



HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS DIVISION / Children's Services Administration

115 S Andrews Avenue, Room A370 • Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301 • 954-357-6202 • FAX 954-357-8204

Broward County Board of County Commissioners
Children's Services Board Needs Assessment Committee Meeting
Draft Minutes October 8, 2025

I. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 A.M.

Committee Members in attendance: Maria Juarez Stouffer, Traci Schweitzer in person. Joel Smith present via Teams.

Committee Members absent: Evan Goldman and Monica King.

Staff members in attendance: Cassandra Evans, Director of Community Partnerships Division (CPD), David Watkins, Assistant Director of Community Partnerships Division (CPD), Dr. Tiffany Hill-Howard, Children Services Administrator (CSA), and Sterling Parrish (CSA) in person.

II. Approval of minutes

Approval of July 9, 2025, Needs Assessment Committee meeting minutes.

Motion: To approve July 9, 2025, Needs Assessment Committee minutes as presented by staff.

First: Joel Smith

Second: Traci Schweitzer

Declaration of Conflict: None.

Discussion: None.

Result: Passed.

III. Chair Report- Maria Juarez Stouffer-

Reviewing the FY2025 Children's Services Strategic Plan and Impact Report. Discussion centered on current community needs, emerging service gaps, and alignment with existing funding priorities.

Results from focus groups (approximately 600 participants, representing diverse demographics) identified the top community priorities as follows: Mental Health, juvenile crime, and homelessness prevention and support.

Food insecurity was noted as a secondary but growing concern. The findings indicate strong community demand for accessible mental health programs and preventive interventions for youth.

Broward County Board of County Commissioners

Mark D. Bogen • Alexandra P. Davis • Lamar P. Fisher • Beam Furr • Steve Geller • Robert McKinzie • Nan H. Rich • Hazelle P. Rogers • Michael Udine
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The committee discussed the need to assess whether the rise in juvenile crime is perceived or data-supported. Data from the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) indicates juvenile crime remains an issue, primarily tied to family and social trauma.

Plans were made to invite the Office of Justice Services and the 'New Day' program to present on recidivism and diversion outcomes, with 90% of participating youth avoiding re-arrest.

Suggestions included expanding diversion programs, facilitating restitution through youth employment or community service, and improving coordination with the State Attorney's Office.

Recommendations included increased transitional housing, job support, and case management. The committee discussed the possibility of adopting a 'housing first' model and expanding life skills programs.

Food insecurity is a growing issue due to rising food costs and reduced funding. The 'Better Together' initiative, led by Broward Health and Memorial, was recognized as the leading collaborative body addressing this issue. The committee agreed on the need to streamline and centralize countywide food assistance coordination.

Committee members noted that many residents are unaware of available services. Traditional outreach methods such as fairs and flyers were found to be ineffective. Recommendations included leveraging local TV/radio, faith-based organizations, school partnerships, sports events, and social media for broader engagement.

Motion

Motion: Approval of a letter of support from the board for additional funding of \$500,000 for Behavioral Health services.

First: Joel Smith

Second: Traci Schweitzer

Declaration of Conflict: None.

Discussion: None.

Result: Passed.

IV. Section Administrator's Report- Dr. Tiffany Hill- Howard-

A weeklong Service Delivery Model (SDM) training hosted by Children's Services with our currently funded providers. Topics included standardizing service quality, clarifying roles, promoting collaboration, and sharing best practices. Feedback was positive, and future sessions will continue under the department's new mission, vision, and values rebranding initiative

Year 1 of the Baker Act Alternative Pilot concluded across nine schools. Nine successful non-traumatic transports occurred (seven from Cross Creek, two from Whispering Pines). Plans were discussed to expand the pilot based on updated school data, identifying higher-need sites. Committee members emphasized the importance of ethical implementation and cross-agency coordination (School Board, BBHC, Henderson, DCF).

Motion

Motion: Extend the meeting by 5 minutes

First: Maria Juarez Stouffer

Second: Traci Schweitzer

Declaration of Conflict: None.

Discussion: None.

Result: Passed.

V. Public Comments- None.

VI. Good of the Order- None.

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VII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 11:05 am.

The next Needs Assessment Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 5, 2025, at 9:00 A.M. at 115 S. Andrews Avenue, A337, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301