County of Fairfax, Virginia

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods and diverse communities of Fairfax County

Human Services Council

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DATE: March 20, 2011

TO: Chairman and Members
Board of Supervisors

FROM: Kevin H. Bell, Chairman
Fairfax County Human Services Council

SUBJECT: Recommendations Regarding the FY 2012 Advertised Budget Plan

The Human Services Council appreciates the opportunity to provide comment and guidance on the FY 2012 Advertised Budget Plan. The Council supports most of the County Executive's budget relating to human services because it balances the need to maintain Fairfax County's vital network of human services with the realities of significant fiscal restraints. Our differences with the County Executive's plan, discussed below, are relatively minor in the big picture. However, they reflect items that we think have the potential, if left untended, to have significant and costly consequences both in financial and human terms.

While it is true there are no service-level cuts to county-funded services proposed in the FY 2012 Advertised Budget Plan, there continues to be a steady increase in the number of children, families, and adults in need of housing and human service supports. In the preparation of this document, the Council was particularly concerned with the increasing number of individuals in need and the impacts of the probable federal and state funding cuts to both county services and the network of community partners.

The Human Services Council's comments are divided into four sections:

1. Support for Items Recommended in the Advertised Budget (Page 1)
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1. Support for Items Recommended in the Advertised Budget

- ***Consolidated Community Funding Pool***. General Fund support in the amount of $8.97 million for the second year of a two-year funding cycle is an extremely wise investment, productively leveraging millions of non-county dollars to serve thousands of our community's residents with essential human services.
- ***Additional Resources for the School Health Program***. Funding of $3.8 million through the state will support 12 new Public Health Nurse positions to target schools with concentrations of high-risk students.
- ***Contractual Adjustments for Human Services Programs.*** This $3.2 million for our community partners will enable these organizations to cope with the increasingly difficult needs in the community. Additional state revenue will partially offset this additional cost.
- ***Comprehensive Services Act (CSA) Support***. State funding of $1.8 million will permit the implementation of state changes to programs for at-risk children.
- ***Child Care Assistance and Referral (CCAR) Program***. Additional funding of $1.3 million, covered by increased state and federal revenues, enables the program to continue serving mandated children. CCAR assists families with child care costs based on income levels.
- ***Self-Sufficiency Program***. Funding of $1.2 million through the state will support the distribution of public assistance resources.

- ***Intensive Community Treatment Teams***. Funding of $1.1 million in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB) will provide for 20 Medicaid-funded positions to serve persons with serious mental illness and/or substance use disorders.
- ***Emergency Support Reserve for Community Organizations***. In funding this $1.0 million the County Executive recognizes the vital partnership the county government has with the nonprofit community in providing human services. Community organizations are in a precarious position. If they fail, our government's costs and responsibilities will increase. This is an extremely prudent move.

2. Support of Critical Items Not Addressed in the Advertised Budget

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	AMOUNT
Maintain a reserve fund to address impacts resulting from federal and state funding cuts	$1,000,000
Provide funding to continue the Homeless Youth Initiative operated by Alternative House	$130,000
Provide services to residents who are most at risk:	
Continue Healthy Families program at current level, covering loss of state funding	$100,000
Provide funding for Medical Detoxification capacity to meet service demand	$600,000
Include funding to prevent institution of a waiting list for Home Based Care services	$800,000
Ensure services for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities graduating from high school	$1,200,000
Maintain Diversion to Detoxification programming at current level	$275,000
Total	**$4,105,000**

◇ Maintain a Reserve Fund to Address Impacts Resulting From Federal and State Funding Cuts

The Human Services Council strongly endorses establishing a contingency fund of $1.0 million so that we can manage our human services responsibilities properly during a time of great instability.

Rationale: Many issues are under consideration at the federal and state levels that could dramatically impact our current and future funding streams for critical human services programs. Fairfax County will realize a reduction in state funding of approximately $9.2 million, more than one-third of which will affect our human services programs. The process of fundamentally transforming the county's human services system to achieve more positive outcomes for our children, families, and communities requires working together with the state to provide an adequate investment in human services. If we do this, it will ultimately pay dividends for years to come; if not, we will pay the price many times over. While we recognize the financial limitations that led to the state decisions this year, we need to remind the state of its vital role and our priority list of human services.

The federal budget is of even greater concern. In particular, three programs stand as examples of the extreme vulnerability to proposed reductions in federal funding: the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG); Workforce Investment Act funding for Self-Sufficiency programs; and Affordable Child Care (Head Start and Child Care Development Block Grant.)

- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**: This program provides a flexible source of funding for a wide variety of affordable housing and community development activities, and is a major source of funding for the Consolidated Community Funding Pool. Fairfax County receives nearly $6.5 million in CDBG funding, of which $2.01 million supports the Consolidated Community Funding Pool (CCFP). The least harmful proposal is the Obama Administration's 7.5 percent reduction in CDBG funding,

which would mean a cut of about $485,000 to the county. The most dire is from the House of Representatives, which has proposed reducing CDBG funding by 62 percent, a reduction of $4.0 million to the county—including a reduction of $1.3 million to the CCFP. What is at risk for the county are programs such as the Affordable Housing component of the Consolidated Community Funding Pool, homeownership programs and relocation services, home repair for the elderly and home improvement loan programs, and capital for new construction and rehabilitation.

- **Workforce Investment Act (WIA)**: A proposal to eliminate this program by the House of Representatives would reduce funding for the SkillSource job resource centers by about $2.5 million, or 70 percent of this activity's resources.
- **Affordable Child Care**: The House of Representatives has proposed reducing funding for Head Start by $1.1 billion (15 percent), which could mean a reduction of $1.1 million for Fairfax County. If approved, it will most likely result in expanding the current waiting list of 1,326 children for Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

The Human Services Council recognizes that it will be very difficult for the county to replicate services threatened by federal and state funding reductions. Fairfax County needs to balance carefully what it can do for our most at-risk populations against our own resources so that we maintain a thriving, viable community.

❖ Provide Funding to Continue the Homeless Youth Initiative Operated by Alternative House

The Human Services Council recommends providing funding of $130,000 to continue the Homeless Youth Initiative for at-risk youth operated by Alternative House.

Rationale: Proven prevention strategies supporting our youth represent good public policy, are cost effective, and are a successful way to reverse many of the emerging trends the system faces today The Homeless Youth Initiative—a partnership funded by Fairfax County Public Schools, Fairfax County, and ARRA stimulus funding—targets 16-21 year old students who are homeless and unaccompanied. The safe and stable transitional housing and host homes in the community enable these youths to complete high school. In addition to housing and community support, youth receive case management services, individual therapy, life skills education, tutoring, and assistance with emergency food and supplies. The $130,000 would fund half of the cost of the program. Alternative House has committed to raise the remaining funds needed to cover the cost of sustaining another year of this program.

❖ Provide Services to Residents Who Are Most at Risk

The Human Services Council urges the Board to consider funding these activities which, if delayed or denied, can have very serious consequences for individuals and their families.

Rationale:

- **Healthy Families: Provide additional funding of $100,000 to continue the program at the current service level, and to cover loss of state funding.** Unless the county provides additional funding support to cover this loss of state funds, the Healthy Families program will most likely eliminate two case workers who would provide home-based supports to approximately 60 first-time, at-risk families.
- **Medical Detoxification: Provide funding of $600,000 for Medical Detoxification capacity to meet service demand.** Due to lack of capacity, the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB) was unable to provide medical detoxification services last year to 52 percent of the people seeking this service. While the CSB completes an analysis of a potential conversion of some existing social detoxification beds into medical detoxification beds to serve 235 more individuals each year, this additional funding will provide the CSB with flexibility to purchase medical detoxification services through local hospitals.

- **Home Based Care: Include funding of $800,000 to prevent institution of a waiting list for Home Based Care services.** Over the past two years, county funding for Home Based Care services has been reduced by almost $1.7 million, resulting in tighter policies around service levels. Over this same period, state revenue is reduced by $800,000, which will result in the institution of a waiting list for services if the county does not cover the state funding reduction. There is no other alternative for these older adults and adults with disabilities as they do not meet the criteria for Medicaid-funded services.
- **Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities Graduating from High School: Include funding of $1.2 million to ensure services for individuals with intellectual disabilities graduating from high school.** This funding will provide services such as vocational training, employment supports, or day services for 83 of the June 2011 graduates. Without these services, we will isolate these young individuals, denying them the ability to participate and contribute to our community.
- **Diversion to Detoxification: Provide funding of $275,000 to maintain programming for this program at the current level.** This program offers an alternative to arrest that preserves law enforcement resources and increases community safety by transporting intoxicated individuals to a safe place (detoxification program) and offering services that intervene in an individual's addiction. To date in FY 2011, this program has served on average 71 individuals each month, for a total of 442 individuals since July. Funding for this service had been covered through a variety of sources (including federal stimulus funds) which are no longer available.

3. Additional Items of Importance for the Board's Consideration

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS
Strengthening the Human Services Safety Net and Our Nonprofit Partners: The Human Services Council recommends that the county continue its cost-effective investment with its nonprofit partners and consider providing additional financial assistance if possible.
Continuing the County's Commitment to Affordable and Accessible Housing, and Preventing and Ending Homelessness: The Council feels strongly that without continuing forward with these crucial prevention initiatives, homelessness will spike throughout the Fairfax community and we will be that much further from achieving the important goal to end homelessness.
Worsening Metrics in Human Services: The Council points out recent trends that indicate the increasing fragility within the segments of our community least able to protect themselves. It is financially wise to address these matters as soon as possible because, in the long-run, prevention is considerably less costly than remediation.
Supporting the County Executive's proposal to hold in reserve the $30 million balance in the FY 2012 Advertised Budget: This prudent action will help prevent unexpected problems from developing into major crises.

❖ Strengthening the Human Services Safety Net and Our Nonprofit Partners

The Human Services Council strongly recommends that the county continue its cost-effective investment with its nonprofit partners and consider providing additional financial assistance if possible.

Rationale: The safety net of basic human services—directly provided county services and a vast network of cooperating nonprofits—is tenuous. The Human Services Council fears that the safety net is growing weaker at the very time when caseloads and service needs are increasing and waiting lists are growing. Of the testimony provided to the Council this year, perhaps this statement from Nonprofit NoVA (an affiliate of the Nonprofit Roundtable of Greater Washington that brings together 60 nonprofits and community partners) most appropriately describes the current state of the human services network:

> *"From the standpoint of human services, our message is clear. Times are still tough and needs continue to grow for those who are most dependent on government and nonprofit support. We have faced one of the worst national economic crises in decades. The needs of our community members for assistance with housing, food, jobs, training, and other assistance remain significant—reaching new highs in FY 2010 that have continued in FY 2011. The problems that led to the collapse of the housing and financial markets and its aftermath will be felt for years to come. Like the crisis that preceded it, recovery is not a one-year fix."*

The human services safety net protects the community as a whole by providing for the needs of individuals and families. Erosion of funding support at all levels creates unacceptable risks for the community. The nonprofit community is crucial in providing resources in the community and filling significant supply/demand service gaps. **Their work has a significant multiplier effect for county funding, in some cases leveraging as much as eight dollars for every county dollar**. Without them, county costs will increase significantly. As the demand for services skyrockets, we must ensure that our community's basic health, safety, welfare, housing, and sustenance needs are sustained.

❖ Continuing the County's Commitment to Affordable and Accessible Housing, and Preventing and Ending Homelessness

The Human Services Council recommends that the county continue its commitment to affordable and accessible housing, and initiatives to prevent and end homelessness.

Rationale: The Board of Supervisors itself recognized that housing is a fundamental component of all self-sufficient households. The Council strongly agrees with the Board that stabilizing families and neighborhoods is vital to the health of our community, directly affecting many human services programs and needs. With the Human Services Council's endorsement last year, the Board of Supervisors adopted **a "Housing Blueprint"** to provide rental assistance, facilitate housing acquisition, reduce waiting lists for housing, and provide housing for those who are homeless, disabled, or have other special needs through the **"Bridging Affordability"** program.

Federal stimulus funds provided an important and timely resource this past year to prevent homelessness, stabilize families, and provide job training. The availability of these funds also showed how deep and important these needs are now: Fairfax County and its community partners distributed nearly all of the available funding for housing and employment assistance allocated for a two-year period in just the first year. This included $2.5 million for Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) assistance, helping more than 900 individuals and families with services to prevent or end homelessness. Without these prevention resources, homelessness will spike throughout the Fairfax community and we will be that much further from achieving this important goal to end homelessness.

◇ Worsening Metrics in Human Services

The Human Services Council highlights for the Board's attention recent trends that underline the increasing fragility within the segments of our community least able to protect themselves. It is financially wise to address these matters as soon as possible because, in the long run, prevention is considerably less costly than remediation.

Rationale: The distress signals evidenced in measures provided by the human services community continue to worsen despite modest improvement in the economy. Consider the following examples from our dialogue this year with Boards, Authorities, and Commissions, community organizations, and the county's human services departments:

- **Public Assistance**. In FY 2008, the average monthly caseload of ***public assistance clients*** (i.e., Food Stamps, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and Medicaid) was nearly 52,000 per month; in FY 2010, this figure increased by 37 percent to 71,000 clients per month.
- **Job Searches**. In FY 2008, over 38,000 people visited the county's ***SkillSource centers*** looking for help in finding a job; in FY 2010, just over 61,000 persons visited the centers—a 61percent increase in just two years.
- **Child Care**. Nearly 3,000 children are on a waiting list for ***Child Care subsidies***. The median income of families receiving subsidized child care is just over $25,000. The annual cost of private full-time child care can range from $8,000 to $13,000 per year.
- **Domestic Violence**. There is one ***Domestic Violence*** bed for every 31,000 people in the county—the worst ratio in Virginia. At this time, there is a 45-person waiting list for individual counseling for domestic violence victims.
- **Calls to Human Services Hotline**. More than 108,000 calls were made last year to the ***Coordinated Services Planning Hotline***—more than 35,000 calls alone for help with housing, food, jobs, and other basic needs. Many of these were individuals calling for the first time.

◇ Supporting the County Executive's Proposal to Hold in Reserve the $30 Million Balance in the FY2012 Advertised Budget

The Human Services Council cautions that the distress signals at all levels of government and in the community reinforce the need to hold the $30 million balance in the FY 2012 Advertised Budget in reserve.

Rationale: The substantial uncertainty created by sizable external financial threats will place a premium on both our adaptability and flexibility. The County Executive's budget proposed an excellent way to maximize our dexterity in dealing with all these financial unknowns—an unallocated balance of $30 million in a reserve fund. Holding the $30 million balance in reserve is a very prudent action that will help prevent unexpected problems from developing into major crises.

4. Commitment to the Viability of the County's Human Services System

Fairfax County has long recognized that investments in critical human services programs can and do save public funds by minimizing the need for more costly services. This is not the time to abandon those essential investments, especially with the unfortunate reductions in state and federal funding. Also, the continued impact of economic distress on county services is worrisome, but the effect on our nonprofit community partners' capacity to meet residents' needs is even more so because their resources are not as deep and diverse as the county's. Government cannot be the sole source provider of services. We must look out for the nonprofit community, our crucial human services partners in leveraging community resources.

County agencies and community organizations continue to work together in new and innovative ways to meet the increasing needs of residents in our community. Indeed, cross-agency work and community involvement have become a way of operating within limited funding resources for many programs, not just within the human services agencies but also with other county agencies such as police, libraries, schools, transportation services, as well as nonprofit organizations, businesses, and the faith community. The Council is encouraged that the human services system is taking advantage of opportunities to involve the community and to collaborate with the county's diverse array of community organizations. By working together, community organizations and county staff are developing promising plans to strengthen the human services delivery system.

The Human Services Council also acknowledges the many strengths of the County's human services system, including the excellent work of the talented human services staff, and the strengths of Fairfax County's larger human services community. The county and the community have continued to work together in many ways to meet the needs of residents in our community.

The human services delivery network is highly interdependent. Unraveling one thread can create unintended, compounded, destructive failures elsewhere. The Human Services Council works to ensure that the county's actions recognize the highly tenuous and intertwined nature of the human services safety net.

The Human Services Council appreciates the thoughtful and considerate actions of the Board of Supervisors who we know work tirelessly with us on behalf of the best interests of the Fairfax County community.

Thank you.

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cc: Human Services Council
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