprite

- d. Red Hawk Fellows Program promotes the development of life skills, financial literacy, professional development, mentorship, housing assistance, and more.
- e. Criteria: Students must meet the following criteria for eligibility:
  - i. 24 years and under
  - ii. Previous involvement in Resource Care
  - iii. Experiencing housing/food insecurity

#### IV. Chafee Advisory Group Discussion – Niambi London

##### a. Membership

- i. Niambi asked the CAG members to let her know if they wish to stay or be replaced on CAG; members coming up on four years of membership in CAG group.
- ii. Since Alice Garcia is retiring this August, Niambi asked members to let her know if they are interested in serving as Co-Chair of CAG.

##### b. Recommendations

- i. Niambi asked the CAG members to share their future recommendations/ideas to increase engagement, sharing info, etc.
- ii. Kelly and Arian stated they favor in-person CAG meetings.
- iii. Ifeanyi suggested adding a section for future CAG meeting agendas for members to share info on their new initiatives, projects, and/or resources
- iv. Jonathan stated he has valued collaborating on a project with CAG members' input (i.e. DCF's Parenting Young People in Care survey).
- v. Niambi stated that CAG had initially created subgroups/workgroups in between CAG meetings to work on proposed ideas.

#### V. Youth Data Presentation & Enlightenment

##### a. Youth Data Presentation– Jonathan Marsh

- i. New Jersey youth who are 14+ years old make up a smaller proportion of youth in placement compared to national data.
- ii. Nationwide, other states had more youth in care, than New Jersey.
- iii. New Jersey had more Hispanic youth in our care, compared to other states, nationwide; Randi commented that this data may be reflective of unaccompanied minors in New Jersey.
- iv. Less than 3% of youth in New Jersey were missing, compared to 5% of missing youth nationwide.
- v. The number of youth who had placements disrupted was fewer in New Jersey than nationwide.
- vi. The number of youth served by CP&P has declined in recent years.
- vii. Over 90% of youth transitioning out of care had a connection to a supportive adult in their lives.

- viii. 82% of youth in care in New Jersey had obtained a GED or High School diploma by the age of 21, compared to 79% nationwide.
- b. Enlightenment Program-Kim Gutierrez
- i. Enlightenment is a Peer-to-Peer mentoring program for youth ages 14-21 years old who experience out of home placement.
  - ii. As of April of 2023, 41 youth have enrolled in this peer mentoring program solely for those who are in out-of-home placements.
  - iii. On average, youth who enroll in DCF's EnlightenMENT Peer-to-Peer mentoring program are 16 years old.
  - iv. DCF's local offices are informed about the EnlightenMENT Peer-to-Peer mentoring program; youth are referred by their county of residence.
- VI. 2020-2024 Chafee/ETV Plan Updates -Niambi London
- a. Planning for the next 5 years. The following Chafee/ETV Plan strategy tasks have not yet been completed:
- i. Strategy #2: Continue to Elevate Youth Voice
    - 1. Develop and implement a strategic sharing training for youth and adults to prepare young people to participate in communities, workgroups, etc.
    - 2. Youth are informed of, prepared for and attend family court hearings.
  - ii. Strategy #3: Changes to Chafee Program Philosophy
    - 1. Refining eligibility for benefits and services.
  - iii. Strategy #4: Promoting Kinship Care, Permanency, and Connections
    - 1. Develop a formalized process and create resources to train and increase knowledge of judiciary staff regarding adolescents and young adults in foster care.
    - 2. Support youth in kinship care through system and direct service intervention strategies that support both the youth and caregiver.
  - iv. Strategy #6: Marketing Chafee Services to Eligible Youth
    - 1. Develop and implement a strategy to market Chafee services to newly eligible youth that achieved reunification 14+.
    - 2. Refine and implement marketing strategies of Chafee services to Chafee eligible youth whose child welfare cases are closed.
  - v. Strategy #7: Technology
    - 1. Develop a mobile application specific to youth in foster care.
  - vi. Strategy #8: Using Data to Measure Success and Improve Service Delivery
    - 1. Develop system to capture NYTD services being provided by resource parents and child welfare staff.

2. Refine outcomes that will be tracked and identify measurement tools.
- vii. Strategy #9: Mental Health, Substance Use, and Domestic Violence - Serving Youth of Various Ages and Stages of Permanency
  1. Develop a stakeholder informed plan to review supports and services currently available and used, while also identifying areas that need to be strengthened and tailored to meet the needs of youth in foster care.
- viii. Collaborations with Other Private and Public Agencies
  1. Promoting developmentally appropriate activities and experiential learning (e.g. driving instruction, cell phones/cell phone plans, transportation, and savings accounts).
- ix. Chafee Training Plan
  1. New Trainings
    - a. Normalcy
    - b. Expectant and Parenting Youth
    - c. Chafee training for resource and adoptive parents
    - d. Strategic sharing training
    - e. \*Adolescent Learning Path
- x. Ideas for the next 5 years
  1. Focus on Thriving
    - a. Housing
    - b. Education
    - c. Employment – Living wage or ALICE (Asset, Limited, Income Constrained, Employed)
    - d. Health Care
    - e. Well Being

## VII. Closing

- a. Next Steps
  - i. Gather input from stakeholders
  - ii. CAG
  - iii. Youth
    1. Collaborate with Office of Family Voice to hold Youth Forums.
  - iv. Providers
  - v. Others?
    1. DCF staff (i.e. Child Protection and Permanency, Office of Family Voice, etc.)
  - vi. Literature Review

- vii. Data
  - 1. Continue to review data as we look ahead to next CAG meeting on September 14<sup>th</sup>.
- b. 2023 Meeting CAG Meeting Dates
  - i. March 9<sup>th</sup>
  - ii. June 8<sup>th</sup>
  - iii. September 14<sup>th</sup>
  - iv. December 14<sup>th</sup>

\*March and December and June 2023 meetings will be virtual via Zoom.

\*September 2023 meeting will be in person at DCF's Professional Center in New Brunswick.

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