



# COUNTY OF SOMERSET DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

27 Warren Street • P.O. Box 3000  
Somerville, New Jersey 08876-1262  
(908) 541-5756 • Fax (908) 575-3935  
CommDev@co.somerset.nj.us  
www.somersetcountynj.gov



Human Services Director  
MOLLIE GREENE, MA

Community Development Director  
KIMBERLY COWART

Aging & Disability Services  
JOANNE FETZKO

One Stop Career Center  
Juvenile Institutional Services  
MONICA MULLIGAN

Operations & Planning  
LISA FEDERICO

Richard Hall Community CHWC  
NICCI SPINAZZOLA

Rutgers Cooperative Extension  
LISA ROTHENBURGER

Veterans Services  
PETER NIEMIEC

Volunteer Services  
LAURIE ROOME

Youth Services  
LINDA M. PORCARO

## September 11, 2025 Continuum of Care meeting minutes

The September 2025 meeting, which took place virtually, via a Teams conference call, was called to order and began at 11:03 am. The meeting started with a moment of silence in remembrance of the victims of September 11, 2001 terrorist attack and victims of gun violence. The minutes from the July meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved.

The guest speaker was Officer Nicole DeBiase, a.k.a. Officer Nikki, from Somerville Police Department. Officer Nikki had joined our previous CoC call when she was invited to join by Dameon Stackhouse. On that call, she heard about the need for shoe donations at SHIP. Since that call, Officer Nikki ran a successful shoe drive, such that now SHIP has more than enough shoes for their clients.

Officer Nikki started by giving a brief history about herself. She is from a law enforcement family and has been a police officer in Somerville for ten years. For much of her early career, Officer Nikki performed what is known as traditional policing. This strategy is more reactive, when an incident occurs ... write a ticket, enforce drug laws or provide emergency services. More recently, Officer Nikki, along with therapy dog Marco, have been doing community policing. This strategy involves getting to know the population and being visible downtown. At its core, this involves building trust between the police force and the community, so that needs are addressed, thwarting foreseeable incidents of infractions, crimes, or emergency situations. Officer Nikki answered questions from the CoC members. Many of the questions delved into collaboration between the nonprofit service providers and the police force to better serve the population. The discussion predominantly focused on the need for more mental health resources and emergency shelters. Also discussed were personal safety and situational awareness in venues, like places of worship or music festivals, that have become targets for active shooters.

Kim Cowart made a community project suggestion for the CoC to provide lunch at SHIP on the third Tuesday of October. This suggestion was positively received, so on October 21<sup>st</sup> the CoC will provide lunch at SHIP. Kim will send out a Sign-up Genius to facilitate.

Linda Rapacki is leaving RideWise and joining New Jersey Travel Independence Program at Rutgers. The CoC was very appreciative of all the work Linda had done in the community. For example, Maria Marnell noted that for the last fifteen years, Linda has consistently provided a monthly workshop for Work First New Jersey. Linda will be missed in Somerset County, but she has moved to a role where the whole state will benefit from her efforts.

Natalie Roca from Hoving Home made a brief presentation about vacancies in their programs to help women (must be over 18). Hoving Home is a private, faith based, 100% donation-funded facility dedicated to helping women who are suffering from addiction, human trafficking and other issues, to

- Mission Statement -

The County of Somerset is committed to excellence and innovation in public service, promoting the well-being of all residents and communities by providing effective, efficient and responsive leadership.

*Somerset County Is An Equal Opportunity Employer*

improve their lives. Hoving Home reports an 82% success rate for graduates from its programs. Also, many of the staff at Hoving Home are graduates too. It is important for CoC members to do their own due diligence, as Hoving Home would not be subject to the same oversight as government-funded programs.

Agency announcements will be sent via e-mail after the meeting and, as such, are incorporated as part of the minutes.

The meeting adjourned at 12:07 pm.

Attendees:

Ruby Arthur  
Tania Asmal  
Stephanie Billitz  
Michelle Blanchfield  
Shelise Brodie  
Elizabeth Burgenson  
Ellen Carfaro  
Kimberly Cowart  
Officer Nicole DeBiase (Somerville PD)  
Ana Diaz  
Alisha Earp  
Kayla Ellis  
Christine Esposito  
Carrie Ferraro  
Keisha Graham  
Mollie Greene  
Jennifer Guyette  
Joanne Hala  
Talysa Jimenez  
Rheanah Johnson

Tamika Levels-Hood  
Jillian Lombardozi  
Qariah Lucus  
Maria Marnell  
Tina McGill  
Lisanny Mendez-Castillo  
Scott Minchello  
Rita Mirabelli  
Tamare Momplaisir  
Edward Prior  
Cynthia Ramsey  
Linda Rapacki  
Natalie Roca  
Leonor Salgado  
Carolyn Solon  
Dameon Stackhouse  
Susie Suter  
Denise White  
(908) 698-1511