



Office of Addiction  
Services and Supports

Office of  
Mental Health

Office for People With  
Developmental Disabilities

## 2023 Goals and Plans Form

### Sullivan County Department of Community Services

**Goal 1: Workforce** – Workforce stabilization is a priority need as Sullivan County continues to experience a severe workforce shortage.

**Goal 2: Housing** - Housing remains a priority need in Sullivan County as existing housing programs do not have enough capacity to meet the need.

**Goal 3: Cross Systems Services** - There is a need for more flexibility regarding services and supports for dually diagnosed individuals with multiple systems involvement.

**Goal 4 (Optional): Transitional Age Services** - There is a need for services for transitional age youth/young adults in Sullivan County.

**Goal 5 (Optional): Transportation** – Transportation continues to be a priority need in Sullivan County. Public transportation is minimal in more populated areas of the County and is merely non-existent in the outlying communities.

#### **Annual and intermediate plans for addiction services:**

Systems transformation work will continue through our United Sullivan initiative. United Sullivan is based on a “No Wrong Door” philosophy that promotes continuous quality improvement and improves co-occurring capability across all systems. Stakeholders within the system of care work in partnership to create a system of care that is welcoming, accessible, person- and family-oriented, recovery- and resiliency-oriented, trauma-informed, culturally competent, integrated, and co-occurring capable. Through United Sullivan, we will continue to promote knowledge of, and access to addiction treatment, enhance services and supports to promote and sustain recovery from substance use disorders, and promote harm reduction. We will also continue to enhance multilingual, multicultural care.

The Sullivan County Substance Use Task Force, which consists of eight “Pillars” with content experts leading focused teams, will continue ongoing efforts to improve the lives of those impacted by substance use. The Pillars include: The United Sullivan Pillar, Information/Technology Services/Data Pillar, Medical Provider Services Pillar, H.O.P.E & Prevention Pillar, Policy Reform Pillar, Law Enforcement Pillar, Treatment Programs Pillar, and the C.A.R.E (Perinatal) Pillar. The vision of the Task Force includes collaboration as a community to reduce stigma, protect the vulnerable, coordinate resources based on data driven need, initiate and implement prevention and treatment strategies, and support those who protect our county. The LGU will remain an active participant in, and supporter of these efforts.

In 2022, three new providers began offering SUD treatment services in Sullivan County

including, Bridge Back to Life Center, Inc., Lexington Center for Recovery, and Restorative Management Corp. The LGU will continue to promote all available resources to increase awareness of and linkage to these services.

Sullivan County continues with participation in the HEALing Communities Study (HCS), a National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) grant that was awarded to Columbia University in 2019. The goal of the HCS is to reduce opioid overdose fatalities by at least 40% over the course of the study. The chief priorities of the HCS is to increase opioid overdose prevention education and naloxone distribution; Increase delivery of medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD); and Promote safer prescribing practices and dispensing. These evidence-based strategies will be implemented within three high risk sectors, including behavioral health, healthcare, and the criminal justice system.

There is a need for broader community prevention in addition to youth prevention. Public awareness of mental health, substance use disorders, overdose prevention, and contaminated drugs causing unintentional overdoses (unaware that fentanyl can now be found in many other street drugs) is needed. The goal is to expand prevention services and the LGU will support available opportunities for such.

Workforce – OASAS programs have experienced a workforce shortage of licensed and credentialed staff and more competitive pay, training, and workforce development is needed. Investments in the workforce have been long-overdue. Most recently, various state-funded bonus structures have not necessarily been as effective as increases to base salaries/COLAs that keep up with inflation. Wage growth outside of/in other parts of the field, proliferation of remote work opportunities, additional providers entering Sullivan County, etc. have contributed to critical vacancy rates. The LGU's goal is to stabilize the workforce.

Housing - Housing remains a priority need in Sullivan County as existing housing programs do not have enough capacity to meet the need. Sullivan County does not have a homeless shelter and much of the homeless housing is within the local hotels/motels through the Department of Family Services. This housing option is not supervised and is often not conducive to an individual's recovery process due to the level of substance use and availability in the vicinity of the buildings. In addition, the hotels/motels are not equipped to manage behaviors which typically results in increased medical and/or law enforcement crisis response. The goal of the LGU is to establish additional safe, sober, and transitional housing in Sullivan County. The LGU will support available options to expand housing in our community.

Cross Systems Services - There continues to be a need for more flexibility regarding services and supports for dually diagnosed individuals with multiple systems involvement. The goal of the LGU is to improve cross systems services in our community.

Transportation - Transportation is a major barrier regarding access to care. Public transportation is minimal in more populated areas of the county and merely non-existent

in the outlying communities. The goal of the LGU is to improve transportation services in our community. The LGU will continue to advocate for the expansion of transportation services.

**Annual and intermediate plans for developmental disability services:**

OPWDD transitioned to a state-wide Front Door information schedule and families are able to register for a WebEx session directly on the website. This is beneficial for families who have access to the technology necessary to attend a virtual session; however, a challenge remains for families who are unable to attend the sessions due to a lack of equipment or internet service. Families continue to experience barriers when seeking OPWDD eligibility and subsequent services. The process of applying for OPWDD eligibility and services remains cumbersome for families. There is not enough direct support during the process regarding paperwork requirements, needed testing, the appeals process, and linkage to a Care Coordination Organization. Some families give up on seeking services because they become too overwhelmed or confused with the process. It is the goal of the LGU to improve these areas of need.

Workforce – Workforce recruitment and retention continues to be an issue across all three disability population in Sullivan County. High staff vacancies and turnover rates disrupt service delivery and there is an urgent and critical need to recruit, train and retain human services staff. The LGU’s goal is to stabilize the workforce.

Housing - Housing remains a priority need in Sullivan County as existing housing programs do not have enough capacity to meet the need. There continues to be a need for housing for transitional age youth/young adults (18-21) and there is a growing need for housing options for individuals with high functioning autism. The OPWDD housing stock that is available faces challenges as those living there ‘age in place’, requiring structural modifications (for which there is limited funding). For those who are seeking a place to live within the OPWDD system, the lack of single bedrooms is an obstacle. Younger folks have reasonable expectations of privacy in their home and often do not wish to share a bedroom with someone else, as is the lack of non-traditional supported housing types. The LGU will support available options to expand housing in our community and the appropriate placement of persons with complex needs.

Cross Systems Services - Persons with multiple systems involvement can become "stuck between silos," thus impeding eligibility for appropriate services. There continues to be a need for more flexibility regarding eligibility for services and supports for dually diagnosed individuals with multiple systems involvement. The goal of the LGU is to improve cross systems services in our community.

Transitional Age Services - There continues to be a need for services and supports for transitional age youth/young adults. Many families have waited until the last minute for transition planning. Proactive work in the schools is needed. Eligibility is an issue for many youth; the process is long and complicated and although the CCOs are required to help, they often give minimal assistance. Also, getting determinations of eligibility for waiver services is becoming increasingly difficult for youth on the spectrum – OPWDD is

requiring ADOS or other confirmatory testing of Autism diagnoses and there are very few providers in the region able to conduct them and almost none take Medicaid. It is the goal of the LGU to improve transitional age services.

Transportation - Transportation is a major barrier regarding access to care. Public transportation is minimal in more populated areas of the county and merely non-existent in the outlying communities. In addition, more transportation options for persons with mobility issues is needed. The goal of the LGU is to improve transportation services in our community. The LGU will continue to advocate for the expansion of transportation services.

**Annual and intermediate plans for mental health services:**

Systems transformation work will continue through our United Sullivan initiative to create a system of care that is welcoming, accessible, person- and family-oriented, recovery- and resiliency-oriented, trauma-informed, culturally competent, integrated, and co-occurring capable. The LGU will continue to promote the mission of United Sullivan while increasing community knowledge of, and access to services. We will also enhance multilingual, multicultural care.

The LGU's goal is to expand and enhance children and youth services. Sullivan County will continue to enhance our System of Care through an intensive team-based planning process intended to provide coordinated, comprehensive, holistic, youth- and family-driven care to meet the complex needs of children, youth and families who have multiple system involvement and who may experience serious mental health or behavioral challenges.

Workforce - Mental Health providers in Sullivan County continue to experience ongoing, critical staffing shortages. At this time, there is an unprecedented number of staff vacancies with a shortage of applicants to fill the positions. In addition, an increased number of professionals are leaving the field while others are selecting other professions altogether. Psychiatrists remain in high demand as well, especially child psychiatrists. Providers in our community generally have extensive waiting lists or are unable to accommodate new patients due to staffing shortages. The LGU's goal is to stabilize the workforce.

Housing - Housing remains a priority need in Sullivan County. There is a need for more supervised housing as existing housing programs do not have enough capacity to meet the need. An increasing number of folks from urban and suburban areas of the state are moving into Sullivan County, thereby reducing the number of available rental options for residents. Rent prices have skyrocketed and existing programs are having difficulty finding supported apartments at fair market value. The A-SPOA housing waiting lists are very long; it often takes many years for an individual to reach the top of our housing waiting lists. The goal of the LGU is to expand housing in our community.

Cross Systems Services - The number of individuals with co-occurring or complex needs continues to grow. Cross System services and deeper collaborations are

necessary. The goal of the LGU is to improve cross systems services in our community.

Transitional Age Services - There continues to be a need for housing and employment services for aging out / transitional age youth/young adults. Sullivan County could benefit from a transitional residence to assist with a successful transition to adulthood. It is the goal of the LGU to improve transitional age services.

Transportation - Transportation is a major barrier regarding access to care. Public transportation is minimal in more populated areas of the county and merely non-existent in the outlying communities. In addition, more transportation options for persons with mobility issues is needed. The goal of the LGU is to improve transportation services in our community. The LGU will continue to advocate for the expansion of transportation services.

**LGU Representative Name:** Heidi Reimer

**LGU Representative Title:** Senior Community Services Coordinator

**Submitted for:** Sullivan County Department of Community Services



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## 2023 Needs Assessment Form

### Sullivan County Department of Community Services

#### **Adverse Childhood Experiences** Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): There is a need to understand and address Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) county-wide and to further work to develop a resilient and trauma informed system of care.

Ideally, the ACEs screening tool should be implemented by schools and other providers involved with the family and children. There is a need for additional education, prevention, and intervention strategies in this area of need. In addition, there is a need to increase resilience scores among our youth.

#### **Case Management/Care Coordination** Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): OMH: Cases being referred through SPOA are becoming increasingly complex. Staffing shortages present as a barrier for linking individuals to case management services (ie: programs being unable to accept new referrals). In addition, there are limited non-Medicaid slots available in both children and adult Case Management programs.

OPWDD: Care Coordination does not seem to be working as intended and it does not provide the same breadth of services that MSC did previously. Personal contact is limited and Care Coordinators do not have a full or timely understanding of needs. In addition, high staff turnover rates disrupt service delivery and often leaves individuals/families unsure about who their care coordinator is.

#### **Crisis Services** Yes

Applies to OASAS? No

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): OASAS: Catholic Charities' Medically Supervised Withdrawal and Stabilization levels of care primarily serve Sullivan County residents and regularly has capacity (open beds) to serve more individuals (adults).

OMH: Many crisis services have age restrictions which creates obstacles when placing youth and young adults. Crisis services for persons with multiple systems involvement can also be challenging. Children in crisis or children who are experiencing psychotic symptoms are often discharged home when their caregivers bring them to the local emergency room to be evaluated. Capacity is an issue as our local hospital has no pediatric psychiatric beds and a limited number of adult beds in their Behavioral Health Unit. Youth are sent out of county for hospital admissions. For adults, we are seeing repeat visits to the emergency room (sometimes within the same day) after being discharged without admission, despite

presenting psychiatric concerns.

OPWDD: Crisis services are extremely limited. The Emergency Department becomes utilized for crises. If a situation is behavioral as opposed to clinical, the individual is returned home (medicated) to an unsafe environment. There are no respite options for families or providers.

**Cross System Services** Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): The number of individuals with co-occurring or complex needs continues to grow. Cross System services and deeper collaborations are necessary. Persons with multiple systems involvement can become "stuck between silos," thus impeding eligibility for appropriate services. There continues to be a need for more flexibility regarding services and supports for dually diagnosed individuals with multiple system involvement.

**Employment/volunteer (client)** Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): Individuals among all three disability populations experience difficulties with obtaining and/or maintaining employment in Sullivan County. Stigma, lack of transportation, childcare, immigration status, education, skills, training and/or legal history are some of the identified barriers to employment. Access to supported employment services are needed to assist individuals with preparing for work, finding and maintaining a job, and thriving in a work environment. Also, veterans could benefit from support with transitioning from military duty to civilian employment.

More work is needed to promote employment for individuals with disabilities. It is important to educate employers about the advantages of hiring persons with disabilities and to support them in accessing available resources.

OPWDD: The largest obstacle is staffing. We currently have more persons wanting to work, and able to do so with staff support, than we have staff to accommodate the need.

**Forensics** Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): OMH: Limited mental health crisis services have resulted in law enforcement officers serving as first responders to many mental health crises. A Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Program would be beneficial to reduce the number of arrests for persons with mental illness or dual diagnoses while simultaneously linking them to appropriate services. A CIT Program would give police officers more tools to do their job safely and effectively.

OASAS: The addition of Hope, Not Handcuffs is a great opportunity to engage with those who would otherwise be part of the criminal justice system.

With the legalization of cannabis, more education around the subject is needed.

**Housing** Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): Housing remains a priority need in Sullivan County. There is a need for more supervised housing as existing housing programs do not have enough capacity to meet the need. An increasing number of folks from urban and suburban areas of the state are moving into Sullivan County, thereby reducing the number of available rental options for residents. Rent prices have skyrocketed and existing programs are having difficulty finding supported apartments at fair market value. The A-SPOA housing waiting lists are very long; it often takes many years for an individual to reach the top of our housing waiting lists.

There also continues to be a need for housing for transitional age youth/young adults (18-21). There is a growing need for housing options for individuals with high functioning autism and there is an urgent need for an increased number of foster care homes in Sullivan County.

Sullivan County does not have a homeless shelter and much of the homeless housing is within the local hotels/motels through the Department of Family Services. This housing option is not supervised and is often not conducive to an individual's recovery process due to the level of substance use and availability in the vicinity of the buildings. In addition, the hotels/motels are not equipped to manage behaviors which typically results in increased medical and/or law enforcement crisis response. The "NIMBY" effect presents as a barrier to the development of a homeless shelter.

Sullivan County has a shortage of housing options for individuals who are dually diagnosed and for special populations. Sullivan County has a great need for supportive transitional housing for homeless and newly recovering/recovered persons.

Regarding housing for OPWDD services, the challenge is the type of housing people want. The housing stock that is available faces challenges as those living there 'age in place', requiring structural modifications (for which there is limited funding). For those who are seeking a place to live within the OPWDD system the lack of single bedrooms is an obstacle – younger folks have reasonable expectations of privacy in their home, and often do not wish to share a bedroom with someone else, as is the lack of non-traditional supported housing types.

#### **Inpatient Treatment** Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): Sullivan County is in need of pediatric psychiatric beds for youth. Long term residential program access could be improved for special populations such as minors, young adults, or those with complex medical or prescription drug use. Several barriers hinder individuals from receiving services, including the type of substances used (ie: benzodiazepines or combinations), unmet admission criteria, age restrictions for youth and young adults, and limited or no insurance. In addition, persons convicted of a sexual offense are hard to place.

Communication could be improved between the hospital and community agencies. In addition, hospital data (ie: admissions post-overdose, hospital-level detox, etc.) could be clearer. Sullivan County would benefit from an access center in the hospital or other locations.

There is a need for additional insurance navigators in Sullivan County to assist persons with obtaining insurance coverage.

#### **Non-Clinical Supports** Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): OASAS: Peer services are beneficial and could be expanded, deepened. More supportive services are needed for family members of persons who use drugs. Currently, there are



no Al-Ateen meetings available in Sullivan County. We could also benefit from an increase in Peer-Parent staff to outreach youth and families and assist with navigation through the system of care.

**Outpatient Treatment** Yes

Applies to OASAS? No

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): OASAS: The addition, in 2022, of one OASAS licensed outpatient treatment program, one mobile provider, and one OTP in Monticello has reduced the need for additional outpatient treatment service providers.

**Prevention** Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? No

Applies to OPWDD? No

Need Applies to: Youth Only

Need description (Optional): Catholic Charities provides evidenced-based curricula in-school to youth in multiple school districts. As students return to school from a remote learning environment, it is clear that their mental and behavioral health needs have grown and changed. Catholic Charities is currently receiving more requests for school-based prevention services than resources allow them to provide. Expansion of school-based prevention resources in Sullivan County is needed.

**Problem Gambling** Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? No

Applies to OPWDD? No

Need Applies to: Adults Only

Need description (Optional): At this time, Sullivan County does not have a problem gambling treatment provider. Sullivan County does not have any Gamblers Anonymous meetings available to those in need. It is also difficult to find CASAC-G's.

**Refugees and Immigrants** Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? No

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): Refugees and Immigrants deserve access to high-quality, person-centered, culturally competent care. Many clients lack access to health insurance and this acts as a barrier to treatment access. It is important that Sullivan County continue to develop the ability to provide multilingual, multicultural care.

**Residential Treatment Services** Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes

Applies to OMH? Yes

Applies to OPWDD? Yes

Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults

Need description (Optional): OASAS: New Hope Manor and Dynamic Youth Center provide residential treatment services to woman and youth. Catholic Charities has four levels of residential treatment and capacity to serve more Sullivan County residents.

OPWDD: There continues to be long waiting lists.

**Respite** Yes

Applies to OASAS? No

Applies to OMH? No

Applies to OPWDD? Yes  
Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults  
Need description (Optional):

**Transition Age Services** Yes

Applies to OASAS? No  
Applies to OMH? Yes  
Applies to OPWDD? Yes  
Need Applies to: Youth Only  
Need description (Optional): OMH/OPWDD: There continues to be a need for housing and employment services for transitional age youth/young adults (18-21). Sullivan County could benefit from a transitional residence to assist with a successful transition to adulthood.

OPWDD: Many families have waited until the last minute for transition planning. Proactive work in the schools would be very helpful. Eligibility is an issue for many youth, the process is long and complicated and although the CCOs are required to help, they often give minimal assistance. Also, getting determinations of eligibility for waiver services is becoming increasingly difficult for youth on the spectrum – OPWDD is requiring ADOS or other confirmatory testing of Autism diagnoses and there are very few providers in the region able to conduct them and almost none take Medicaid.

**Transportation** Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes  
Applies to OMH? Yes  
Applies to OPWDD? Yes  
Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults  
Need description (Optional): Transportation is a major barrier regarding access to care. Public transportation is minimal in more populated areas of the county and non-existent in the outlying communities. In addition, more transportation options for persons with mobility issues is needed.

**Workforce** Yes

Applies to OASAS? Yes  
Applies to OMH? Yes  
Applies to OPWDD? Yes  
Need Applies to: Both Youth and Adults  
Need description (Optional): Workforce recruitment and retention continues to be an issue across all three disability population in Sullivan County. Sullivan County has a record high number of staff vacancies. The number of qualified staff is limited and it is difficult to retain the staff that are qualified. Lack of staff continues to be at a crisis level of need. Investments in the workforce have been long-overdue. Most recently, various state-funded bonus structures have been unwieldy and not necessarily as effective as increases to base salaries/COLAs that keep up with inflation. Wage growth outside of/in other parts of the field, proliferation of remote work opportunities, additional providers entering Sullivan County, etc. have contributed to critical vacancy rates.

**LGU Representative:** Heidi Reimer

**Submitted for:** Sullivan County Department of Community Services