

ESSEX COUNTY YOUTH SERVICES COMMISSION MEETING

Thursday, April 18th, 2024 2:00PM

Via <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82245632074>

or

50 S Clinton St. East Orange, NJ - Suite Samuel Okparaeke, 2nd Fl

Attendees: **Hon. Philip Degnan**, - Co-Chairman of the Essex County Youth Services Commission Hon. Naazneen Khan, Family Part of the Superior Court, **Kesha Manning**, - Family Division, **Ana Rivera**, Keisha Walker - Chief Probation Officer, **Anthony Higgins** – County Prosecutor Office, **Lenora Humphrey** – County DCP&P District Manager, **Rosi Hermida** – Superintendent of the County Vocational School, **Anibal Ramos** – County Human Services Department Director, **Todd Barcliff** - Youth Detention Center Director, **Tyrone Hunter** – Juvenile Family Crisis Intervention Unit-Director, **Lt. John Henriques** – President- Juvenile Officers Association or other law enforcement representative who works primarily with youth/police, **Apryl Caldwell**, Pam Cohen - Workforce Investment Board Representative, **Adejobi Odeneye** – Business Representative, **Monique Williams**– Parent or parent organization, **Shelton Thurman** – Community Youth, **Lori Scott-Pickens**– Education Sector, **LaQuanda Williams** – Mental health, family counseling, child advocacy, domestic violence, and/or victims’ rights groups, **Rev. Bernard Wilkes** – Clergy, **Gino R. Arevalo** – Mental health, family counseling, child advocacy, domestic violence, and/or victims’ rights groups, **Amy Godfrey** – Care Management Organization, Amanda Compton Dover – Court Liaison- Juvenile Justice Commission, Ron Small – Court Liaison- Juvenile Justice Commission, Erica Cashaw – Newark Public Schools, Andrea M., Yolanda Loney– UCC FEP, Paul Boxer – Rutgers-Newark University, Flohisha Johnson, Nayellie Collazo, Alicia Holman, & Jason Martinez, Administrator of Youth Services Commission.

“This meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 -10:4-21. Notice of this meeting has been provided on the Essex County Website.”

Reading of the Open Public Meetings

Act Approval of Minutes – March 21st, 2024

Judge Philip Degnan asked for a roll call of voting members which was administered by Administrator Martinez. It was determined that there was a quorum. The Open Public Meeting Act was read by Judge Degnan. Judge Degnan asked for a motion to approve the minutes March 21st, 2024. *Lori Scott-Pickens motioned to approve the minutes and LaQuanda Williams 2nd the motion. Minutes were unanimously adopted.*

Subcommittee Reports:

- I. **Planning Committee:** LaQuanda Willaims stated that the Planning committee has had several meetings regarding details with the regulations which will be further provided at the next YSC meeting.
- II. **Monitoring Committee:** Lori Scott-Pickens stated that the Monitoring Committee will soon begin the process of monitoring and identifying volunteers to work in visiting some of the recipients under the grants of the YSC. The process will begin as we move into the next month.
- III. **Allocations/Proposal Committee:** No further updates.

Presentations:

- I. **Leaders for Life:** Altarik White, Executive Director from LFL and his Program Director, Nichole Williams, presented for the Day and Evening Reporting Center Programs. Ms. Williams gave an introduction and mission statement of Leaders for Life and continued discussing the Detention Program Summary. She then provided a S.O.A.R Model Analysis: Strengths: (Community Engagement, Individualized Plans, and Restorative Justice), Opportunities: (Skill Development, Mentorship, Community Service), Aspirations: (Reducing Recidivism, Empowered Youth, Family Reintegration), and Results: (Graduation Rates, Community Impact, Participant Feedback). Ms. Williams stated since the beginning of the Detention Alternative Program in 2023, LFL had received 35 referrals with 2 of them successfully completing the program and receiving their high school diploma. For 2024, there are currently 13 daytime referrals and 2day/night referrals. All participants are provided with 60 days of social, emotional, and educational learning skills. She continued stating the key elements of LFL and proceeded to close out presentation. Mr. White noted he will answer any questions regarding LFL or the program itself.

Lenora Humphrey asked the age-requirement and target population for program and Mr. White replied stating the target age population is between the ages of 16-24 for both young men and women.

Judge Degnan asked about the new Evening Reporting Center Program and if the judges should send a youth to both programs. Mr. White answered with stating the program hours, description, and noted that both Evening and Day Programs reflect one another. He also stated he prefers youth to be send to Evening Reporting Center due to the quieter hours in the evening. Mr. White mentioned that, if necessary, youth can be reported to both programs and prefers youth to be enrolled in both programs.

Keisha Walker asked the hours of the Day Program to which Mr. White replied stating the hours are from 9:00a.m.-3:00 p.m. and the Evening Program operates from 3:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Keisha Walker also asked if the GED program is offered in both programs and Mr. White stated both programs offer GED services.

Lenora Humphrey asked if the programs served undocumented youth, Mr. White noted that all referrals are sourced through the courts.

Administrator Martinez asked if there are any differences to programs. Mr. White stated there are no distinct differences between the Day and Evening programs except the atmosphere due to the Day Program operating during school hours alongside the alternative high school within LFL.

Administrator Martinez asked if transportation and refreshments are provided, Mr. White replied both transportation and meals are provided for participants.

Alicia Holman noted that two youths that MDT referred to LFL received their high school diplomas.

- II. **United Community Corporation Family Engagement:** Andrea M., Program Director, and Yolanda Loney presented the Family Engagement Program. Andrea introduced the Youth Empowered for Success (Y.E.S) Initiative, created by Yolanda Loney and her team, which provides mentoring, academic support, personal development, and violence intervention/prevention. The Family Engagement Program expects to serve 125 participants, 41 families per year for the following three years. The program schedule will be Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. Andrea M stated the objectives and outcomes for the program. She then continued with a S.O.A.R. analysis model: Strengths: (Wrap around services/extensive partnerships), Opportunities: (Culturally competent and Equity-Informed Service), Aspirations: (Family engagement/community support), Results: (Increase family engagement, prevent, and reduce juvenile delinquency behavior). Andrea proceeded to close out presentation and mentioned UCC is currently hiring for roles within the program.

Michelle Callari asked when the program should be running, Andrea responded the program should promptly begin in the next month.

Administrator Martinez mentioned that MDTs will begin to assist UCC Family Engagement through the court system. He asked how many youths will be served. Yolanda responded with 125 participants, 41 families throughout the following 3 years; also mentioning the program duration would be 60 days for each participant.

LaQuanda Williams asked for clarification if referrals are court ordered, Administrator Martinez confirmed.

ECYSC Updates: Administrator Martinez stated that as of March 28, 2024, denial letters were sent to providers that did not qualify for funding for 2024. On April 15th the award letters did get sent to the administration for signatures. Also, May 1st, 2024, he will present the proposals that have been recommended for funding to the Board of Commissioners to fully execute contracts.

In regards with membership of the YSC, Administrator Martinez stated that there will be additional members added to the committee. Everyone will be notified prior to the next meeting and will be required to submit their resumes and designees. He also stated that the Planning committee has been revising the bylaws to best match the JJC's regulations; the deadline for bylaws to be voted on is November 2024. Regarding monitoring process, the 1/3 set aside programs (Home Detention Monitoring) will be monitored first. Anyone who would like to volunteer of monitoring please contact Lori Scott-Pickens or Administrator Martinez. Administrator Martinez stated that the YSC has applied for Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative grant for 60,000.00. For those who are members of the YSC and are interested in planning committees for the CJJSI, please feel free to volunteer during this opportunity.

Restorative and Transformative Justice for Youths and Communities Pilot Program

Updates: Andrea M. stated that there are currently four youths that have been referred. UCC has met with the Superintendent of Newark Public Schools and is in the process of establishing an MOU with NPS. Andrea stated that UCC has hired a new program assistant and currently is working on hiring another program coordinator. Administrator Martinez mentioned any new changes to programs should be notified to the YSC. Regarding schools in Newark UCC will be meeting with charter school stakeholders sometime in May to discuss referral processes. Administrator Martinez stated that Jacqueline Henry met with the JJC prior in preparation of meeting with the Newark Board of Education members.

Regarding referrals, Administrator Martinez, stated legislation (ASSEMBLY, No. 4663) "To have restorative justice hubs establish working relationships with local law enforcement agencies, courts, prosecutors, and defense attorneys to support the diversion of youth away from arrests and prosecution and towards participation in restorative justice services provided in the hubs." The RTJ Pilot Program is not a detention alternative program.

Laquanda Williams asked for clarification regarding detention centers making referrals. Amanda Compton stated that a detention center may make referrals as reentry for those youth in the detention center but not as a detention alternative program. Those youth who are being released from the detention center (through disposition or step-down options) may be referred to the RTJ Pilot Program, however those youth who are on GPS and HDM are not eligible for referrals.

Administrator Martinez stated that he will contact the JJC for clarification on the referral process and the point of continuum for the RTJ Pilot Program.

Juvenile Justice Commission Announcements: No further announcements.

Public and/or Youth Service Commissioner Announcements: Shelton Thurman stated that the Essex County Summer Program application had successfully filled 200 applicants. There are a wide range of recreational and innovative activities for the youth from the ages of 16-24. Despite the heavy flow of college applicants, Mr. Thurman stated that the program directs its focus to those in the system for an opportunity of employment and entrepreneurship. He also stated in the

following years, the program hopes to increase the number of eligible applicants and providers/sites.

Kesiha Walker stated the Juvenile Probation will be hosting another commencement ceremony on May 20th, 2024; she also stated she will send the save the date for the event shortly.

Director Higgins stated that Essex County will have their Essex County Celebrates Youth Event on April 24th, 2024 (6:00 p.m.) at the Hall of Records. Celebrating youth from Newark, Montclair, and East Orange.

Apryl Cadwell announced the upcoming Essex County Job Fair which will be held at Essex County College on May 30th, 2024, from 10:00 a.m. TO 3:00 p.m. There are currently 95 employers and she also stated if there are any agencies or providers interested in participating as employers to let her know. For 2024, the goal is to have 3,000 Essex County participants with the total of participants in 2023 being over 1,700 participants. Employers are youth- friendly, vender-friendly, and disability-friendly. On the spot interviewing and hiring. Apryl Caldwell stated that she will send the flyer information to Administrator Martinez. Kesiha Walker asked Administrator Martinez if job fair information can be forward, and he stated that Michelle Washington will send it over today.

Director Scott-Pickens gave a quick shoutout to Nayellie Collazo, a senior-intern from the School of Criminal Justice of Rutgers-Newark University. Nayellie Collazo gave a brief description of her experience so far.

Administrator Martinez stated that the YSC is working strongly to provide the public to attend YSC meetings. He also gave a proper thanks to Max, who was assisting with the technology for today's hybrid YSC meeting. On Saturday April 20th, the YSC will be at Bloomfield Library to hand out information about the YSC and well as promoting Summer Youth Work Employment Program and the County's job fair.

Judge Degnan and Director Ramous gave they're thanks to everyone joining in-person and virtually for today's meeting.

Adjournment: Judge Degnan asked for *a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion by LaQuanda Williams and 2nd by Apryl Caldwell.*