

CoWag Full Council Meeting

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, July 23, 2024

3:00 PM Via Videoconference

Video available here:

[2024-07-23 Governor's Council on Women and Girls-Full Council Meeting - YouTube](#)

I. Welcome

Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz called the meeting to order at 3:02 pm.

**II. Social Connection Campaign Presentation by Amy Marracino, Section Chief,
Young Adult Services, DMHAS**

Honored to be here to share some of the work DMHAS is doing concerning the social connection opportunities we are offering women and young adults.

Goal: To facilitate collaboration between state agencies, federal and municipal governments, and non-profit grassroots organizations. Many agencies and organizations are already engaged with this work, so the question is A) how we can collaborate and B) collectively message.

DMHAS takes referrals at the age of 16 to prepare to serve by the time individuals turn 18. Some services they provide include psychiatry, case management, nursing, trauma services, and peer mentorship to aid in recovery efforts. To ensure that young people gain employment and educational skills, they provide vocational and educational services. Almost 50% of young people from this program have been referred to competitive employment.

Young pregnant women can take advantage of the match with a prenatal advisor to ensure success both before and 5 years after the birth.

DMHAS has residential, clinical, and in-patient locations. Through the CT Stay Strong Grant in collaboration with DCF, they work towards healthy transitions from childhood to young adulthood.

Additionally, they have implemented a Young Adult Voice initiative to continuously gain feedback from young adults about the services they provide. They also collaborate with Affinity E-sports in Newtown to help young adult gamers connect with each other in a healthy way while promoting teamwork and personal expression. After receiving a lot of positive feedback, they are looking to expand it to explore opportunities in graphic design and coding.

A website called turningpointct.org was created by young adults for young adults to strengthen young adult engagement in recovery while providing socialization and technological experience. They will work on enhancing this website moving forward.

Advocacy Unlimited is a peer support program across the state for young adults dealing with various life stressors. It is open every day from 12-9pm and is for those who experience loneliness and need someone to talk to.

There have also been civic engagement efforts to educate these young adults about their role in government and to empower them to vote and get involved, e.g. through public testimony.

III. Presentation on the Kids' Cabinet by Thea Montañez, Senior Advisor to Governor Ned Lamont

Mission: The Kids' Cabinet plans and implements solution focused, interagency initiatives designed to improve the lives of Connecticut's children, youth and their families.

They will promote equitable policies, strengthen communication throughout the system, and make better use of existing resources.

CT is #8 in the nation for Overall Child Wellbeing. Specifically, we are #3 in education, #1 in Health, #19 in economic wellbeing, and #22 in family and community.

Priority #1: Homeless Children & Youth. In 2022-2023, 5093 (or 1%) of PreK-12 students experienced homelessness. Most are "doubled-up," though significant amounts utilize hotels/motels, homeless shelters, or are unsheltered.

Priority #2: Cross-Over Youth. These are youth who are at risk of or are fluctuating between the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

Priority #3: Opportunity Youth. 1 in 5 of CT's young people, were either at-risk or disconnected. Many of them have dropped out of school, or at risk of doing so, and are often

unemployable. Hence, the Cabinet will work to support these youth and give them the skills and education necessary to be employed.

Next steps: Cabinet Establishes Goals → Programmatic Evaluations by Agencies → Planning & Implementation in an Interagency Fashion

IV. Report from Council Leadership/Subcommittee Reports

- a. All members should have received an email about the completion of the Annual Summaries of prior CoWaG meeting years.
- b. All subcommittees should revisit their mission statements and make necessary revisions.
- c. **Headstart on Housing Update:** Majority of our families are single-mother households. We have housed 102 families, including 223 children. Currently looking at leasing 45 homes and 50 applicants are in review. We will surpass our goal! Currently working with Boards of Education to support children who do not have Early Headstart siblings. Go to <https://headstartonhousingct.com/> for more.

V. Announcements

a. Request for Legislative Proposals

- i. Subcommittee chairs shall request members to submit proposals prior to their August/September meetings through the OPM form
- ii. Chairs must review the submissions and discuss with the subcommittee which proposals should be advanced
- iii. Send the advanced legislative proposals to the Lt. Gov. or Jodi Hill-Lily.

b. Upcoming Meeting Dates

- i. August 13th- Economic Opportunity and Workforce Equity at 3pm
- ii. August 21st- Education and STEAM at 3 pm
- iii. September 18th- Leadership Subcommittee at 3 pm
- iv. September 23rd- Health and Safety at 10 am
- v. October 15th- Full Council meeting at 3 pm in LOB (Hybrid)

c. Housing Community Development Leadership Institute is now accepting applications for the next cohort.

VI. Adjournment

- a. Lt. Governor adjourned the meeting at 3:59 pm.