

Department of Neighborhood and Community Services

LOB #170:

COMMUNITY CENTERS

Purpose

Community Centers offer something for every member of the family and provide a space to foster a community of self-reliant citizens who are involved in the development of activities and resources for their community. From programs for adults, children, teens, and active older adults to after-school, mentoring, and sports programs community centers focus on the strengths, abilities and interests of the community. Community Centers promote community ownership and responsibility which helps individuals develop and maintain healthy and positive lives, increase community unity and pride, and build self-reliant and strong communities.

Description

Community Centers operate in the Regional Services and Center Operations (RSCO) division. There are currently eight community centers (Bailey's, Gum Springs, Huntington, James Lee, Mott, Pinn, Providence, and Southgate) and one multicultural center (Willston) that are located throughout the County, most in neighborhoods that face multiple socio-economic challenges. There is no charge to attend any of these centers, although a nominal fee may be charged for some activities. Community centers offer people of all ages, abilities, and cultures activities that provide enrichment to foster embracing diversity and establishing healthy connections with others in the community. Within community centers there are a variety of activities from which to choose. Center programs include diverse recreational, cultural, and educational activities, community service opportunities and character-building programs designed to develop personal assets and community leadership in children, youth and adults. Community centers also operate an 11 week summer camp that augments the after-school programming by creating a continuum of service for youth throughout the summer months.

The activities selected provide opportunities to meet the unique needs and interests of the communities and include out-of-school time programs, homework help, competitive and recreational sports, drama and music clubs, social clubs for older adults, games, crafts, fitness programs, family events, teen clubs, and computer clubhouses and computer learning centers. Centers also provide a nutritional component for many of their participants through federal grant supported programs, including the USDA Summer Food Service Program for youth, the year-round USDA snack program, and the year-round Congregate Meal Program for older adults. Additionally, community center locations provide rooms for community meetings, classes, socials and weddings. All of the community centers have Advisory Councils or Community Program Leadership Teams which ensure that the services being provided are meeting the needs of the community.

Additionally, by sharing and overlapping data about community assets, needs, and trends other agencies and organizations are able to identify what services and programs specific to community center neighborhoods they should offer such as parenting education, cultural competency, health classes and services, educational enrichment programs, home-buying and homelessness prevention services, financial literacy, vocational training, and other self-sufficiency and wellness programs and services.

Community centers operate Monday thru Saturday but hours of operation are specific to center location and community need. Programs and services are provided by County merit and non-merit staff, volunteers, community-based partners, and contracted staff.

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Benefits

Targeted communities: Community centers were developed specifically to meet the many needs and interests of targeted communities. Needs are identified by staff who use community trend data around center locations and work with advisory councils and community program leadership teams to solicit information from members of the immediate community regarding their priorities for programs and services at their local center. Community centers benefit the communities they are in by fostering an environment for partner support and collaboration with community stakeholders; providing space to support community and civic engagement; convening stakeholders to develop community leadership and planning in order to address service gaps; and building strengths and assets by facilitating outcome-focused programs and services.

Vulnerable populations: Because community centers promote, support, and encourage healthy individuals, stable families, and connected communities through developing partnerships, serving as a convener of communities, and operating service and resource centers they help achieve the following: promote services for particularly vulnerable segments of the community such as older adults and school-aged children, ensure access to public health programs, maintain cultural resources for community use, and provide recreational opportunities for residents

Mandates

This Line of Business is not mandated.

Trends and Challenges

Teens: According to the recent Fairfax County Youth Survey data, challenges for the community include reducing alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use; decreasing incidence of bullying and cyberbullying; decreasing depressive symptoms as well as suicidal ideation; improving students' habits in the areas of nutrition and physical activity; and increasing adult engagement with our community's youth.

Elementary: According to the Fairfax County Free and Reduced Lunch Trends data kids receiving free lunch and scholarships from 2002-2014 the Fairfax County elementary student membership increased by 17 percent. During the same time period the number of students eligible for free and reduced lunches increased by 72 percent. Additionally, 8,500 elementary students have become eligible for free and reduced lunches since 2008-09. As a result, community centers play a major role in feeding children during out of school time with the USDA Summer Food Service Program for youth, USDA snack program, and Capital Area Food Bank's Kid's Café program.

Meeting the program needs of the older adult spectrum: Older Adults fall within a wide age spectrum beginning at age 50. This requires multiple levels of program planning, adaption, and programming selection. Physical limitations, cognitive abilities, and variety of health issues are all challenges that need to be addressed in providing resources to each age group within the spectrum.

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Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
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FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$1,932,503	\$2,102,383	\$2,634,798
Operating Expenses	566,865	726,234	505,199
Capital Equipment	51,523	105,963	0
Total Expenditures	\$2,550,891	\$2,934,580	\$3,139,997
General Fund Revenue	\$198,634	\$244,517	\$200,270
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$2,352,257	\$2,690,063	\$2,939,727
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	21 / 21	24 / 24	24 / 24
Total Positions	21 / 21	24 / 24	24 / 24

Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Community Center attendees	264,144	269,279	308,143	338,957	345,736
Community Center cost per attendee	\$5.15	\$6.11	\$6.43	\$7.00	\$7.08
Percent of satisfied community center participants	91%	91%	90%	90%	90%

Attendance at eight community centers and one multicultural center continued to rise as outreach efforts, targeted community events, and programming shifted to meet the needs of local communities. Additionally, Community Centers saw an approximate 14 percent increase in attendance, due in large part to the opening of Providence Community Center, which opened for business in January 2015. New partnerships introduced opportunities to provide programming to a larger numbers of residents. Service quality results indicate a continued high level of satisfaction with community centers.