

# Department of Neighborhood and Community Services

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LOB #160:

## **COORDINATED SERVICES PLANNING**

### **Purpose**

Coordinated Services Planning (CSP) provides information, referrals, linkages, and advocacy to public and private human services that are available to low-income and vulnerable Fairfax County residents. Through partnerships with community-based organizations and other Fairfax County agencies, CSP assist callers with the following services: basic needs (food/clothing/housing), financial assistance, health care services, employment and education, recreation, and general information and referral. CSP also provides initial screening to secure in-home services, nursing home placement, or to access other related services provided.

### **Description**

Coordinated Services Planning is a business unit in the Access to Community Resources and Programs (Access) division. CSP provides services and assistance in a call center environment, thus operating a unique system of information, referral, and social work services in many areas. As a safety net service, Coordinated Services Planning is an entry point into the Human Services System for vulnerable residents in the community. CSP provides an easy access to the Human Services System in the County. The following services are provided over the phone without the need for office visits.

- **Basic Needs:** Emergency food, shelter, clothing, furniture, and transportation.
- **Financial Assistance:** Rent or mortgage assistance to prevent eviction or foreclosure, security deposit assistance to secure permanent housing, utility payments to prevent disconnection, prescription assistance, and other special needs. Assistance is determined on a case-by-case basis and is generally available only once a year.
- **Health Care Services:** Provide referrals for other health care services—medical, dental, eye glasses, hearing aids, mental health, substance abuse, home care, pregnancy, and family planning.
- **Employment and education:** Includes referrals for job training, job search, English for speakers of other languages, legal assistance, and financial literacy.
- **Recreation:** Referrals to recreation facilities and programs, senior centers, teen centers, and referrals for those with special needs.
- **General Information and Referral:** Linkage to numerous other services and programs.

CSP's multilingual staff are available to assist callers in almost 20 languages and utilize interpreter services for additional language needs.

Through their telephone interactions, CSP Social Services Specialists complete broad-based assessments to identify human services needs and uncover underlying issues for the client. CSP Specialists develop informed service plans that address clients' immediate and long term needs. These service plans draw on each client's personal resources while also linking them to community and/or public resources intended to stabilize the household. Many clients require case coordination and short-term case management in order to access services to avert crisis situations. The ability of CSP to provide short-term bridge management/crisis intervention (such as assistance with rent for one month) helps residents stay self-sufficient.

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CSP partners with numerous community-based organizations, non-profits, faith-based organizations as well as other County agencies to meet client needs. An electronic referral process is in place with over 30 organizations. Referrals are sent to partners electronically to ensure a strong handoff and to eliminate the need for a repeat assessment, collection of demographic information, and required verifications.

During emergency events, CSP assists in recovery efforts and inter-agency coordination of services for individuals affected by fire, flood, events that require isolation and/or quarantine and others. CSP works with public and private human services providers and County agencies, including the Office of Emergency Management, Red Cross, Health Department, and other organizations to connect impacted residents in the provision of housing, food, clothing, and other needed services.

### Benefits

***Navigating a complex system:*** The CSP system is designed to minimize confusion, promote efficiency, and prevent duplication of services in the navigation of a complex service delivery system while optimizing the use of non-County resources in meeting each individual and family's needs. By providing short-term intervention, more significant crisis may be averted without an increased spiraling of needs and therefore preventing deeper use of the Human Services System.

***Community engagement:*** CSP operates under a culture of engagement and collaboration with clients, community-based and faith-based organizations as well as other County human services agencies. For instance, in FY 2015, CSP facilitated nearly \$1.5 million through community- and faith-based resources to prevent evictions and homelessness to stabilize fragile housing situations and to address other housing-related emergencies. Further, CSP handles the emergency assistance and safety net services for clients of other human services agencies. This allows for their staff to focus on the longer term needs of the client while CSP works to meet the urgent needs, such as food, shelter, urgent prescription needs.

***Trends and needs data:*** CSP also supports the entire human services system by capturing trend information about needs of vulnerable households and the system's overall capacity to meet those needs. CSP publishes trend information quarterly and specific data and reports as needed by partners for strategic planning, grant writing, and new initiatives.

### Mandates

This Line of Business is not mandated.

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## Trends and Challenges

**Economic stress:** The ability of CSP to respond effectively to requests is impacted by various factors, from national economic conditions to local circumstances and personal crises. The success of CSP is largely dependent upon the contribution of resources by partner community-based organizations. Of all of the basic needs requests CSP receives, the most difficult to meet are requests for assistance with housing payments and utility bills. Community-based organizations are the primary source used to meet those needs, but often they are unable to offset larger factors such as poverty rates and rising housing costs.

**Increase in calls for assistance:** Stress in the economy since 2008 has resulted in a prolonged increase in the number of calls to CSP and a greater effort required by workers to coordinate the service response with community partners. Calls to CSP increased dramatically over the course of the economic downturn and though they have somewhat stabilized, they remain much higher than pre-2008 levels. This places a strain on existing resources, both CSP staff and community-based efforts.

**Emergency food assistance:** Requests for emergency food assistance increased dramatically in recent years. In FY 2015 CSP received 7,035 requests for emergency food which is well over double the 2,800 requests made in FY 2007.

**Depletion of funding:** Some community-based organizations deplete their funding for emergency assistance as early as the first day of each month. This means CSPs must coordinate with multiple organizations to complete financial assistance requests and in some cases the requests go unmet if clients have previously used other resources. CSP continues to collaborate with community-based organizations, faith-based organizations as well as County agencies to inform and strengthen the capacity of the broader human services system to meet client needs.

## Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #160: Coordinated Services Planning			
<b>FUNDING</b>			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$2,904,367	\$2,759,692	\$2,735,015
Operating Expenses	41,358	41,971	40,200
Total Expenditures	<u>\$2,945,725</u>	<u>\$2,801,663</u>	<u>\$2,775,215</u>
General Fund Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$2,945,725	\$2,801,663	\$2,775,215
<b>POSITIONS</b>			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	44 / 44	44 / 44	43 / 43
Total Positions	<u>44 / 44</u>	<u>44 / 44</u>	<u>43 / 43</u>

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### Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
CSP client service interactions	161,476	182,351	167,253	168,296	170,615
CSP new cases established	4,619	4,977	4,609	4,609	4,609
CSP client service interactions per worker	4,485	5,065	4,646	4,692	4,739
Percent of survey respondents reporting overall satisfaction	NA	93%	94%	94%	94%
Percent of CSP clients having basic needs successfully linked to County, community, or personal resources	73%	76%	75%	75%	75%

CSP's output indicators have highlighted the state of the economy over the last few years. An increase in demand for services began with the growth in the number of brand new cases in FY 2009, the worst period of the economic downturn. Over the past few years, including FY 2015, CSP has met approximately 75 percent of basic needs requests identified through client assessments conducted through the call center. Of those needs that could not be met successfully, nearly 80 percent were for rent or utility payments. Unmet needs are primarily due to: 1) clients not meeting criteria for financial assistance as defined by community-based and emergency assistance programs, 2) previous receipt of support, and 3) clients lack of follow through on service plans developed to provide enhanced stability. Criteria for community-based emergency services are defined by individual organizations and vary among providers. CSP continues to work with individual community-based organizations to educate them about current trends and needs and where appropriate find opportunities for policy adjustments that better support the needs of Fairfax County residents. While the number of new clients served continues to stabilize, service quality measures were better than current estimates.

As an output measure, client service interactions represent CSP's efforts in response to incoming calls which are primarily requests for assistance with basic needs and short-term case management. With 167,253 interactions in FY 2015 and with the poverty rate in Fairfax County somewhat stabilizing for two years, it is anticipated that client service interactions will increase slightly in FY 2016 and FY 2017.