Needs Assessment Guidance

New Jersey Department of Children and Families/Human Services Advisory Council
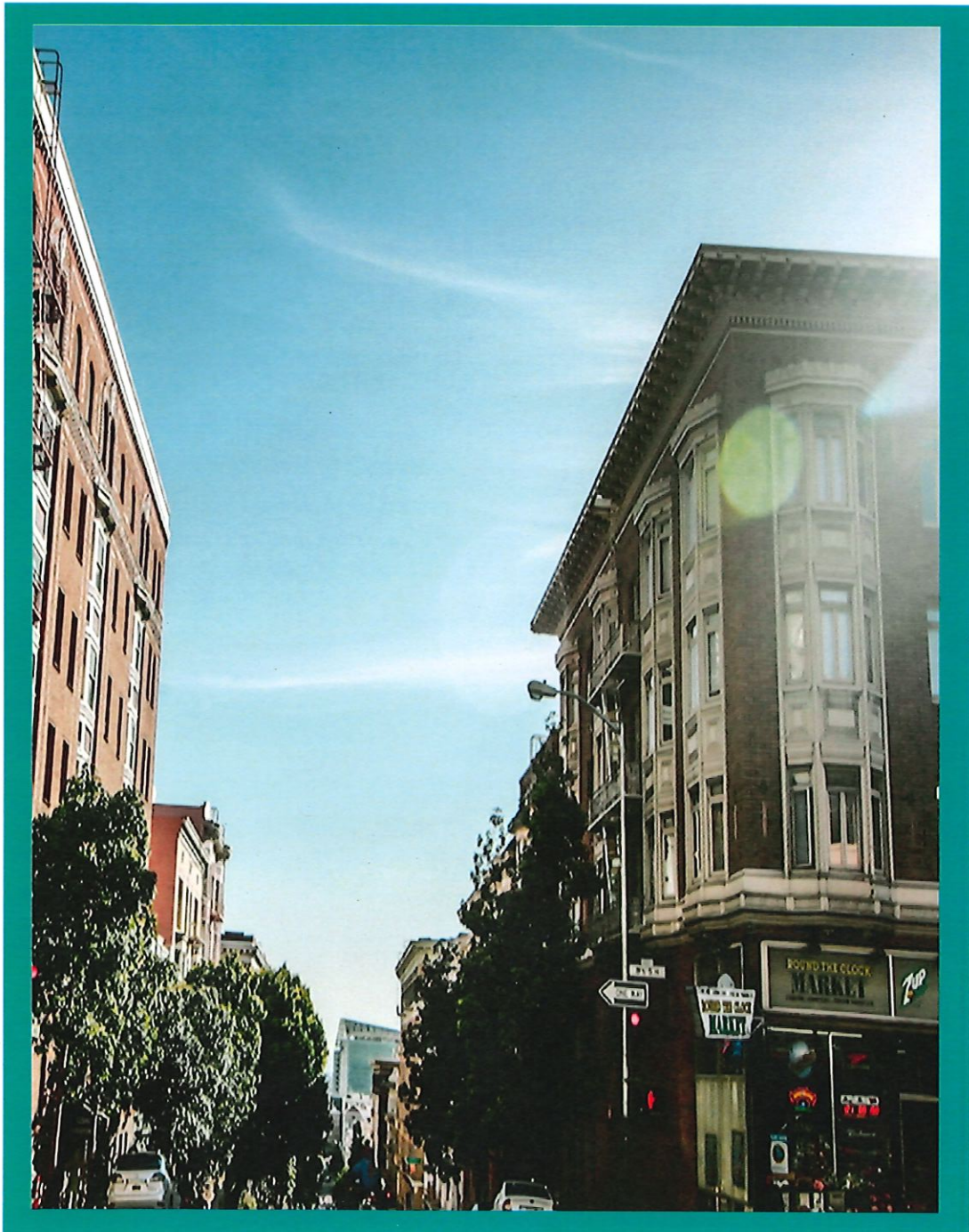
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Part 1: Getting Started

Introduction

Purpose

The N.J. Department of Children and Families is partnering with human services organizations in each county to undertake an assessment of local strengths and needs. The goal of this assessment is to collect the information needed to make sure the right mix of services and activities are available in every county in New Jersey to support families. In a coordinated effort to understand the needs of families in each county, DCF has funded county Human Services Advisory Councils (HSACs) to undertake an assessment of local needs every two years. Counties are charged with gathering information related to local basic and service needs, social connections and community networks, the impact of those needs on subpopulations, trends in needs over time, key barriers to service delivery and considerations for action.

For DCF, the primary purposes of the needs assessment are to:
- Partner with communities throughout New Jersey to strengthen families,
- Collaborate with HSACs to gain county-specific qualitative information related to assets, needs and barriers and the context and considerations for action, and
- Utilize information gained from the needs assessment process to support DCF's vision and continuous quality improvement efforts and to inform policy, strategic planning (e.g., service array development) and New Jersey's Federal Child and Family Service Plan.

Background

In 2018, DCF approached the county Human Services leadership regarding the design of a new needs assessment tool to attain county-specific qualitative information related to service needs and barriers to meeting those needs. The county Human Services leadership agreed to form a workgroup with DCF to help inform the assessment process and the workgroup began meeting in October 2018. The workgroup developed a common needs assessment process for statewide implementation in alignment with DCF's biennial county-focused continuous quality improvement efforts. The workgroup focused on the development of an assessment tool that attains county-specific qualitative information beyond the mere identification of needs and barriers; and that provides a comprehensive understanding of the scope, nature and local context related to addressing those needs as well as ensures feasibility and usefulness and to avoid duplication of efforts.

Throughout 2019, the workgroup continued to meet and vetted the new process and tools with key stakeholders. Needs assessments will commence in 2019. Beginning in 2020, the findings from the needs assessment will be embedded into the DCF's ChildStat process and shared with DCF staff and stakeholders during the county's biennial ChildStat presentation.

Needs Assessment Structure At a Glance

Needs Assessment Preparation and County Data Profiles – A key component of the needs assessment is preparing and establishing teams to carry out the various responsibilities associated with collecting data and prioritizing need areas to be discussed during the county focus group sessions.

- **Establish Needs Assessment Teams -** Identify individuals who have skills to assist with the management of the needs assessment (e.g., prioritization of needs, focus group recruitment, focus group facilitation, etc.)
- **County Data Profile** – County data profiles will be provided to each county by DCF and will include data related to need areas (e.g., housing, transportation, substance use disorder services, etc.)
- **Prioritization -** County data profiles include prioritization guidance to support the Needs Assessment Team in determining which need areas will be discussed during the focus group sessions. The prioritization guidance is provided as supplemental material and to serve as a recommendation. Ultimately, the needs assessment team is responsible for establishing the need areas that will be prioritized in the qualitative data collection components of the needs assessment process.

HSAC Qualitative Data Collection Focus Groups (Survey and Discussion) – Preparation for the focus group process is essential to identifying and understanding the scope of the need. As a part of the qualitative data collection process, HSACs will recruit and facilitate the administration of focus group surveys and discussions.

- **Preparing for Facilitation -** Identify team members to administer, review and collect surveys and informed consent forms from the participants, to serve as notetakers and to serve as facilitators of the focus group discussion.
    - o Ensure all supplies and materials are readily available.
- **Recruitment -** HSACs will make special recruitment efforts to engage community members to support and participate in completing the focus group surveys and discussions. Incentives can include:
    - o Transportation,
    - o Child Care,
    - o Gift Cards, or
    - o Invites to other county events.
- **Conduct and Facilitate Focus Group Survey and Discussion -** Each focus group session will include two data collection methodologies: focus group standard survey and focus group dialogue. Key steps include:
    - o Reviewing confidentiality statement and need areas to be discussed with the group,
    - o Having each participant complete an informed consent form prior to participating,
    - o Providing the survey and offering any needed survey assistance, and
    - o Facilitating the focus group dialogue.

HSAC Qualitative Data Collection Key Informant Interviews (Survey and Interview) – After the focus group sessions are complete, HSACs will complete the key informant interviews, analyze needs assessment findings and complete required reporting.

- **Key Informant Interviews** – Key informant interviews are conducted to gather pertinent information about and assess the needs of your county through open and structured discussions. Key steps include:
    - o Reviewing confidentiality statement and need areas to be discussed,
    - o Having each participant complete an informed consent form prior to participating,
    - o Providing the survey and offering any needed survey assistance, and
    - o Facilitating the interview.

Needs Assessment Findings and Reporting – HSACs will analyze their findings, complete a county report and participate in DCF's ChildStat presentation.

- **Analyze Needs Assessment Findings** – The Needs Assessment team identifies a means (e.g., online survey tool, Excel, manual, etc.) to analyze, compile and synthesize data and information gathered through the qualitative data collection process.
- **Reporting -** The Needs Assessment team completes a comprehensive report that provides the needs assessment findings for your county using the standardized report template.
- **HSAC Presentation Child Stat -** The needs assessment findings will be embedded into DCF's ChildStat process and shared with DCF staff and stakeholders during the county's biennial ChildStat presentation.

Needs Assessment Implementation Team

It is recommended for HSACs to develop an implementation team to oversee the needs assessment process. This team should develop a structure that provides members with concrete roles and responsibilities and allows for designated meeting times throughout the implementation of the needs assessment.

HSACs will create a team that should include individuals who have skills related to:
- o Facilitation (overseeing the process),
- o Procurement/fiscal management,
- o Recruitment,
- o Analyzing data, and
- o Report writing.

The delegation of these responsibilities will vary across counties.

Data Profiles and Prioritization

- **DCF Provided County Data Profiles**
- **Prioritization**

DCF Provided County Data Profiles

DCF will provide HSACs in each county with a county data profile, which will include county population data with the most recent available administrative data. County data profiles includes data for the following **basic need** areas: housing, food, health care, community safety, employment and career services, and child care (see Appendix A). Data profiles may also include data to demonstrate **specialized service** need areas including: services for families caring for a child of a relative/family friend, behavioral/mental health services for children, behavioral/mental health services for adults, substance use disorder services, domestic violence services, parenting skills services, and legal and advocacy services (see Appendix A). The County data profiles and existing county trends will highlight areas of need to help support HSACs in identifying, prioritizing and addressing county needs, services and resources.

DCF Data Profiles Identified Need Areas

Housing	Food	Health Care	Community Safety
Employment & Career Services	Child Care	Services for Families Caring for the Child of a Relative/Family Friend	Behavioral/Mental Health Services for Children
Behavioral/Mental Health Services for Adults	Substance Use Disorder Services	Domestic Violence Services	Parenting Skills Services
	Legal and Advocacy Services		

Prioritization

In addition to identifying the county needs, the county data profile will include a prioritization guide that rates the status of needs based on the scope and magnitude of the need. The prioritization guide is based on trends related to changes over time, comparisons to statewide needs, and the impact the need is having on subpopulations, when data is available. This guide is supplemental material and *serves only as a recommendation*. The HSACs may decide to use the areas that emerge from the county data profile prioritization guide, select areas that align with local priorities or any combination of the two approaches.

Criteria for Prioritization
o **Changes Over Time:** How have counties been fairing over time? Are county needs increasing over time? Has a significant number or percent of county residents been impacted by the need over time?
o **Comparisons to Statewide Needs:** Is this a need that has been largely unmet in the county? Is there a significant number or percent of the county residents impacted by the need?
o **Impact on Subpopulations:** Is the need more prevalent for subpopulations or subgroups? Are there differences in needs across racial/ethnic groups or other subpopulations?

The HSACs will use the information from the county data profile and prioritization guide to inform the areas of need to be discussed with the focus groups and target their qualitative data collection efforts. HSACs can review trends and needs assessment data to inform and prioritize the programs and services provided to families in local communities throughout the county. The HSAC needs assessment process can also be used to educate residents, raise awareness regarding unmet needs and barriers to service delivery, and advocate for policies that represent the interests of those who have no voice in government or the public arena.

Part 2:
HSAC Qualitative Data Collection Focus Groups

HSAC Qualitative Data Collection Focus Groups
(Survey and Discussion)

- **Preparing for Facilitation**
- **Recruitment of Focus Group Participants**
- **Conducting Focus Group**

Preparing for Focus Group Facilitation

HSACs will facilitate county focus groups as part of the needs assessment process. Preparation for this process is key to assisting counties and DCF with identifying and understanding their individual scope of the need areas.

Focus Group Overview. A focus group is intimate in size and usually consists of six to ten people. The group needs to be large enough to create profound conversations, but not so large that some participants are unable to meaningfully participate. The group is led through an open and structured discussion to ensure some consistency and to be able to synthesize the information in a meaningful way.

Examples of best practices around facilitating a focus group include:
- o Use predetermined and structured questions. (See Focus Group Protocol document.)
- o Provide timeframes to participants at the start of the session.
- o Hold multiple focus groups around a specific area to produce valid results.
- o Designate facilitator and assistant facilitator.
- o Arrange for comfortable space in a convenient location.
- o Provide light snacks and beverages.

A focus group is not:
- o A debate.
- o A problem-solving session.
- o Therapy.
- o A conflict resolution session.

Identify a Focus Group Facilitation Team or Lead. It is important to identify individuals who have experience conducting focus group conversations, managing the process and environment and taking detailed notes as part of the team.

Examples of best practices around facilitator engagement: It would be beneficial for the facilitator and assistant facilitator to have a skill set that allows them to incorporate the following best practices:

- o Welcome participants, offer food, assist with questions and direct participants to pre-group paperwork.
- o Be prepared and knowledgeable about the topics being discussed.
- o Paraphrase and summarize lengthy, in-depth responses as a demonstration of active listening and to ensure clarity
- o Ask the following questions to engage participants and assist them with fully explaining their answers:
    - o "Can you give me an example?"
    - o "Can you talk about that more?"
- o Use the following strategies to garner feedback from other participants in the group:
    - o Make eye contact; smile; call on participants.
    - o Ask participants who speak softly to repeat responses using a louder voice.
    - o Redirect participants who may have trouble focusing their responses.
    - o "Let's have some additional feedback/comments?"
    - o "Thank you. What are some thoughts from others in the room?

Steps for Preparation for the HSAC Needs Assessment Focus Group

1) Develop agenda outlined in the Focus Group Protocol.
2) Identify two basic need priority areas that will be discussed during the focus group session.
3) Identify two service need priority areas that will be discussed during the focus group session.
4) Gather the following needed materials:
    - o Consent forms (approximately 10 copies).
    - o Surveys (approximately 10 copies).
    - o Focus Group Protocol (1 copy for each member of the facilitation team).
    - o Paper.
    - o Pens.
    - o Flip Chart.
    - o Markers.
5) Contact Participants: Once the participants for each focus group are identified, call each person to confirm their interest and availability. Provide time and location information and obtain a verbal confirmation. Inform each participant that they will receive written confirmation and a reminder prior to the focus group session.
    - o Over-invite a small number of participants to address the probability of a no-show and to ensure there is a sufficient number of participants.
    - o Track invitation calls and confirmations.

Recruitment of Focus Group Participants

To assist with gathering viable information related to county needs and services, HSACs recruit focus group members including a predetermined set of diverse stakeholders (e.g., community members, leaders, and influential persons, public service organizations, community-based organizations, local business owners, youth, etc.) The early establishment of these participants will support the overall goals and objectives of the needs assessment.

HSACs will conduct at least ten separate focus groups that consist of six to ten people for each predetermined stakeholder group identified below. HSACs have the flexibility to conduct additional focus groups beyond the ten that are required for the needs assessment.

Special Note: HSACs must also conduct focus groups that consist solely of youth/young adults ages 16 to 23. The youth/young adults who participate in the focus group can be involved with DCF (e.g. CP&P and CSOC); however, they are not required to have past or present DCF involvement to be part of the focus group. No one person may participate in more than **one** focus group in the same needs assessment cycle.

Ten Required Focus Group Types

Community Members Currently or Previously Served by CP&P	Community Members Currently or Previously Served by CSOC	Community Members Currently or Previously Served by Community-Based Providers	Youth/Young Adults
Community Members at Large (1 of 2)	Community Members at Large (2 of 2)	Community-Based Organizations (Health & Human Service Providers)	Community Leaders & Influential People (e.g. Judge, Clergy, Activists)
	Public Service Organizations (e.g. Schools, Police, Medical Professionals, etc.)	Local Business Owners (e.g. Landlords, Corp, Salons, Barbershops, etc.)	

HSACs can use various means to recruit focus group participants, such as:

o **Nomination** – HSACs can nominate or receive nominations of people who meet the criteria and would be a good participant. Nominees will have some knowledge of county needs and be willing to respectfully share their insight and opinions.

o **Random Selection** – HSACs can randomly select participants from existing groups who would be willing to participate and meet the predetermined criteria.

o **Volunteers** – Participants can be recruited through flyers, ads, community events, etc.

o **Utilize Existing Partners** – Use individuals from affiliated sub-committees and planning boards.

Incentivize

Offer an Incentive. HSACs can offer to pay eligible participants for participating in the focus group. Options such as gift cards, networking opportunities, and a raffle to win a big item can also be considered.

Offer Services to Reduce Attendance Barriers, such as:

Transportation	Child Care	Evening or Weekend Sessions
Familiar/Easily Accessible Setting	Translators	Food

Conducting Focus Groups: Survey and Discussion

The purpose of the focus groups is to learn the scope of needs, nature of needs and barriers and considerations for each county. Each focus group session will include two data collection methodologies: focus group standard survey and focus group dialogue. The standard survey will assist with prioritizing needs and barriers, while the dialogue will allow for a deeper discussion and assessment of top barriers in each need area.

Confidentiality and Informed Consent Form Completion

Facilitators must have each participant sign an informed consent form and read the following statement prior to completing their survey.

> *"Your participation in this session is **voluntary and confidential**. Your name will not appear on any published papers and nothing you say today will be connected to you personally."*

Highlight Next Steps for the Group

The facilitator should highlight the next steps for the group, including:

- o The focus group will last approximately 90 minutes.
- o First, each participant will complete a survey, which will take about 25 minutes. Surveys should be handed to _____.
- o The group will take a short break once the informed consents have been signed and surveys are completed.

Facilitators must inform participants that they are available to offer assistance in interpreting a question in the survey and that surveys and consent forms will be collected when they are both completed.

Facilitator Review of Completed Surveys
o Facilitation team will write group type in the top right-hand corner of the survey
o Assign designees to review each survey to ensure ALL questions are answered. When applicable, ask participants to respond to any unanswered survey questions.
o Ensure all participants have returned a signed consent form (see Appendix B).
o Ensure all parental consent forms for youth/young adults under age 18 are returned and signed by the PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN. Also ensure the age of each youth is documented on the consent form (see Appendix F).
o Ensure that all YOUTH/YOUNG ADULTS also complete and sign the focus group consent form.
o Complete the Facilitation Team section of the survey after the focus group participants hand in the survey. This portion of the survey is intended to help to track the participant group type and assist in data analysis later in the process.
o Facilitators should quickly assess the Ranking Section (bottom of pg. 9) of the surveys to determine if the pre-selected priority areas make sense for the group discussion.
o As directed by your leadership, determine if any changes need to be made to priority discussion areas for this group.
o Once these steps are complete, bring the group back together to begin the focus group discussion.

Focus Group Discussion

Once each participant has fully completed the survey and consent forms and the areas of need to be discussed have been confirmed, facilitators begin the focus group discussion by doing the following:

- o Review ground rules (e.g., respect other participants and their points of view, confidentiality, etc.)
- o Introductions: ask participants to introduce themselves by the name they wish to be referred to and share how long they have lived, worked or been an active member in the county.
- o Provide context: Inform participants that, in the interest of time, the group will focus on four need areas (state names) and have a discussion to better understand how efforts can be made to make sure members of the community can use services once they learn about or are referred to services.
    - o Tip: Consider asking the group if they agree with group responses being displayed on a large paper or writing board to help organize and drive the conversation.
- o Begin to ask participants the structured questions (see Focus Group Protocol) for each need area.
- o Thank participants for taking time out of their schedules to participate in the focus group and for their willingness to participate and share their individual perspectives.

For more details on the focus group discussion, please see Focus Group Protocol in Appendix E and the Youth and Young Adult Focus Group Protocol in Appendix F.

Focus Group Introduction Example

Welcome

Hello, thank you for agreeing and taking time to be here and part of the focus group today.

Introductions

Facilitator and Assistant Facilitator: The NJ Department of Children and Families is partnering with human services organizations in each county to complete an assessment of local strengths and needs. The goal of the assessment is to collect the information needed to ensure the right mix of services and activities are available in every county.

Purpose

The purpose of today's meeting is to find out about your experiences and perceptions as a community member in this county. Your feedback today will help our local and state level leaders in planning and acting to meet the need of New Jersey residents. This focus group is just one group of a series of focus groups. Information from everyone will be combined to understand trends related to strengths and needs in this county.

Ground Rules

1. **We want to hear from each of you.**
   a. Don't be afraid to speak up.
   b. Be respectful of other group members; do not cut off or talk over anyone.
   c. We want everyone to feel comfortable sharing their input and honest thoughts throughout the process.
2. **There are no wrong answers.**
   a. Every person's experiences and viewpoints are significant.
   b. We want to hear from various experiences and opinions.
   c. Respect each other's viewpoints. Contribute the discussion whether you agree or disagree.
   d. Do not discuss topics of discussion outside of the focus group setting.
3. **Confidentiality:** Information gathered from focus group surveys and discussions will not be linked to any specific person. It will be used to identify trends and barriers related to needs to support and improve county services.
4. **Group Introductions:** Ask participants to introduce themselves by the name they wish to be referred to and share how long they have lived, worked or been an active community member in the county.

Part 3
HSAC Qualitative Data Collection Key Informant Interviews

HSAC Qualitative Data Collection Key Informant Interviews (Survey and Discussion)

<div style="background-color:yellow">Section Key Topics</div>

Key Informant Interviews
- **Preparing for Facilitation**
- **Recruitment of Interview Participants**
- **Conducting Interviews**

Preparing for Key Informant Interview Facilitation

Key Informant Interview Overview

HSACs will facilitate county key informant interviews as part of the needs assessment process. Preparation for this process is key to assisting counties and DCF with facilitating a conversation to identify additional considerations for addressing identified need areas (e.g., local strategies, partnerships, etc.) The purpose of the key informant interviews is to: 1.) learn if the identified need areas can be feasibly addressed at the county level; 2) determine if the need can be addressed, with additional support, by existing service providers and community organizations; and 3) to outline considerations for procuring and allocating resources.

A key informant interview is conducted to gather pertinent information about and assess the needs of your county. Through open and structured discussion, we can ensure some consistency and synthesize the information in a meaningful way.

Examples of best practices around conducting a key informant interview include:
   o Use predetermined and structured questions. (See Key Informant Protocol document, Appendix G.)
   o Providing timeframes to participants at the start of the session.
   o Interviewing multiple key informants around a specific area to produce valid results.
   o Designate Interviewers.

Identify a Key Informant Interview Facilitation Team or Lead

It will be important that the needs assessment team identify interviewers that are able to be engaging in an interview situation while also being able to effectively capture and document the feedback provided by the interviewee. Although each county may develop an approach that aligns with available resources, it is recommended that the identify interviewers have some previous experience in conducting structured interviews. Some counties may choose to have the same facilitators from the focus groups to act as interview facilitators, while others may choose to have different facilitators who may have more experiencing engaging county leaders in one-on-one conversations.
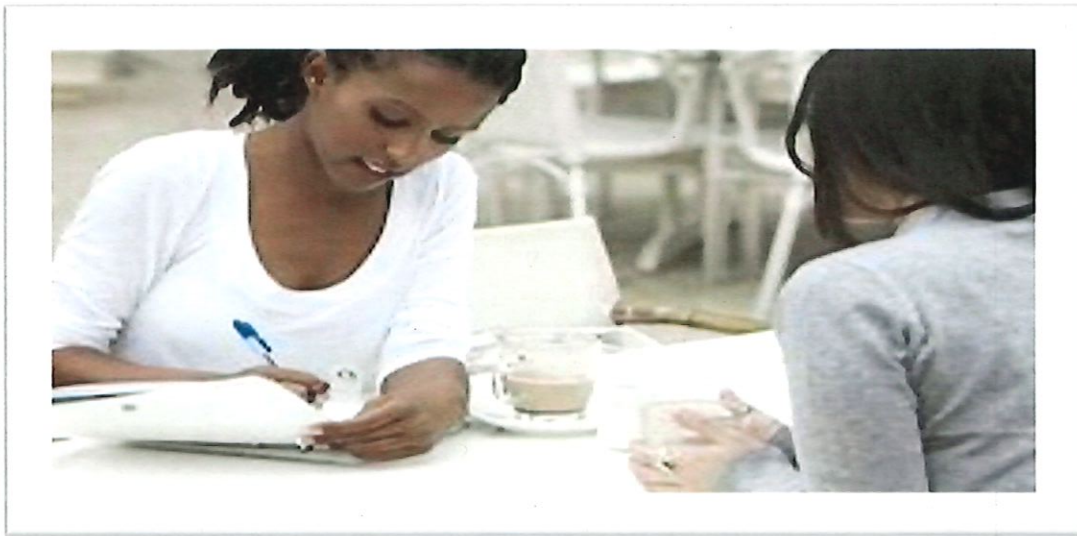
Steps for Preparation

1) Develop agenda outlined in the Key Informant Interview Protocol.
2) Identify two basic need priority areas that will be discussed during the interview session.
3) Identify two service need priority areas that will be discussed during the interview session.
4) Gather the following needed materials:
   o Consent forms for participants (approximately 10 copies).
   o Surveys (at least 10 copies).
   o Key Informant Protocol (1 copy for each interviewer).
   o Paper.
   o Pens (15).
5) Contact Participants: Once the key informants are identified, call each person to confirm their interest and availability. Provide time and location information and obtain a verbal confirmation. Inform each participant that they will receive written confirmation and a reminder prior to the interview.
   o Over-invite a small number of participants to address the probability of a no-show and to ensure there is a solid number of participants.
   o Track invitation calls and confirmations.

Recruitment of Key Informant Interview Participants

Key informants should consist of individuals who work and/or live in your county (e.g., HSAC Director, County Administrator/Director, County Human Services or Social Services Directors, School Superintendent, mayor, etc.), who can provide insight on and viable solutions to address the identified needs areas.

HSACs may use their discretion in determining the number of key informant interviews to undertake. Incorporation of multiple perspectives is recommended.

Conducting Key Informant Interviews: Survey and Discussion

Confidentiality and Informed Consent Form Completion

Interviewers must have each participant sign confidentiality statement and read the following statement prior to completing their survey.

> "Your participation in this session is **_voluntary and confidential_**. Your name will not appear on any published papers and nothing you say today will be connected to you personally."

Highlight Next Steps for the Interviewee

- o The interview will last approximately 90 minutes.
- o Provide an explanation of the project, goals for the interview, confidentiality, and the type of information covered in the interview.
- o First, each participant will complete consent forms and a survey, which will take about 25 minutes.

Survey Assistance

Facilitators must inform participants that they are available to offer any assistance in interpreting a question in the survey and that surveys and consent forms will be collected when they are both completed.

Interviewer Review of Completed Survey
o Interviewer should review each survey to ensure **ALL** questions are answered. When applicable, ask participant to respond to any unanswered survey questions.
o **Ensure all participants have returned a signed consent form (see Appendix C).**
o **Complete the Facilitation Team section of the survey after the interviewee hands in the survey.** This portion of the survey is intended to help to track the participant group and assist in data analysis later in the process.
o Interviewers should quickly assess the Ranking Section (bottom of pg. 9) of the surveys to determine if the pre-selected priority areas make sense for the discussion.
o As directed by your leadership, determine if any changes need to be made to priority discussion areas.

Key Informant Interview Discussion

Interviewers will share focus group feedback key informant interviewee and facilitate a conversation to identify additional considerations for addressing needs (e.g., local strategies, partnership, etc.) Interviews will also be used to start discussing identified trends related to specific need areas.

Once the interview participant has fully completed the survey and returned the consent form, the interviewer should begin the discussion by doing the following:

- Review ground rules (e.g., confidentiality, etc.)
- Provide context: Inform participants that, in the interest of time, the group will focus on four need areas (state names) and have a discussion to better understand how efforts can be made to make sure members of the community can use services once they learn about or are referred to services.
- Begin to ask participants the structured questions (see Key Participant Protocol) for each need area.
- Thank participant for taking time out of their schedules to participate in the focus group and for his or her willingness to participate.

For more details on the key informant interview, please see Key Informant Interview Protocol in Appendix G.

Key Informant Interview Introduction

Welcome

Hello, thank you for agreeing and taking time to participate in this interview today.

Introductions
Interviewer: The NJ Department of Children and Families is partnering with human services organizations in each county to complete an assessment of local strengths and needs. The goal of the assessment is to collect the information needed to ensure the right mix of services and activities are available in every county.

Purpose
The purpose of today's interview is to find out about your experiences and perceptions as a community member in this county. Your feedback today will help our local and state level leaders in planning and acting to meet the need of NJ residents. This interview is just one in a series of interviews. Information from everyone will be combined to understand trends related to strengths and needs in this county.

Ground Rules
1. **We want to hear from you.**
   a. Don't be afraid to speak up.
   b. We want everyone to feel comfortable sharing their input and honest thoughts throughout the process.
2. **There are no wrong answers.**
   a. Every person's experiences and viewpoints are significant.
   b. We want to hear from various experiences and opinions.
   c. Do not discuss topics of discussion outside of the interview setting.
3. **Confidentiality:** Information gathered from these interviews will not be linked to any specific person. It will be used to identify trends and barriers related to needs to support and improve county services.
4. **Group Introductions:** Ask participants to introduce themselves by the name they wish to be referred to and share how long they have lived, worked or been an active community member in the county.

Part 4. Analyzing Needs Assessment Findings & HSAC County Needs Assessment Reporting

Analyzing Needs Assessment Findings & HSAC County Needs Assessment Reporting

- **Analyzing Needs Assessment Findings**
- **Report Overview/Content**
- **HSAC Results Presentation at ChildStat**

Analyzing Needs Assessment Findings

To ensure participant responses are used in the best way possible, HSACs can use various ways to analyze, compile and synthesize that data and information gathered through the focus group process.

Process Considerations:
- o Keep track of surveys by each focus group session and for key informants so that you will be able to analyze survey data by group type.
- o Become familiar with the report template so that you can develop processes to ensure that you will be able to aggregate data as outlined.
- o Use appropriate software to compile and analyze data:
  - o Online survey tool (e.g., Survey Monkey, Qualtrics, Survey Gizmo, etc.)
  - o Excel.
  - o SPSS Software.
  - o Manually.
- o Assess similarities and differences across data collection types (i.e., focus groups and key informant interviews) for specific questions/need areas to identify trends, strengths and challenges across perspectives.

County Needs Assessment Report Template

HSACs will complete a standard summary report, summarizing the information collected during the focus groups and key informant interviews. The standard report will be completed using the template provided by DCF. Upon completion, the standard report will be submitted to DCF and may be distributed broadly.

Report Overview/Content

- *Executive Summary.* HSACs will write a narrative that discusses and introduces the purpose of the report, as well as emerging trends and findings related to the needs assessment that will be highlighted in the report.

- *Introduction.* DCF will provide narrative that provides an in-depth description regarding the purpose of the needs assessment and report.

- *County Description.* HSACs will write a description of the county that includes information related to areas such as: demographics, geography, economics, and education.

- *Needs Assessment Methodology.* DCF will provide language that describes methodologies used for the needs assessment.

  - **County Profile Data.** DCF will provide narrative that describes the content and purpose county profile data.

  - **Approach for Prioritizing Needs.** HSACs will write a narrative that provides a justification for how the four prioritized need areas were selected. The DCF provided profile will include data driven recommendations. However, HSACs may decide to use the areas that emerged from the profile, select need areas that align with local priorities or any combination of the two approaches. HSACs will then list the four need areas selected for the county.

  - **Focus Groups.** DCF will provide narrative that describes the purpose and facilitation process of the focus groups.

  - **Recruitment.** HSACs will provide a narrative related to the recruitment processes.

  - **Focus Group Participants.** DCF will provide narrative that will also require HSACS to select appropriate answers from a drop down or callout box. HSACs will also be required to complete a table about the make-up (e.g., type, age, gender, race education, etc.) of the qualitative data collection participants.

  - **Key Informant Interviews.** DCF will provide a narrative to describe the purpose and facilitation of the key informant interviews.

  - **Recruitment.** HSACs will provide a narrative related to the recruitment processes.

  - **Additional Data Collection Methodologies.** HSACs interested in incorporating additional needs assessment activities will be responsible to write a narrative to describe the process. This is optional.

- o *Key Findings Across Needs.* HSACs will write a narrative summary of the key findings. The summary should describe the following:
  - o *Trends related to Scope Across Needs*
  - o *Significant Common Barriers to Services*
  - o *Significant or Common Trends in Impact of Needs on Subpopulations*
  - o *Overarching Local Considerations for Addressing Needs*
  - o *Trends (Differences or Similarities) Across Stakeholders' Perspectives]*

- o *Key Findings Each Need Area.* HSACs will provide summaries as outlined in the report template related to the scope and nature; local considerations for addressing needs and additional trends as identified. HSACs will also provide some county data information and provide survey results as guided by the template.

HSAC Presentation of ChildStat

A HSAC representative or county Human Service Director will present county needs assessment information at the county biennial ChildStat presentation. DCF and/or Rutgers University will incorporate results of each county needs assessment into ChildStat slide deck. HSACs should be prepared to present and discuss the results during their county ChildStat presentation.

ChildStat. ChildStat is a learning, management, and accountability tool used by DCF to support continuous quality improvement, foster a shared sense of accountability and promote system-wide problem solving around critical issues affecting child and family outcomes. ChildStat allows for discussion of the needs of County constituents, and the analysis and interpretation of qualitative and quantitative data from the County, DCF's Division of Child Protection and Permanency Local Office, and the Children's System of Care. It provides opportunity for dialogue between DCF executive management, senior, area and local office leadership and system partners. Through this process, major child and family service systems in local counties can outline steps to reinforce expectations, strengthen service delivery and outcomes, enhance accountability mechanism and identify immediate and longer-term next steps. ChildStat also supports alignment with other county based continuous quality improvement efforts.

ADDITONAL INFORMATION

For additional information or for technical support you may contact DCF's Office of Quality to be directed to someone that can assist you at 609-888-7500.

Appendix A: Need Area Descriptions

Need Area: Housing   **County Prioritized Need Area**

Description of Need Area: Housing includes the availability of affordable, stable, permanent and acceptable living accommodations. This need area seeks to assess the sufficiency of housing in the county and the degree to which residents are homeless or threatened with eviction, as well as the existence of community supports (e.g., subsidy, vouchers, etc.) and services aimed at ensuring housing for all (e.g., Homelessness Prevention Program, Housing Resource Center, community shelters, County Board of Social Services, Section 8, affordable housing, housing authorities, etc.)

Need Area: Food   **County Prioritized Need Area**

Description of Need Area: Food security is the availability and ability to acquire nutritionally adequate and safe foods. This area of need seeks to assess the level to which residents throughout the county have adequate food and the existence of community services and supports to address unmet food needs (e.g., food banks, soup kitchen, local pantry, community-based organization, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), food stamps, Women, Infants, Children (WIC) Supplemental Nutrition Program, etc.)

Need Area: Health Care   **County Prioritized Need Area**

Description of Need Area: Health care service providers deliver medical care, including health promotion, disease prevention and diagnosis and treatment services, to children and adults. This need area seeks to determine the level of residents in the county with health care needs, the availability of insurance coverage, and the existence of community services and supports that address health and wellness (e.g., doctors and clinics, hospitals, Medicaid Services, Home Visiting Programs, Family Success Centers, etc.)

Need Area: Community Safety   **County Prioritized Need Area**

Description of Need Area: Community safety is the ability to be and feel safe from crime or violence in one's community and public spaces. This need area seeks to assess the level to which residents throughout the county are safe from crime or violence and the existence of community services and supports to assist residents with being and feeling safe in their community (e.g., local police, DCF's Child Protection and Permanency, Family Success Centers, security companies, neighborhood watch, safe havens, hospitals, etc.)

Need Area: Employment and Career Services   **County Prioritized Need Area**

Description of Need Area: Employment is the condition of having paid work or an alternate ability to earn a living. This need area seeks to determine the employment status (e.g., full or part-time, permanent or temporary) of county residents and the employment opportunities within a county, as well as the existence of community services and supports to assist in ensuring employment (e.g., unemployment services, career development, County One-Stop Centers, Family Success Centers, County Board of Social Services, etc.)

Need Area: Child Care   **County Prioritized Need Area**

Description of Need Area: Childcare services include agencies that provide care and supervision to children, as well as before- and after- school care programs. This need area seeks to assess the level to which residents throughout the county need child care and before and after school care and the existence of community services and supports that address the need for childcare (e.g., licensed daycares providers, subsidized and unsubsidized childcare, Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs, Family Success Centers, County Board of Social Services, etc.)

Need Area: Services for Families Caring for a Child of a Relative   **County Prioritized Need Area**

Description of Need Area: Kinship services are supports for caregivers who have taken on the responsibility of caring for kin, including financial assistance, support groups, navigation of government benefits and assistance, and more. This need area seeks to assess the level to which residents require kinship services and the existence of community services and supports to support caregivers' ability to care for their kin (e.g., Kinship Navigator Program, DCF's Division of Child Protection and Permanency, Family Success Centers, County Board of Social Services, etc.)

Need Area: Behavioral/Mental Health Services for Children   **County Prioritized Need Area**

Description of Need Area: Child mental health services are services designed to assess, address and support the emotional, psychological and social well-being of children. This need area seeks to assess the level to which children throughout the county have mental health disorders, their ability to cope and function, and the existence of community services and supports to address children's mental health needs (e.g., hospitals, in/out-patient therapy, individualized counseling, medication management, PerformCare, DCF's Children's System of Care, Family Support Organizations, etc.)

Need Area: Behavioral/Mental Health Services for Adults   **County Prioritized Need Area**

Description of Need Area: Adult mental health services include services designed to assess, address and support the emotional, psychological and social well-being of adults. This need area seeks to assess the level to which adult residents throughout the county have mental health disorders, their ability to function and the existence of community services and supports to address adult mental health needs (e.g., hospitals, in/out-patient therapy, individualized counseling, medication management, Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, PerformCare, etc.)

Need Area: Substance Use Disorder Services   **County Prioritized Need Area**

Description of Need Area: Substance use treatment services includes services that provide a range of assessment and supportive treatment for substance use disorders. This need area seeks to gauge the substance use needs and the existence of community services and supports to address substance use disorder needs throughout the county (e.g., detoxification, short- and long-term inpatient treatment services, outpatient treatment services, medication management, Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, NJ 2-1-1, etc.)

Need Area: Domestic Violence (DV) Services   **County Prioritized Need Area**

Description of Need Area: Domestic violence is violence or other forms of abuse by one person against another in a domestic setting, e.g., husband and wife, child and parent, sibling and sibling, etc. This need area seeks to assess the level to which domestic violence impact residents throughout the county and the existence of community services and supports that will keep families safe from physical, sexual, financial, digital, mental and emotional forms of domestic violence (e.g., shelter services, victim services, batterers intervention services, DCF's Office of Domestic Violence Services, domestic violence liaisons, domestic violence hotline, Family Success Centers, etc.)

Need Area: Parenting Skills Services   **County Prioritized Need Area**

Description of Need Area: Parenting skills services are programs that aim to enhance parental capacity and skills, improve parenting practices and behaviors, and teach age appropriate child development skills and milestones. This need area seeks to assess the level to which residents require parenting skills services and the existence of community services and supports which address parenting skills (e.g., Home Visiting Program, Nurse-Family Partnership, Family Preservation, Family Success Centers, Family Service Organizations, Parents Anonymous, Parent Mentors, SPAN, etc.)

Need Area: Legal and Advisory Services   **County Prioritized Need Area**

Description of Need Area: Legal and advisory services include legal assistance, advocacy and support in various types of legal matters, including child support, child custody, paternity, immigration, domestic violence, housing and eviction, criminal, etc. This need area seeks to assess if the level to which residents throughout the county have unresolved legal issues for which they need assistance and the existence of legal and advisory services to meet those needs (e.g., Legal Aid, pro-bono attorneys and clinics, court system, ombudsman, etc.)

DCF/HSAC Needs Assessment

Focus Group Consent Form

Purpose: You have been invited to participate in a focus group with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and your county Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC). You will be asked to answer questions about (1) your needs, your family's needs, and/or your community's needs and (2) the services available in your community to meet those needs. The purpose of this group is to allow you to share your perspectives and experiences about your community. The information shared will be used to ensure that the right mix of services and activities are available throughout the state.

Procedure: The focus group will last approximately **90 minutes**. The focus group session will consist of a survey and a group discussion.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this focus group is **voluntary.** You are not obligated to participate in this group. If you do participate, you can join in the conversation as much or as little as you like. You may choose not to answer any questions with which you are not comfortable. You can leave the group at any time and for any reason.

Benefits and Risks: The benefit of participation is the opportunity to inform the DCF and the HSACs of your community's strengths and needs. There are no direct benefits or known risks to participation in this project.

Confidentiality: This focus group is **confidential.** Only staff at the DCF and the HSAC, or agencies contracted by DCF or the HSAC to do work related to the needs assessment, will be able to access information about your participation in this group. A report of this study may be published and may be presented at professional conferences, however only de-identified or group results will be stated. **No personally identifying information about you will be published or presented.** Please respect the privacy of other focus group members by not disclosing any content of discussions.

Questions: If you have any questions about this focus group or the needs assessment process, you may contact _____ at (___) ___ - ____.

I understand this information and agree to participate under the conditions stated above.

Print Name: _____

Sign Name: _____

Date: _____

DCF/HSAC Needs Assessment

Key Informant Interview Consent Form

Purpose: You have been invited to participate in an interview with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and your county Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC). You will be asked to answer questions about (1) your needs, your family's needs and/or your community's needs and (2) the services available in your community to meet those needs. The purpose of this interview is to allow you to share your perspectives and experiences about your community. The information shared will be used to ensure that the right mix of services and activities are available throughout the state.

Procedure: The interview will last approximately **90 minutes**. The interview session will consist of a survey and a discussion.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this interview is **voluntary.** You are not obligated to participate. If you do participate, you may choose not to answer any questions with which you are not comfortable. You can end the interview at any time and for any reason.

Benefits and Risks: The benefit of participation is the opportunity to inform the DCF and the HSACs of your community's strengths and needs. There are no direct benefits or known risks to participation in this project.

Confidentiality: This interview is **confidential.** Only staff at the DCF and the HSAC, or agencies contracted by DCF or the HSAC to do work related to the needs assessment, will be able to access information about your participation in this group. A report of this study may be published and may be presented at professional conferences, however only de-identified or group results will be stated. **No personally identifying information about you will be published or presented.** Please respect the privacy of other interviewees by not disclosing any content of discussions.

Questions: If you have any questions about this focus group or the needs assessment process, you may contact _____ at (___) ___ - ____.

I understand this information and agree to participate under the conditions stated above.

Print Name: _____

Sign Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D: Survey

New Jersey DCF/HSAC County Needs Assessment

Purpose

2019-2020

The State of New Jersey's Department of Children and Families (DCF) is committed to ensuring that all New Jersey residents are safe, healthy and connected. To do this, DCF partners with communities in each county to undertake an assessment of <u>local strengths and needs of families with children</u>. The goal of this assessment is to collect information to ensure the right mix of services and activities are available in every community. The following questionnaire should take approximately twenty-five minutes to complete and it will assist in helping families and meeting community needs. All information will be kept confidential. Please note that although you may find the items repetitive in Section B, this is by design. Please consider each item for each Need Area (e.g., housing, food, etc.) Thank you for your time.

Section A. Demographic Information

County Name _____

Date: _____

How old are you?

- ○ Under 18
- ○ 18 - 24
- ○ 25 - 34
- ○ 35 - 44
- ○ 45 - 54
- ○ 55 - 64
- ○ 65 and over

What is your gender?

- ○ Female
- ○ Male
- ○ Non-binary, third gender/transgender
- ○ Prefer not to say
- ○ Other (fill-in)_____

What is your race?

- ○ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ○ Asian
- ○ Black or African American
- ○ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ○ White or Caucasian
- ○ Multi-race (two or more of the previous)
- ○ Other (fill-in) _____

What is your ethnicity?

- ○ Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origins
- ○ Not Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origins

Which is your employment status?

- ○ Employed - full time
- ○ Employed - part time
- ○ Unemployed - looking for work
- ○ Unemployed - not looking for work
- ○ Retired
- ○ Student
- ○ Self-employed
- ○ Unable to Work

What is your highest education level?

- ○ Grades preschool -8
- ○ High school- Non-graduate
- ○ High school– Graduate or GED
- ○ High school/GED <u>and</u> some post-secondary
- ○ 2- or 4-year college graduate
- ○ Graduate or other post-secondary school

Demographic Section (continue)

What is your role in the community?

○ I live in the county

○ I work in the county as a staff member or volunteer with a community-based organization
(e.g., Health and Human Services providers, Planning Board Participants)

○ I work in the county as staff member or volunteer with a public service organization
(e.g., paramedics, fire fighter, police officers, air force, judges)

○ I am a local business owner who sells goods or services in this county

○ I act in the role of community leader and advocate in the county (e.g., hold a volunteer office, clergy, activist)
Other _____

Which municipality do you consider yourself a resident or community member of (you may write in all that apply)?

_____ _____

Have you or someone in your household accessed services within the past two years? (Services could include, but are not limited to, case management support, community center support, job training, soup kitchens, shelters, welfare services, substance abuse treatment, mental health counseling, youth services or others.)

○ Yes

○ No

○ Prefer Not to Say

Have you or someone in your household had DCF Division of Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P) involvement?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Prefer Not to Say

How many years have you been a resident or member of a community in this county?

_____

Section B. Understanding Needs and Services of Families with Children

Housing
Directions: Indicate the degree to which agree with each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	O	O	O	O	O
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	O	O	O	O	O
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	O	O	O	O	O
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	O	O	O	O	O
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	O	O	O	O	O
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	O	O	O	O	O

Directions: Consider the barriers that make it difficult to address this need in the county. Mark all that apply.

☐ Wait Lists
☐ Services do not exist
☐ Transportation
☐ Cannot contact the service provider
☐ Too expensive

☐ Lack of awareness of service
☐ Cultural Barriers
☐ Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs

☐ Stigma Leads to Avoidance
☐ Eligibility Requirement (explain below)

_____

☐ Other (explain below)

Optional: Is there anything else that you would like county leaders to know about related to **housing**?

Food
Directions: Indicate the degree to which agree with each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	O	O	O	O	O
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	O	O	O	O	O
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	O	O	O	O	O
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	O	O	O	O	O
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	O	O	O	O	O
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	O	O	O	O	O

Directions: Consider the barriers that make it difficult to address this need in the county. Mark all that apply.

☐ Wait Lists
☐ Services do not exist
☐ Transportation
☐ Cannot contact the service provider
☐ Too expensive

☐ Lack of awareness of service
☐ Cultural Barriers
☐ Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs

☐ Stigma Leads to Avoidance
☐ Eligibility Requirement (explain below)

_____

☐ Other (explain below)

Optional: Is there anything else that you would like county leaders to know about related to **food**?

Health Care

Directions: Indicate the degree to which agree with each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	O	O	O	O	O
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	O	O	O	O	O
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	O	O	O	O	O
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	O	O	O	O	O
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	O	O	O	O	O
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	O	O	O	O	O

Directions: Consider the barriers that make it difficult to address this need in the county. Mark all that apply.

☐ Wait Lists
☐ Services do not exist
☐ Transportation
☐ Cannot contact the service provider
☐ Too expensive

☐ Lack of awareness of service
☐ Cultural Barriers
☐ Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs

☐ Stigma Leads to Avoidance
☐ Eligibility Requirement (explain below)

_____

☐ Other (explain below)

Optional: Is there anything else that you would like county leaders to know about related to **health care?**

Community Safety

Directions: Indicate the degree to which agree with each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	O	O	O	O	O
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	O	O	O	O	O
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	O	O	O	O	O
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	O	O	O	O	O
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	O	O	O	O	O
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	O	O	O	O	O

Directions: Consider the barriers that make it difficult to address this need in the county. Mark all that apply.

☐ Wait Lists
☐ Services do not exist
☐ Transportation
☐ Cannot contact the service provider
☐ Too expensive

☐ Lack of awareness of service
☐ Cultural Barriers
☐ Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs

☐ Stigma Leads to Avoidance
☐ Eligibility Requirement (explain below)

_____

☐ Other (explain below)

Optional: Is there anything else that you would like county leaders to know about related to **community safety?**

Employment and Career Services
Directions: Indicate the degree to which agree with each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	O	O	O	O	O
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	O	O	O	O	O
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	O	O	O	O	O
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	O	O	O	O	O
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	O	O	O	O	O
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	O	O	O	O	O

Directions: Consider the barriers that make it difficult to address this need in the county. Mark all that apply.

- ☐ Wait Lists
- ☐ Services do not exist
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Cannot contact the service provider
- ☐ Too expensive

- ☐ Lack of awareness of service
- ☐ Cultural Barriers
- ☐ Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs

- ☐ Stigma Leads to Avoidance
- ☐ Eligibility Requirement (explain below)

_____

- ☐ Other (explain below)

Optional: Is there anything else that you would like county leaders to know about related to **Employment and Career Services**

Child Care
Directions: Indicate the degree to which agree with each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	O	O	O	O	O
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	O	O	O	O	O
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	O	O	O	O	O
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	O	O	O	O	O
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	O	O	O	O	O
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	O	O	O	O	O

Directions: Consider the barriers that make it difficult to address this need in the county. Mark all that apply.

- ☐ Wait Lists
- ☐ Services do not exist
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Cannot contact the service provider
- ☐ Too expensive

- ☐ Lack of awareness of service
- ☐ Cultural Barriers
- ☐ Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs

- ☐ Stigma Leads to Avoidance
- ☐ Eligibility Requirement (explain below)

_____

- ☐ Other (explain below)

Optional: Is there anything else that you would like county leaders to know about related to **child care?**

Services: Families Caring for a Child of a Relative

Directions: Indicate the degree to which agree with each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	O	O	O	O	O
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	O	O	O	O	O
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	O	O	O	O	O
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	O	O	O	O	O
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	O	O	O	O	O
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	O	O	O	O	O

Directions: Consider the barriers that make it difficult to address this need in the county. Mark all that apply.

- ☐ Wait Lists
- ☐ Services do not exist
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Cannot contact the service provider
- ☐ Too expensive
- ☐ Lack of awareness of service
- ☐ Cultural Barriers
- ☐ Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs
- ☐ Stigma Leads to Avoidance
- ☐ Eligibility Requirement (explain below)

_____

- ☐ Other (explain below)

Optional: Is there anything else that you would like county leaders to know about related to **services for kin or family caring for the child of a relative**

Behavioral Health/Mental Health Services for Children

Directions: Indicate the degree to which agree with each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	O	O	O	O	O
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	O	O	O	O	O
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	O	O	O	O	O
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	O	O	O	O	O
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	O	O	O	O	O
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	O	O	O	O	O

Directions: Consider the barriers that make it difficult to address this need in the county. Mark all that apply.

- ☐ Wait Lists
- ☐ Services do not exist
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Cannot contact the service provider
- ☐ Too expensive
- ☐ Lack of awareness of service
- ☐ Cultural Barriers
- ☐ Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs
- ☐ Stigma Leads to Avoidance
- ☐ Eligibility Requirement (explain below)

_____

- ☐ Other (explain below)

Optional: Is there anything else that you would like county leaders to know about related to **behavioral heath and/or mental health services for children?**

Behavioral Health/Mental Health Services for Adults
Directions: Indicate the degree to which agree with each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	O	O	O	O	O
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	O	O	O	O	O
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	O	O	O	O	O
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	O	O	O	O	O
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	O	O	O	O	O
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	O	O	O	O	O

Directions: Consider the barriers that make it difficult to address this need in the county. Mark all that apply.

- ☐ Wait Lists
- ☐ Services do not exist
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Cannot contact the service provider
- ☐ Too expensive

- ☐ Lack of awareness of service
- ☐ Cultural Barriers
- ☐ Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs

- ☐ Stigma Leads to Avoidance
- ☐ Eligibility Requirement (explain below)

_____

- ☐ Other (explain below)

Optional: Is there anything else that you would like county leaders to know about related to **behavioral heath and/or mental health services for adults**?

Substance Use Disorder Services
Directions: Indicate the degree to which agree with each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	O	O	O	O	O
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	O	O	O	O	O
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	O	O	O	O	O
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	O	O	O	O	O
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	O	O	O	O	O
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	O	O	O	O	O

Directions: Consider the barriers that make it difficult to address this need in the county. Mark all that apply.

- ☐ Wait Lists
- ☐ Services do not exist
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Cannot contact the service provider
- ☐ Too expensive
- ☐ Lack of awareness of service

- ☐ Cultural Barriers
- ☐ Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs
- ☐ Stigma Leads to Avoidance
- ☐ Substance Use Disorder
- ☐ Eligibility Requirements (explain below)

- ☐ Availability of Substance Use Disorder Services for Adolescents

- ☐ Availability of Substance Abuse Prevention Programs

- ☐ Other (explain below)

Optional: Is there anything else that you would like county leaders to know about related to **substance use disorder services**?

Domestic Violence Services
Directions: Indicate the degree to which agree with each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	O	O	O	O	O
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	O	O	O	O	O
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	O	O	O	O	O
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	O	O	O	O	O
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	O	O	O	O	O
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	O	O	O	O	O

Directions: Consider the barriers that make it difficult to address this need in the county. Mark all that apply.

☐ Wait Lists
☐ Services do not exist
☐ Transportation
☐ Cannot contact the service provider
☐ Too expensive

☐ Lack of awareness of service
☐ Cultural Barriers
☐ Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs

☐ Stigma Leads to Avoidance
☐ Eligibility Requirement (explain below)

_____

☐ Other (explain below)

Optional: Is there anything else that you would like county leaders to know about related to **domestic violence services?**

Parenting Skills Services
Directions: Indicate the degree to which agree with each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	O	O	O	O	O
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	O	O	O	O	O
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	O	O	O	O	O
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	O	O	O	O	O
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	O	O	O	O	O
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	O	O	O	O	O

Directions: Consider the barriers that make it difficult to address this need in the county. Mark all that apply.

☐ Wait Lists
☐ Services do not exist
☐ Transportation
☐ Cannot contact the service provider
☐ Too expensive

☐ Lack of awareness of service
☐ Cultural Barriers
☐ Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs

☐ Stigma Leads to Avoidance
☐ Eligibility Requirement (explain below)

_____

☐ Other (explain below)

Optional: Is there anything else that you would like county leaders to know about related to **parenting skills services?**

Legal and Advocacy Services

Directions: Indicate the degree to which agree with each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	O	O	O	O	O
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	O	O	O	O	O
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	O	O	O	O	O
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	O	O	O	O	O
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	O	O	O	O	O
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	O	O	O	O	O

Directions: Consider the barriers that make it difficult to address this need in the county. Mark all that apply.

☐ Wait Lists
☐ Services do not exist
☐ Transportation
☐ Cannot contact the service provider
☐ Too expensive

☐ Lack of awareness of service
☐ Cultural Barriers
☐ Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs

☐ Stigma Leads to Avoidance
☐ Eligibility Requirement (explain below)

_____

☐ Other (explain below)

Optional: Is there anything else that you would like county leaders to know about related to **legal and advocacy services?**

Section C. Prioritizing

Step 1.

Prioritizing Basic Needs

Directions: If you had to select the TOP THREE **Basic Needs** that should be addressed in your county right now, which 3 would you recommend? Please select three from the list below.

☐ Housing

☐ Food

☐ Health Care

☐ Community Safety

☐ Employment and Career Services

☐ Child Care

Step 2.

Prioritizing Service Needs

Directions: If you had to select the TOP THREE **Service Needs** that should be addressed in your county right now, which 3 would you recommend? Please select three from the list below.

☐ Behavioral/Mental Health Services for Adults

☐ Substance Use Disorder Services

☐ Services for Families Caring for Children of a Relative

☐ Behavioral/Mental Health Services for Children

☐ Domestic Violence Services

☐ Parenting Skills Services

☐ Legal Advisory Services

Appendix E: Focus Group Protocol

Focus Group Protocol

Focus Group Leader: _____

Support Staff: _____

Date: _____

90 Minute Agenda

- Arrival/Bringing the group together to begin (5 minutes)
- Introduction of focus group leader and support staff and explanation of project, goals for the focus group, confidentiality, and the type of information covered in the focus group (5 minutes)
- Consent forms and survey completion (25 minutes)
- Break for need prioritization by focus group leader (5 minutes)
- Focus group dialogue (50 minutes)

Materials Needed

- Consent forms for participants (approximately 10 copies)
- Surveys (approximately 10 copies)
- Focus group questionnaire (1 copy for each member of the facilitation team)
- Paper
- Pens (15)

Facilitator Guidance

List the two basic need priority areas that will be discussed in this group.

1.

2.

List the two service need priority areas that will be discussed in this group.

3.

4.

Introduction

Hello. Thank you for making the time to be here today. My name is _____ and I am with _____. The N.J. Department of Children and Families is partnering with human services organizations in each county to undertake an assessment of local strengths and needs. The goal of this assessment is to collect the information needed to make sure the right mix of services and activities are available in every county in New Jersey to support families. The purpose of today's meeting is to find out about your experiences and perceptions as a community member in this county. Your feedback today will help our local and state level leaders in planning and taking action to meet the needs of New Jersey residents. This focus group is just one group of a series of focus groups. Information from everyone that we talk to will be combined to understand trends related to strengths and needs in this county.

Confidentiality Statement and Survey Completion

(Note to focus group facilitation team: The following confidentiality statement must be read verbatim.)

Your participation in this session is voluntary and confidential. Your name will not appear on any published papers and nothing you say today will be connected with you personally.

This focus group should last approximately 90 minutes. First, we will ask each of you to complete a survey. You will have approximately 20 minutes to complete the survey and hand it in to _____. Then, we will take a short break and then come back together to begin the conversation portion of the focus group.

Okay, let's get started with the survey, if you need any assistance or have any questions, please feel free to ask and we will be happy to assist you. When you have finished your consent form and survey, hold on to them and we will come around to collect them.

(Note to focus group facilitation team:
- **Allow 25 minutes for group participants to sign the form, complete survey and return both.)**
- **Ensure that all participants have returned signed consent forms.)**
- **Complete the Facilitation Team section of the survey after the focus group participants hands in the survey. This portion of the survey is intended to help to track the participant group and assist in data analysis later in the process.**
- **Try to complete a quick review of the Ranking Section (bottom of pg. 9) of the surveys to determine if the pre-selected priority areas make sense for the group. As directed by your leadership, determine if any changes need to be made to priority discussion areas for this group. Next, bring the groups back together to begin the focus group.)**

Focus Group Discussion

Okay, let's begin. First, let's me review some quick ground rules. We want to hear from all of you, so please do not be afraid to speak up. At the same time, please respect the other participants in the group. Do not cut them off or talk over them. Most importantly, the topics discussed in this focus group should not be discussed outside of this room. Please respect each other's point of view.

Okay, let's start off by quickly introducing ourselves.

(Note to focus group facilitation team: Before you start to ask questions, go around the room and ask participants to introduce themselves by the name they wish to be referred to and to share how long they have lived, worked or been an active member in the county.)

Thank you everyone. Now, in the survey you provided your opinions on a list of the different topics (e.g. food, transportation, employment). In the interest of time, in our group we are going to focus on _____, _____, _____, _____, and then have a discussion to better understand how we can make sure that the members of the community can actually begin using services once they learn about or are referred to them.

First, let's talk about _____.

(Note to focus group facilitation team: Ask question 1 – 3 for each priority need area.
Tip: Consider asking the group if it would be okay if you displayed the groups responses for each area on large paper or a writing board. This may help when asking the group to think across priority need areas in question 4-6.)

1. When people need help related to _____, what do they currently do to try to meet the need?

2. When people struggle to meet their needs, what are some of the barriers that make it difficult for them to get help and fully address the need?
    Example clarity questions: Are these barriers new (i.e., have they come up in the past 5 years or so?) Or are they long standing (i.e., existed persistently more than 5 years?)

3. What would be most helpful steps the county could take to address the barriers in this need area?

Now, Let's talk about another need that has been identified _____

(Note to focus group facilitation team: only ask the remaining questions once. You do not need to ask for every need area.)

4. Are there areas in the county where the barriers that we've been discussing for needs areas do not exist? Are there areas where these barriers have a larger impact?

5. The goal is for equal access to resources and services for everyone in the county. Are there any subgroups (e.g., race, ethnic group, children under a certain age, adoelscents, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) that are influenced by the barriers related to any of the need areas that we have been discussing more than others?

6. How do most people learn about services in the county (e.g., other community members, churches, professionals in service organizations, schools, police, medical providers, print media, internet, etc.)?

(Note to focus group facilitation team: At the end of all focus group discussion, thank the group for taking time out of their schedule to participate in the focus group. Express appreciation for their willingness to participate and to share their perspectives.)

Appendix F: Youth and Young Adult Focus Group Protocol

Youth/Young Adult Focus Group Protocol

Focus Group Leader: _____

Support Staff: _____

Date: _____

Youth/Young Adult Selection Criteria: HSACs must also conduct focus groups that consist solely of youth/young adults. ALL participants can <u>only be used in 1</u> focus group in the same needs assessment cycle. Youth and young adults ages 16 through 23 can participate in the focus group. All youth <u>**under age 18 must have a signed parental consent form**</u> to participate in the focus group. In addition, each youth/young adult participating in the focus group must sign a consent form.

The youth/young adults who participate in the focus group can be involved with DCF (e.g. CP&P and CSOC); however, they are not required to have past or present DCF involvement to be part of the focus group.

90 Minute Agenda
- Arrival/bringing the group together to begin (5 minutes)
- Introduction of focus group leader and support staff and explanation of project, goals for the focus group, confidentiality, and the type of information covered in the focus group (5 minutes)
- Consent forms and survey completion (25 minutes)
- Break for need prioritization by focus group leader (5 minutes)
- Focus group dialogue (50 minutes)

Materials Needed
- Consent forms for participants (approximately 10 copies)
- Surveys (approximately 10 copies)
- Focus group questionnaire (1 copy for each member of the facilitation team)
- Paper
- Pens (15)

Facilitator Guidance

List the two basic need priority areas that will be discussed in this group.

1.

2.

List the two service need priority areas that will be discussed in this group.

3.

4.

Introduction

Hello. Thank you for making the time to be here today. My name is _____ and I am with _____. The N.J. Department of Children and Families is partnering with human services organizations in each county to assess local strengths and needs. The goal of this assessment is to collect the information needed to make sure the right mix of services and activities are available in every county in New Jersey to support families. The purpose of today's meeting is to find out about your experiences and views as a community member in this county. Your feedback today will help our local and state level leaders in planning and taking action to meet the needs of New Jersey residents. This focus group is just one group of a series of focus groups. Information from everyone that we talk to will be combined to understand trends related to strengths and needs in this county.

Confidentiality Statement and Survey Completion

(Note to focus group facilitation team: The following confidentiality statement must be read verbatim.)

Your participation in this session is voluntary and confidential. Your name will not appear on any published papers and nothing you say today will be connected with you personally.

This focus group should last approximately 90 minutes. First, we will ask each of you to complete a survey. You will have approximately 20 minutes to complete the survey and hand it in to _____. Then, we will take a short break and then come back together to begin the conversation portion of the focus group.

Okay, let's get started with the survey, if you need any assistance or have any questions, please feel free to ask and we will be happy to assist you. When you have finished your consent (and if applicable parental consent) form and survey, hold on to them and we will come around to collect them.

(Note to focus group facilitation team:
- **Allow 25 minutes for group participants to sign the form, complete survey and return both.)**
- **Ensure that all parental consent forms for youth/young adults under age 18 are returned and SIGNED by the PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN. <u>Also make sure the age of each youth is documented on the consent form.</u>**
- **Ensure that all YOUTH/YOUNG ADULTS complete and sign the focus group consent form. For youth under 18 there will be 2 consent forms submitted.**
- **Complete the Facilitation Team section of the survey after the focus group participants hands in the survey. This portion of the survey is intended to help to track the participant group and assist in data analysis later in the process.**
- **Try to complete a quick review of the Ranking Section (bottom of pg. 9) of the surveys to determine if the pre-selected priority areas make sense for the group. As directed by your local**

leadership or planning team, determine if any changes need to be made to priority discussion areas for this group. Next, bring the groups back together to begin the focus group.)

Focus Group Discussion

Okay, let's begin. First, let's review some quick ground rules. We want to hear from all of you, so please do not be afraid to speak up. At the same time, please respect the other participants in the group. Do not cut them off or talk over them. Most importantly, the topics discussed in this focus group should not be discussed outside of this room. Please respect each other's point of view.

Okay, let's start off by quickly introducing ourselves.

(Note to focus group facilitation team: Before you start to ask questions, go around the room and ask participants to introduce themselves by the name they wish to be referred to and to share how long they have lived, worked or been an active member in the county.)

Thank you everyone. Now, in the survey you provided your opinions on a list of the different topics (e.g. food, transportation, employment). In the interest of time, in our group we are going to focus on _____, _____, _____, _____, and then have a discussion to better understand how we can make sure that the members of the community can actually begin using services once they learn about or are referred to them.

First, let's talk about _____.

(Note to focus group facilitation team: Ask question 1 – 3 for each priority need area.
Tip: Consider asking the group if it would be okay if you displayed the groups responses for each area on large paper or a writing board. This may help when asking the group to think across priority need areas in question 4-6.

7. When people need help related to _____, what do they currently do to try to meet the need?

8. When people struggle to meet their needs, what are some of the barriers/challenges that make it difficult for them to get help and fully address the need?
   Example clarity questions: Are these barriers and challenges new (i.e., have they come up in the past 5 years or so?) Or are they long standing (i.e., existed persistently more than 5 years?)

9. What would be most helpful steps the county could take to address the barriers in this need area?

Now, Let's talk about another need that has been identified _____

(Note to focus group facilitation team: only ask the remaining questions once. You do not need to ask for every need area.)

10. Are there areas in the county where the barriers/challenges that we've been discussing for needs areas do not exist? Are there areas where these barriers/challenges have a larger impact?

11. The goal is for equal access to resources and services for everyone in the county. Are there any subgroups (e.g., race, ethnic group, children under a certain age, adoelscents, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) that are influenced by the barriers/challenges related to any of the need areas that we have been discussing more than others?

12. How do most people learn about services in the county (e.g., other community members, churches, professionals in service organizations, schools, police, medical providers, print media, internet, etc.)?

(Note to focus group facilitation team: At the end of all focus group discussion, thank the group for taking time out of their schedule to participate in the focus group. Express appreciation for their willingness to participate and to share their perspectives.)

Appendix G: Key Informant Interview Protocol

Key Informant Interview Protocol

Interview Leader: _____

Interview Organization: _____

Title of Individual Interviewed: _____

Date: _____

90 Minute Agenda

- Explanation of project, goals for the interview, confidentiality, and the type of information covered in the interview (5 minutes)
- Consent forms and survey completion (25 minutes)
- Interview dialogue (60 minutes)

Materials Needed

- Consent forms for participant
- Survey
- Interview Questionnaire
- Paper
- Pens

Introduction

Hello. Thank you for making the time to be here today. My name is _____ and I am with _____. The N.J. Department of Children and Families is partnering with local communities in each county to undertake an assessment of local strengths and needs. The goal of this assessment is to collect the information needed to make sure the right mix of services and activities are available in every county to support families. The purpose of today's meeting is to gain insights from your experience in the county and to highlight factors and local context that contributes to how the county goes about addressing needs. Your feedback will help our county and state level leaders in planning for next steps. Information from everyone that we talk to will be combined to understand the trends related to strengths and needs in this county.

Confidentiality Statement and Survey Completion

(Note to Interviewer: The following confidentiality statement must be read verbatim.)

Your participation in this session is voluntary and confidential. Your name will not appear on any published papers and nothing you say today will be connected with you personally in our notes.

This interview should last approximately 90 minutes. First, we will ask you to complete a survey. You will have approximately 25 minutes.

Interview Discussion

Okay, let's get started with the survey, if you need any assistance or have any questions, please feel free to ask. Then after completing the survey, we will begin the conversation portion of this interview.

(Note to Interviewer: Allow 25 minutes for the key informants to sign the consent form, complete the survey and return.)

(Note to interviewer: Ensure that all participants have returned signed consent forms.)

Thank you. Now in the survey you provided your opinions on a list of many different topics (e.g. food, transportation, employment). In the interest of time, we are going to focus on _____, _____, _____, _____, and have a discussion to better understand how we can make sure that the members of the community can actually begin using services once they learn about or are referred to them.

First, let's talk about _____

(Note to interviewer: Ask question 1 – 3 for each priority need area.
Tip: Consider asking the participant if it would be okay if you displayed the focus need areas on a piece of paper. This may help when asking the participant to think across priority need areas in question 4-12.

1. When people need help related to _____, what do they currently do to try to meet the need?

2. When people struggle to meet their needs, what are some of the barriers that make it difficult for them to get help and fully address the need?
   Example clarity questions: Are these barriers new (i.e., have they come up in the past 5 years or so?) Or are they long standing (i.e., existed persistently more than 5 years?)

3. What would be most helpful steps the county could take to address the barriers in this need area?

Now, Let's talk about another need that has been identified _____

(Note to interviewer: only ask the remaining questions once. You do not need to ask for every need area.)

4. Are there areas in the county where the barriers that we've been discussing do not exist? Are there areas where these barriers have a larger impact?

5. The goal is for equal access to resources and services for everyone in the county. Are there any subgroups (e.g., race, ethnic group, children under a certain age, adolescents, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) that are influenced by the barriers related to any of the need areas that we have been discussing more than others?

6. Are there any other contributing factors that are causing the any of the needs to continue to be a concern and the barriers to persist in the county?

(Note to interview: Be careful to note when the participant is referring to all needs areas versus specific need areas)

7. When people learn about services or get referred to a service related to the need areas that we've been focusing on, what gets in the way of them being able to get what they need from the service to fully address the need?

8. Thinking of the need areas that we've discussed, is it reasonable to think that these can be addressed at the county level? Are the steps needed to address this need in the county feasible for the county?

9. Does the county have or have access to enough organizations/programs/resources to adequately meet the demand associated with addressing the needs discussed?

10. If prioritized, would the existing constellation of service providers and community support organizations be able to address all of the needs that we've been talking about? Are the necessary resources readily available?

11. What additional collaboration from the New Jersey Department of Children and Families would be helpful in meeting the needs of families locally?

12. How long have you been a resident, volunteered or worked in this county?

(Note to interviewer: Please thank the participant for taking time out of his or her schedule to participate in the interview. Express appreciation for their willingness to participate and to share his or her perspectives.)