

# Participants Sought for ‘Path to Promise’ Focus Groups

## Community input will help shape local youths’ futures

Dutchess County Executive Marcus J. Molinaro invites residents to be part of one of five upcoming focus groups to give their input into the County’s “Path to Promise” – a comprehensive evaluation of services and programs available throughout Dutchess County – with the aim of providing every child in Dutchess County equal opportunity to succeed. Focus group meetings will be held throughout the County from May 7th to May 11th. Interested participants can register online at [dutchessny.gov/path](http://dutchessny.gov/path).

Announced by County Executive Molinaro in his 2017 State of the County address, the “Path to Promise” is a multi-year effort to ensure all young people in Dutchess County – from birth through age 19 – have the assets they need to achieve their full potential as they grow into young adults. This effort includes an analysis of existing youth services, development of a universal asset framework, and implementation of action plans to build on what is working, resolve any duplication of services and close any gaps in services and supports.

County Executive Molinaro said, “Every child in Dutchess County deserves the opportunity to fulfill his or her purpose and become whatever he or she wishes to be. Our ‘Path to Promise’ will give them that opportunity by assessing what is – and just as importantly, what isn’t – offered in our county to help our youth reach their potential. I encourage you to be part of a focus group near you, share your input and help our children take the next step on their ‘Path to Promise.’ ”

The aim of each focus group is to work toward a single, universally accessible ‘Path to Promise’ framework; determine current major assets that serve youth; determine the nature and causes of current unmet youth needs; and identify opportunities to strengthen the community’s array of assets that serve youth.

Youth, parents, guardians, caregivers and local stakeholders, including members of the business community, faith-based organizations, service providers, and other community groups and coalitions are invited to attend one of the following focus groups:

Date	Region	Time	Location	Participants
Monday 5/7	South	5:30 PM – 7:30 PM	<b>Beacon Recreation Center</b> 23 West Center Street Beacon	Parents Caregivers Youth
Tuesday 5/8	North	10 AM – Noon	<b>Red Hook Town Hall</b> 7340 South Broadway Red Hook	Community Stakeholders
		5:30 PM – 7:30 PM	<b>Red Hook Community Center</b> 59 Fisk Street Red Hook	Parents Caregivers Youth
Wednesday 5/9	Poughkeepsie	10 AM – Noon	<b>Family Partnership Center</b> 29 North Hamilton Street Poughkeepsie	Community Stakeholders
		5:30 PM – 7:30 PM	<b>Catharine Street Community Center</b> 152 Mansion Street Poughkeepsie	Parents Caregivers Youth
Thursday 5/10	East	10 AM – Noon	<b>North East Community Center</b> 51 South Center Street Millerton	Community Stakeholders
		5:30 PM – 7:30 PM	<b>Amenia Town Hall</b> 4988 Route 22 Amenia	Parents Caregivers Youth
Friday 5/11	South	10 AM – Noon	<b>Howland Public Library</b> 313 Main Street Beacon	Community Stakeholders

Residents are asked to RSVP online for the focus group they'll attend at [dutchessny.gov/path](http://dutchessny.gov/path).

During the focus groups, participants will give candid and comprehensive input by answering questions regarding what young people in Dutchess County need, what is currently working well and not as well in meeting those needs, and what should be areas of priority as the County and community work together in the coming years to make sure that youth needs are met more and more effectively.

Ideal candidates to participate in the focus groups are those who have firsthand knowledge about and insight into what the youth of Dutchess County need to thrive and grow into healthy adults who contribute positively to the community – both today and in the future. Having gained this knowledge as parents, caregivers, service providers, employers, other caring and knowledgeable adults, or young people themselves, they can contribute concrete examples of what is working well and not as well in meeting the needs of current and future youth, why/why not, and what improvements might be most valuable going forward. While focus groups will concern services and supports for all youth across the county, regardless of who they are and where they live, insights into the strengths and gaps in meeting the needs of traditionally underserved and/or hard to serve populations of young people will be particularly valuable.

The focus groups will be facilitated by Public Consulting Group (PCG), a consulting organization with more than 30 years' experience helping government organizations improve services to and outcomes for individuals and families they serve, to help with this effort.

The initial phase of the "Path to Promise," completed in December 2017, involved PCG's extensive assessment of all youth services provided by Dutchess County Government, including organizational charts, budgets, performance or outcome reports, as well as interviews with personnel from the various departments that provide youth services, including the Departments of Community and Family Services (DCFS), Behavioral and Community Health, Probation and Community Corrections, and Planning and Development. PCG reviewed how the departments share information and collaborate, identified strengths and weaknesses in the current system, as well as duplication or gaps in services.

The second phase, which will continue through summer 2018, includes:

- surveying families and community-based providers to collect and analyze data;
- convening focus groups throughout Dutchess County to collect further data and community input;
- creating maps highlighting population densities, and risk and protective factors, as well as a map of services available by region; and
- analyzing areas of strength and further opportunity.

Dutchess County Government recently convened a Change Team, which meets regularly and is comprised of members from the private and public sector, to guide its "Path to Promise" efforts; community advisory groups have similarly been convened to provide additional input and guidance. Later this year, Dutchess County Government will host a "Path to Promise" Youth Summit to generate buy-in for the framework and serve as a launching point for the action plan.

Sabrina Jaar Marzouka, DBCH Commissioner, said, "Public input is critical in making our 'Path to Promise' a success. Our effort will only be successful if it is informed, embraced and championed by the community – not just the government. We look forward to hearing from various populations – youth, parents, guardians, caregivers and stakeholders – to help us formulate the best plan that will benefit every child in Dutchess County."

Each year, Dutchess County Government spends more than \$58 million on youth services mandated by the state and federal government; these include significant investments in early education and early intervention. In addition to those mandated costs, the County invests an additional \$4 million on youth development "discretionary services," such as child care, teen parent supports, education, employment, and drug awareness programs; most of these services are contracted through community agencies.

[www.dutchessNY.gov](http://www.dutchessNY.gov)

**Dutchess County Department  
of Community & Family Services**

*You are invited to participate in Dutchess County's*

# **“Path to Promise” Focus Group**

Dutchess County seeks your input on its “Path to Promise,” a comprehensive assessment of youth programs and services in the county, both public and private, with the aim of giving every child the opportunity to succeed.

**Monday, May 7th through Friday, May 11th**

**Northern Dutchess • Eastern Dutchess • Southern Dutchess  
Town and City of Poughkeepsie**

Youth, parents, caregivers and community members are sought to discuss services currently available and additional programs that may be needed.

**RSVP for the event near you at [dutchessny.gov/path](http://dutchessny.gov/path)**



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