



Southeast Regional Behavioral Health Interagency Collaboration (Hybrid)

January 29th, 2026, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

African American Research Library and Cultural Center (AARLCC)

2650 W. Sistrunk Blvd., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33311

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance: Total 113

In-Person 35

Virtual 78

Full Attendee List is Provided in Appendix A

Hosts/Facilitators: Department of Children and Families – Laurinda “Lala” Andujar, Regional Collaboration Coordinator; Jessica Durant, Regional Operations Manager; Idell Gayman, Regional Operations Supervisor

Presenters: Priscilla Ortiz and Jalen Davenport, Outreach Workers at Oxford House

I. CALL TO ORDER

Laurinda “Lala” Andujar called to order the Southeastern Regional Behavioral Health Interagency Collaboration Meeting at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, January 29, 2026.

II. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Jessica Durant, Southeast Regional Operations Manager, welcomed attendees. The following individuals were introduced:

Laurinda Andujar, Regional Collaboration Coordinator, Department of Children and Families

Idell Gayman, Regional Operations Supervisor, Department of Children and Families

Priscilla Ortiz, Outreach Worker, Oxford House

Jalen Davenport, Outreach Worker, Oxford House

III. PRESENTATION – OXFORD HOUSE

Priscilla Ortiz and Jalen Davenport

PowerPoint presentation was provided by Priscilla Ortiz and Jalen Davenport, Outreach Workers with Oxford House. Ms. Ortiz and Mr. Davenport presented an overview of Oxford



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House Florida and the Oxford Model, which offers self-run, self-supported homes for individuals in recovery from a substance use disorder.

Presenters shared the history of Oxford House Florida, progression of growth, housing in Broward County, and what makes Oxford House different including their nine traditions for success. Additionally, they discussed membership qualifications, demographics, reentry statistics, and the benefits members receive which include 24/7 peer support, accountability, stability, and much more. Staff contacts, current locations throughout Florida, and how to search for vacancies using their [online interactive map](#) were shared with participants.

Lisa McWhorter, Wayside House, inquired about the timeframe from application to acceptance or denial.

Ms. Ortiz responded, stating applicants are contacted within 24 hours of applying, and interviews scheduled at least 24 hours after initial contact. For discharge planning, applications are recommended at least 72 hours prior to discharge, though outreach may begin 5–6 days in advance to support coordination. Interviews are conducted by current house members, require participation from at least 80% of members, and follow a democratic voting model.

Lisa McWhorter, Wayside House, followed up asking if there was a waiting list for entry.

Ms. Ortiz responded, when no beds are available, waitlists are maintained and updated regularly, and current vacancies are listed on <https://oxfordvacancies.com/>.

Jalen Davenport, Oxford House, reported that the Palm Beach County inventory includes a total of 10 houses, consisting of 3 women and children houses, 1 women-only house, and 6 men's houses.

Doreen Clancy, Wayside House, inquired about the policy for mothers and their children and asked if there was an age limit for children. Heather Gelety, DCF, asked if there was a time limit for families and individuals.

Both Ms. Ortiz and Mr. Davenport answered children must be no older than 10 years old at the time of interview, with no minimum age requirement, and mothers may have up to two children. There is no time limit on length of stay for either families or individuals.

Antonio Ellison, The HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN), asked if Oxford House had accommodations specifically for the LGBTQ community.



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Ms. Ortiz stated that there are no LGBTQ-specific houses, but placement is based on an individual's gender identity and comfort, with a strong emphasis on inclusivity and community integration.

Heather Gelety, DCF, inquired about the cost of rent.

Mayra Reimer, Henderson Behavioral Health, added to the inquiry by asking what considerations there are for indigent individuals and those facing financial hardships.

Mr. Davenport, Oxford House, reported that in Broward County there is a \$200 move-in fee, weekly costs of \$220–\$230, and an additional \$25 per child per week, with rates based on the local market. Residents experiencing financial hardship may move in with no money upfront, with fees still owed but flexible payment arrangements available, along with assistance for employment, identification, documentation, and peer support.

Mayra Reimer, Henderson Behavioral Health, asked if participants were allowed to continue treatment for behavioral health conditions.

Ms. Ortiz, Oxford House, responded, continued mental health and psychiatric treatment is encouraged.

Melissa Reesor Martin, Archways, asked why someone may be denied admission.

Mr. Davenport, Oxford House, stated automatic disqualifications include registered sex offenders and individuals with arson convictions, while other denials are determined through house-specific democratic decisions or a lack of acknowledgment of addiction; denial from one house does not prevent acceptance at another.

Gayle Giese, NAMI Broward/FLMHAC, asked how the Oxford House model relates to FARR.

Ms. Ortiz, Oxford House, responded that the program operates under the Fair Housing Act, is FARR-exempt through a memorandum with DCF, and follows a peer-run model with no onsite staff, with oversight provided by trained chapter and housing services officers.

Lidia Martinez, Lidia Martinez PhD LLC, inquired about the resources provided to individuals and families while residing at Oxford House.

Ms. Ortiz, Oxford House, answered the program provides resource linkage through strong community networking, maintains partnerships with counseling, family support, and treatment providers, and emphasizes collaboration across organizations.



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Mira Froum, Principles Recovery Center, asked what makes Oxford House effective for someone who has struggled in other settings.

Ms. Ortiz stated they provide a member-centered, peer-supported recovery environment, where everyone is valued and empowered. Our focus is on fostering belonging, accountability, and personal investment, creating a community where members feel both supported and responsible for their growth.

Kelsey Moldof, Broward Office of Public Defender, asked if Oxford House accepts people with pending criminal charges.

Mr. Davenport stated we welcome individuals with pending criminal charges and do not let extensive criminal backgrounds prevent participation, except in cases where legal disqualifications apply. Their goal is to provide equitable access to recovery and support for all who are committed to personal growth.

Ronald Voltaire, DCF, asked what would happen if someone were to relapse after moving into the home.

Mr. Davenport and Ms. Ortiz answered, when urgent issues arise, we hold an emergency house meeting to address concerns collaboratively. Our approach is always non-punitive and supportive, prioritizing the well-being of all members. They help with detox or treatment placement as needed and typically allow a 24–72-hour transition window to ensure smooth transitions. Immediate removal occurs only in cases involving violence or safety risks.

IV. PRESENTATION – YEAR IN REVIEW

Jessica Durant, Southeast Regional Operations Manager with DCF, presented the 2025 Year in Review by highlighting three key regional needs identified in May 2025: strengthening forensic services, increasing funding flexibility, and centering peer support and lived experience. These priorities aligned with statewide focuses on training, workforce retention, service accessibility, crisis care, data improvement, financial management, and cross-agency collaboration.

Throughout 2025, the region engaged in educational presentations and partner collaborations, shared provider success stories, utilized surveys to inform planning, and hosted a Lunch &



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Learn series to enhance engagement. These efforts reinforced regional alignment and highlighted meaningful outcomes for individuals served.

A highlight of the year was the sharing of provider success stories and impactful moments, with organizations such as Gulf Coast, JFCS, South Florida Wellness Network, MHA Palm Beaches, Rebel Recovery, Smith Community Mental Health, and Chrysalis Health presenting narratives and videos that showcased meaningful outcomes for individuals served. Surveys also played an important role in gathering broader input beyond meetings, informing strategic planning and shaping future direction. The 2025 Lunch & Learn Series further supported engagement and education, featuring Bikers Against Child Abuse (BACA), Dr. J. Reeves, and the Coordinated Opioid Recovery Network (CORE), with plans to continue the series in 2026.

The 2026 Vision and Regional Approach is grounded in strong readiness for collaboration, as reflected in the January 2026 Pre-Event Survey of 50 respondents. More than half expressed willingness to lead or facilitate regional workgroups, and a large majority supported comprehensive, integrated collaboration. Key priorities identified include improving data sharing and coordination, expanding shared training and staffing support, and exploring joint use of resources.

Respondents emphasized increasing service awareness through community outreach, regional partnerships, and referrals, while recommending networking sessions, live polling, and peer consultation to enhance hybrid meeting engagement. Overall, the strategy focuses on strengthening cross-agency communication, reducing duplication, aligning priorities, and tailoring regional solutions to local needs. Planned action steps include establishing workgroups, expanding shared training opportunities, promoting resource sharing, mapping services, and strengthening referral pathways to create a more connected and responsive regional system of care.

VI. SUCCESS STORIES

Laurinda “Lala” Andujar, DCF, shared a success story and video about Homes United recipient Mr. David submitted by Broward Behavioral Health Coalition (BBHC). For years, housing instability defined this individual’s life. Multiple program attempts came and went, each ending without lasting success. The cycle of uncertainty continued—until November 2025, when they entered Homes United.

This time, the approach was different. Through compassionate, low-barrier housing support, stability came first. With a safe place to live, everything else began to fall into place. Housing created the foundation for healing, focus, and forward movement. This story is a powerful reminder that success isn’t about compliance before care, it’s about meeting people where they are and removing barriers that keep them stuck. Homes United didn’t just provide



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housing. It provided space for transformation. And this outcome demonstrates what's possible when compassion leads the way: people stabilize, systems work, and lives truly change.

Ms. Andujar also shared a success story presented by the Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network, (SEFBHN) highlighting Sunset House, a long-term recovery house for men with substance use disorders. After recurrence, isolation, and unemployment, one man entered Sunset House in February 2025 through SEFBHN-funded support—and everything began to change. Through structured, compassionate, evidence-based care that combined therapy, peer support, recovery housing, and vocational assistance, he rebuilt stability from the ground up.

Today, he has nearly six months of sustained sobriety, has reentered the workforce with stable employment, and is actively engaged in his recovery community with strong relapse-prevention skills. His journey powerfully demonstrates that when stable housing, integrated treatment, and strong partnerships come together, recovery is not only possible, but also transformative.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

The floor was opened for public comment, and the following questions were submitted via Microsoft Team's chat and by those attending in-person.

Jill Sorensen, SEFBHN, inquired about whether the previous Lunch and Learns were recorded.

Ms. Durant responded by saying, sessions were not recorded, but resources and contact information are available for sharing. Presenters expressed openness to future presentations and ongoing collaboration, including continued partnerships such as Bikers Against Child Abuse, (B.A.C.A.). The discussion reinforced the statewide value of luncheon & learns as a platform for connection, learning, and collaboration, along with a strong commitment to sharing and promoting future events.

Antonio Ellison, HIV Prevention Trials Network, asked if it was possible to reach out to discuss collaboration and partnerships. If so, how?

Ms. Durant discussed opportunities for facilitation workshops and media engagement, highlighting ways to expand outreach and impact. It was also confirmed that contact information is readily available through shared folders and business cards to support continued connection and follow-up.



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Ms. Gayle Giese, NAMI Broward/FLMHAC, regarding housing and support services raised concerns about the critical lack of supportive housing for individuals with serious mental illness, citing findings from Triennial Needs Assessments and the Ernst & Young gap analysis that underscore a significant statewide shortage of supportive housing units. She emphasized the value of pairing mental health clubhouses with supportive housing to strengthen long-term recovery and stability and recommended forming a dedicated workgroup to collaboratively address these gaps and advance sustainable solutions.

Ms. Durant responded by acknowledging housing as a recurring and evolving priority, noting that it is included as a potential post-survey workgroup focus. She expressed strong support for continued discussion and collaborative efforts to advance housing solutions.

Megan Sease, PEACE, asked how the potential bill that addresses property tax impact the work being done in the community.

Ms. Durant stated that the issue had not previously been raised and affirmed her commitment to explore it further and continue the discussion.

Sylvia Quintana with BBHC, Jill Sorensen with SEFBHN, and Ruth Hook with PEACE all chimed in stating that the potential bill on property taxes could impact post-arrest diversion programs, Children's Services Council funding, and county-funded behavioral health services, emphasizing the importance of early awareness and proactive dialogue to address challenges and mitigate unintended consequences.

Ms. Andujar asked if Ms. Durant, Ms. Gayman, Ms. Ortiz, Mr. Davenport or the audience had any further comments or questions.

Ms. Ortiz, Oxford House, shared a lived experience perspective, highlighting challenges faced by residents reentering the workforce, including financial strain and the risk of housing instability due to unpaid balances. The discussion emphasized the importance of responsible use of funding and reinforced that stable housing is a critical foundation for recovery, family stability, and long-term success.

VIII. CLOSING REMARKS

Ms. Andujar shared the DCF contact information and the regional operations manager's email. She also announced that the next Southeast Regional Quarterly Meeting will be held in April in or around Palm Beach, continuing in a hybrid format to maximize participation. She announced that details would be forthcoming.



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Ms. Andujar also invited participants to provide their post event feedback via the use of a QR code and stated that the information will also be available in the event follow-up email.

Ms. Durant thanked everyone for their participation and turned the podium back over to Ms. Andujar.

X. ADJOURN

Laurinda “Lala” Andujar adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 29th, 2026.



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APPENDIX A

Alyssa	Plaske	Evolutions Treatment Center
Alyssa	George	Community Care Plan
Andrew	Wilson	DCF SAMH
Anna	Branney	15 th Judicial Circuit Court Administration
Antonio	Ellison	HPTN 096
April	Busby	DCF SAMH
Aquila	Lovell	Broward Office of Public Defender
Asha	Moorman	MMHC LLC
Ashley	Ballard	Broward Behavioral Health Coalition
Asta	Trinh	DCF SAMH
Brad	Hill	DCF
Caren	Longsworth	Broward Behavioral Health Coalition
Carol	Fiddis	Drug Abuse Treatment Association
Caroline	Romero	Broward Behavioral Health Coalition
Cierra	Bynoe	DCF
Clara	Alevy	Agency for Persons with Disabilities
Connie	Reese-Tucker	SEDNET
Danica	Mamby	Broward Behavioral Health Coalition
David	Mirambeaux	Pathways Recovery
Diane	Sasser	Hendersen Behavioral Health
Diveka	Anderson	DCF SAMH
Doreen	Clancy	Wayside House
DeNai	Timmons	Flite Center
Eleanor	Weekes	Broward Behavioral Health Coalition
Elisa	Cramer	Palm Beach County
Elizabeth	Lombardo	AAA
Erin	Bigler	Oxford House
Emily	Walsh	The Luminous Care
Emilia	Vilaire-Monchery	United Way Broward
Garry	Smith	Fellowship/Rotary Connection
Gayle	Giese	FLMHAC and NAMI Broward



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Grace	Marquez	Broward Health Medical Center
Guillermo	Suarez	DCF SAMH
Harlee	James	DCF SAMH
Heather	Gelety	DCF
Heather	Pennington	Henderson Behavioral Health
Holly	Hannah	Pathways
Idell	Gayman	DCF SAMH
Isis	Williams	DCF
Jalen	Davenport	Oxford House
James	Fata	Evolutions Treatment Center
Jay	Bumgarner	Port St. Lucie Hospital
Jay	Flicker	Drug Abuse Treatment Association
Jayme	Fuentes	Broward Schools
Jeff	Lefton	Tenet Health
Jennifer	Branham	Carisk Partners
Jennifer	Robinson	DCF SAMH
Jesse	Kemper	DCF
Jessica	Durant	DCF SAMH
Jill	Sorensen	SEFBHN
John	Novy	APS
Jose	Santiago	DCF
Jordyn	Muller	DCF
Karen	Williams	Broward County Library
Kelsey	Moldof	Broward Office of Public Defender
Kofoworola	Lawson	DCF SAMH
Kristen	DeSimone	Office of Criminal Conflict
Kristopher	Claros	Flite Center
Krystal	Kennison	Child net
Larry	Rein	Child Net
Laurie	Gerhard	LAB
Leanne	Sullivan	South Florida Wellness Network
Laurinda	Andujar	DCF SAMH
Lidia	Martinez	Lidia Martinez PhD LLC
Lisa	Fonteyn	PD 19



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Lisa	Baird	Humana
Lisa	McWhorter	Wayside House
Lucia	Garcia	BBHC
Marina	Viola	NYAP
Mary Jo	Sellers	DCF
Mary Claire	Mucenic	Palm Beach Schools
Mayra	Reimer	DCF
Megan	Sease	PEACE
Melanie	Kranker	Communities Connected for Kids
Melvin	Wright	Be A Champion for AIDS/HIV Inc.
Michelle	Thomas	Florida Palms Academy
Mike	Licciardiello	ACHA
Melissa	Reesor Martin	Archways
Mira	Froum	Principles Recovery
Natalie	Davis Goodman	DCF
Natasha	Osilaja	Prodigy House
Neiko	Shea	Child Net
Norma	Wagner	Retired
Odalys	Frequiere	VPSF
Patrick	Heidemann	Disability Rights of Florida
Phillip	De Veronica	Memorial Healthcare System
Priscilla	Ortiz	Oxford House
Raquel	Smith	Sunshine Health
Renzo	Torrenga	BBHC
Ronald	Voltaire	DCF
Ruby	Aguirre Carnes	Whole Child Martin County
Ruth	Hook	PEACE
Sandra	Reyes	South Florida Wellness Network
Sara	Ange	Indian River Schools
Sarah	Sheppard	DCF
September	Millar	Delray Center
Sherria	Slaughter	NHCMHC
Shanel	Manning	Flite Center
Silvia	Quintana	Behavioral Health Coalition



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Sophia	Wetmore	Banyan Treatment Centers
Tammy	Tucker	MHS
Tiffany	Lawrence	Behavioral Health Coalition
Timothy	Macsuga	UHS Inc.
Toby	Pina	Child Net
Tonya	Harrison	DCF
Traci	Schweitzer	DCF
Twila	Taylor	Palm Beach County
Ute	Gazioch	Florida Behavioral health Association
Valoria	Thomas	DCF SAMH
Vernicca	Wynter	Broward County Public Schools
Wes	Evans	DCF
Yolanda	Brown	Seventeenth Judicial Circuit - Court Administration
Zoha	Khan	DCF SAMH