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United Way #8199 CFC #37839

To: Fairfax County Human Services Council
From: Shirley Marshall, Executive Director
Date: March 13, 2014
Re: Budget Testimony

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the FY15 Budget. As a comprehensive provider of human services, we focus on moving families and individuals from fragility to stability. With many other agencies, we support three essential pillars: Education; Employment; and Housing.

While our focus is education and employment, as well as emergency services, we believe that the County must also invest in housing to keep families stable. In order to not only help the homeless but to *prevent* homelessness, housing and services are *both* key components of Fairfax County's budget. Some nonprofit services are tailored for those people with special needs, some for specific regions. However designed, these programs ensure County residents can become or remain stable members of the community.

As you know, the County provides vital funds for these activities through the Community Funding Pool [CCFP]. County Manager Ed Long has recognized this value by recommending an increase of 7.5% for the next fiscal year. Why is that important? Because costs continue to rise, while funding often stagnates. This recommendation will help nonprofits leverage both dollars and in-kind support. And the resulting services and their outcomes will prove the success of that investment.

We don't know what will be in the March 18 recommended cuts. Please continue your wonderful support of the County and the CCFP as a necessary part of our economic recovery.

How do nonprofits help the economy? By ensuring that workers are trained and ready; that students are prepared to learn; and that families are stable. This requires affordable housing, so adults and children can focus and move forward; employment opportunities so adults and older youth can support their families and save for the future; and early learning and adult education so residents can continue on to financial stability and success.

If we look at the seven strategic focus areas:

o Healthy People

- Good health starts with enough and appropriate food, combined with appropriate health care. Nonprofits ensure that families receive all these services, daily at food pantries and health clinics across the County. We also provide individual counseling, financial aid for medicine, and referrals to other services.
- What would this mean without affordable housing? Can we expect people to remain healthy when they don't have a place to call home? Good health refers to the mental as well as physical state of our County residents.
- Violence in the home is destructive on so many levels. We see an increased need for services, as more families are coming forward to say they need help. That help must be available when people ask for it or the services may be too late. Getting adequate support and trauma therapy, especially to the children, is essential.

o Positive Living for Older Adults and People With Disabilities

- Some services need to be tailored for specific needs, focused on keeping people engaged and stable. By 2017, over 50% of residents in NoVA will be over 65. Where and how will they be living? We must ensure that all have the opportunity for stable, connected lives.

o Connected Communities

- Isolation breeds distrust and destructive behavior. Engaging our citizens for empowerment and mutual strength ensures a stronger community. We are not alone in our wealth or poverty, we are one in common humanity.

o Successful Children and Youth

- Support children by continuing support for early learning centers and parent education. If we want children to start school ready to listen, they must start learning before the first day of class. Learning to be part of a class, learning to pay attention, can be fun. But not if you are holding back the other children and can see that you are "not as good." For the sake of the children, ensure that parents have opportunities to keep their children in early learning child care and that parents themselves can connect with education. We must find better ways to bridge the language barriers that keep parents

from connecting with schools and that limit the financial advancement of the family.

o Economic Self Sufficiency/Financial Security

- According to Dr. Stephen Fuller, between 2008 and 2013, the middle class lost ground and the lower [under 25k] and higher [over 80k] gained. What does that mean for the future? That without job training and further education, we will see a widening gap. And since \$25, 000 can not support a family, we will continue to see increased demand for services. Let's invest now, to ensure that more families are self-sufficient tomorrow.

o Sustainable Housing

- The County has a gross short-fall of housing, by the standards of the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness as well as the Center for Housing Research at Virginia Tech. We desperately need housing that is affordable to people who earn low- to moderate-incomes. How can children see the value of working toward success, when their hard-working parents cannot even afford a decent apartment?

o Infrastructure Support

- Nonprofits understand better than most organizations the essential value of infrastructure.
- CCFP funds ensure that nonprofits can leverage – on average, \$4 for every \$1 of government funds – support to make programs successful. All our programs measure outcomes, all must exhibit a degree of success to obtain financing. Without this base support, the rest of the funds may never be invested in Fairfax County's human services. From individuals, corporations, foundations - - nonprofits raise and spend money in the County to help ensure a wonderful community for us all.
- Like the CCFP funds, contract funds ensure that nonprofits can continue providing essential services. The proposed increase will help ensure that these services can continue to ensure success for clients.