



County of Fairfax, Virginia

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

Human Services
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DATE: March 20, 2009

TO: Chairman and Members
Board of Supervisors

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

SUBJECT: Recommendations Regarding the FY 2010 Advertised Budget Plan

The Human Services Council appreciates the opportunity to provide comment and guidance on the FY 2010 Advertised Budget Plan. The Council understands that the County Executive's strategy to close an estimated \$650 million budget shortfall will require difficult reductions in programs that will result in a deterioration of services. The economic recession is fundamentally challenging the county government's business model and possibly requiring radical changes in how we do business. However, we must make careful and thoughtful responses to the economic situation, especially in the provision of human services, or we will greatly exacerbate a rapidly deteriorating state of affairs.

The Human Services Council applauds the County Executive's inclusion of several spending requirements and initiatives in the FY 2010 baseline budget plan:

- Continuing "The Penny for Affordable Housing Fund". Affordable and accessible housing is fundamental to a stable community. At a time when seismic economic forces threaten to tear even Fairfax County's strong social fabric, we need this critical initiative more than ever. This fund has been used to preserve more than 2,200 affordable housing units, sustaining the accessibility of affordable housing, so vital to the health of our community and directly underlying many human service programs and needs. The fiscal resources provided by The Penny for Affordable Housing Fund provide the county with flexibility to address urgent housing needs such as the growing number of foreclosures, the Ten Year Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, and connecting persons with disabilities with appropriate housing. These funds are leveraged at least three to four times over—a very good investment, especially in this dour economy.
- Funding the Consolidated Community Funding Pool at the FY 2009 funding level. This is an extremely wise investment, productively leveraging millions of non-County dollars to serve thousands of our community residents with essential human services.
- Funding \$1.0 million as an emergency support reserve for community organizations. As with the Consolidated Community Funding Pool, the County Executive has recognized the vital partnership the County Government has with the nonprofit community in providing human services. Community organizations are in a very precarious position. If they fail, our government's costs and responsibilities will increase. This is an extremely prudent move.
- Funding \$2.0 million to fill case worker positions to address program eligibility workloads in food stamps, Medicaid, and TANF. The County has seen caseloads in these areas in human services more than double. We think that we have not yet seen the bottom. There is no alternative to this.

The Dismal Landscape of Human Services

The current situation in human services is bleak and worsening, threatening the basic needs of our most endangered residents. Economic stress inversely impacts the county's and our nonprofit partners' capacity to meet residents' needs because as service requests increase sharply, donations and availability of resources decline. While Fairfax County Government certainly feels the impact, our nonprofit community partners are even more severely affected because their resources are not as deep and diverse as the county's. Look, for example, at the current plight of food banks, which are faced with increasing demand for food but are at their lowest resource ebb in nearly four decades. The Human Services Council recently learned that lines of people waiting for food at a local nonprofit have been so long at times that they evoke those indelible images of soup lines during the Great Depression. Simply put, demand is outstripping supply.

Challenges Affecting Human Services Delivery

The Human Services Council recognizes that many of these proposed reductions will create significant risk in terms of standards for service quality or accessibility. Few of the proposed reductions are just inconveniences. In fact, they affect our most exposed populations' basic living and coping requirements. What's at risk?

- **Safety Net.** The magnitude and severity of some of the proposed reductions will reverse the safety net of services that has been carefully built over many years.
- **Basic Needs.** There has been a significant and documented increase in requests for job-search, rental, medical, financial, and housing assistance.
- **Unintended Consequences.** We are extremely concerned about the unintended consequences of reductions and multiplied hardships for our most vulnerable residents.
- **County-wide Impact.** The majority of proposed reductions are universal in nature, affecting all county residents eligible for the services offered. Examples include child care assistance, older adult services, juvenile justice programs, and transportation programs.

Our dialogue with Community-Based Organizations and Boards, Authorities, and Commissions emphasized the precarious state of the human services community. Since Fall 2008, requests for basic assistance and services have sharply increased. For example:

- An increase of 125% in requests for emergency food (January 2006-December 2008)
- An 81% increase in requests for emergency rent assistance (January 2006 – December 2008)
- 500 new individuals/families each month with no previous CSP contact
- Nearly 24,000 persons in Fairfax County received food stamps in November 2008—a 16% increase over the prior year
- Ongoing applications have increased by 18.8% for food stamps, Medicaid, General Relief, TANF, and Refugee Assistance
- Almost 25,000 persons currently seeking employment in Fairfax County, according to the March 13, 2009 unemployment data released by the Virginia Employment Commission
- 22,000 persons sought employment assistance through the Workforce Investment Board—a 122% increase (November 2007 to November 2008 data)

Areas of Particular Concern to the Council

While the Council is constrained to acknowledge that reductions to human services programs will be necessary to help address the financial shortfall, we need to proceed very carefully because of related *cascading effects*. The human services service delivery net is highly interdependent. Cutting one thread can create unintended, compounded, destructive failures elsewhere, a chain reaction of ever-widening misery and damaged lives. The Human Services Council wants to assure that the county's actions recognize the highly tenuous and intertwined nature of the human services safety net for county residents. In our discussions with the community, the following issues, speaking to the county's ability to maintain critical human services and respond to emergency needs, emerged:

- **Affordable and Accessible Housing**

The human services community again commends the county's strong support for developing and preserving affordable and accessible housing by dedicating one penny of the real estate tax to addressing the issue of housing affordability. The county has surpassed its initial goal to preserve 1,000 units of affordable housing and create 200 new affordable units. Accessibility to affordable housing also is of special importance to the disabled, the elderly, and members of low-income households. Availability of affordable housing is vital to the health of our community, directly affecting many human services programs and needs, but accessibility is equally important because it expands the reach of affordable housing opportunities to individuals who have special needs and/or disabilities. As the Human Services Council has said before, the lack of affordable housing is the preeminent threat to the overall well-being and stability of our community.

- **Preserving the Entire Human Services Safety Net**

The extremely fragile safety net of basic services is comprised not only of directly provided county services, but also of a vast network of cooperating non-profit and faith-community providers. Many of the proposed reductions will accelerate the deterioration of services from all service deliverers. The safety net is growing weaker at the very time when caseloads and service needs are increasing, and waiting lists are growing longer. The Council's recommendations try to ensure that at least a minimum safety net of critical human service programs remains in place to supply the most basic needs of county residents. However we do that—by encouraging efficiencies, program redesign, new strategies, or alternative service delivery—we need to keep our eye on two bottom lines: budget constraints and the basic needs of our residents at peril.

- **Concern for the Protection and Well-Being of Children and Families**

The Council is especially concerned in this budget cycle about the need to provide supportive and protective services for children and families. Examples include the juvenile crime rate, substance abuse among youth, and the growth of protective services and foster care caseloads. Additionally, the growing number of single-parent families and the prevalence of families in which all adults must work outside of the home has led to a greater need for affordable, accessible child care throughout the county. The need for human services has been exacerbated not only by the economic downturn but also by the dramatic population growth Fairfax County has experienced over the past several years. A related and especially distressing issue is the matter of elderly parents trying to care for their adult children with physical, sensory, and intellectual disabilities. The situation will become worse. The Council strongly recommends maintaining funding for programs that provide a range of supportive and protective services for children and families, including child care, health care, foster care, child protection, juvenile supervision, and substance abuse and violence prevention.

- **Maintaining Independence: the Availability of Long-Term Care and Other Assistance for Seniors and Persons With Physical, Intellectual, and Sensory Disabilities**

The Human Services Council strives to ensure that at least a minimum safety net of critical human service programs remains in place to supply the most basic needs of county residents. Helping our senior residents maintain their independence is a much more cost-effective strategy than service alternatives, especially institutionalization. Many of our seniors and residents with physical, sensory, and intellectual disabilities need some type of assistance to live independently, whether they are elderly persons trying to remain in their own homes or families trying to support aging parents of a mentally or physically challenged child. Every year the need for such supportive services grows, and we can expect this trend to continue. Persons with physical or mental limitations can live independently with the proper support. Services such as adult day care and vocational and day support programs make it possible for intellectually challenged persons to continue living meaningful and productive lives in their homes and communities.

- **Transportation is a Key Component of Providing Human Services**

Reliable, on-time transit support to county human services programs underlies the delivery of human services and is a critical component of self-sufficiency. Reducing this critical connection between human services clients and their benefits illustrates many of the potential compounding pitfalls for human services in the County Executive's budget. Proposed reductions of several million dollars may result in limited transportation services because per-unit costs increase with the loss of revenues for a third of the consumer base. A large share of FASTRAN para-transit services will be transferred to the State Medicaid managed-care provider, with the possibility that some county services could be required to be assumed by the Metro Access system. However, the Human Services Council did not hear testimony regarding whether Metro Access could handle the additional trips or if this is appropriate and advisable. The Council is also concerned about the capacity of the state's Medicaid provider, Logisticare Inc., to provide these services in a quality manner in Fairfax County. Everyday transportation to human services continues to be a vital need for many individuals, especially the working poor, elderly, persons who are mobility-impaired, and persons with other disabilities. The County needs to be very careful that reductions in transportation do not effectively eliminate other services. A rescaling of the human services transportation system may be required once the full impact of reductions to the system is ascertained.

- **Human Services Infrastructure is Impacted**

The County's Human Services enterprise is an enormous and well-run business. It includes more than \$450 million in expenditures and approximately \$175 million in revenues and reimbursements—all of which are managed with a very low administrative overhead rate of 2.0 percent. But, proposed reductions to administrative functions will compromise this very efficient system. A budget-reduced human services system will need this lean administrative infrastructure to implement and manage transformational change through a human services system that will improve outcomes. Noted below are several *human services-wide* infrastructure functions that are proposed for varying degrees of reduction. The Human Services Council is especially concerned about this and recommends that they be spared from the most serious of the reductions:

- Accounts receivable, accounts payable, financial management, contracts management and monitoring, human services training, facilities services support, emergency planning, and information services.
- Business process reengineering and research, planning and service integration efforts, survey research analysis, workforce development, and technology planning and coordination.
- Direct county personnel and operating expenses for program support functions such as temporary clerical services, marketing, and program-specific cleaning and maintenance contracts.

Items Recommended for Restoration by the Board of Supervisors

The Human Services Council understands the tremendous pressure that the Board of Supervisors will be under to restore some of the proposed reductions in human services, education, and public safety. The Council would be remiss if we did not present options for the Board’s consideration. Thus, the Council has included below a table of items for consideration of restoring funding. The Council strongly supports all of these items which are critical to the county’s human services network. Of course, providing funding to restore these services and programs is contingent on the availability of additional or redirected funding. If additional funding becomes available from sources such as the proposed vehicle registration fee, the additional penny on the tax rate that the Board has proposed, federal stimulus funding, and funding from the county’s fuel reserve, the Council urges the Board of Supervisors’ consideration of restoring some or all of the items on the list.

Lines of Business Reduction Description	Merit Pos.	Amount
<i>Affordable and Accessible Housing</i>		
Restore funding for the Homeless Prevention Program, for which a funding reduction of 15% is proposed for FY 2010. Five to seven fewer families would be at risk of becoming homeless, thereby supporting the county's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. (LOB 001-67-228)	0/0.0	\$35,268
Restore funding for homeless shelter contracts, for which a funding reduction of 5% is proposed for FY 2010. This restored funding will maintain case management services and timely access to critical services at current service levels. With a flat allocation from the county, the emergency homeless shelters will be able to offer services that are comparable to what currently exists, including case management, supportive supervision, and meals. The shelters should be able to continue staffing levels necessary to maintain safe and healthy shelter conditions for the same number of families and individuals that are currently being served and to provide the intensity of services that help people make the changes needed to sustain permanent housing. The emergency homeless shelters will still have to absorb increased costs for insurance, food, supplies, etc., while donations are not likely to increase, or may actually decrease. With level county funding, the shelters will be able to participate in the plans to end homelessness. (LOB 001-67-230)	0/0.0	\$318,727
Restore funding for Community Services Board (CSB) Homeless Services. This restored funding will maintain on-site services provided at county shelters and outreach services provided to unsheltered homeless individuals. The CSB estimates that 468 homeless people at shelters will be served with the restored funding. (LOB 106-75-418)	9/8.5	\$673,819

Safety Net		
Restore funding for Child Care and Referral (CCAR) program (2 separate cuts of \$1,725,917--the other in "Children and Families"--each affecting 250 children). Maintaining the CCAR funding at the current level will help approximately 500 low-income working families to attain and maintain economic self-sufficiency and support children's school readiness and success. Child care subsidies enhance the ability to maintain self sufficiency and to not enter or return to welfare programs. The Human Services Council wants to make sure that the number of children served by the CCAR program remains the same as it is with the FY 2009 revised budget. (LOB 001-67-231)	0/0.0	\$1,725,917
Restore funding for one position that seeks out, obtains, and coordinates alternative funding and program support resources via grants and business partnerships. The Department of Community and Recreation Services (CRS) relies on its ability to leverage business partnerships, volunteers, and grant funding. Elimination of this position will immediately impact coordination of these efforts and will require effort from direct service staff to fill this gap. (LOB 001-50-158)	1/1.0	\$80,500
Restore funding for one position that provides specialized statistical and survey research capacity for human services and for the county as a whole. This position designs, implements, and analyzes the annual county-wide youth survey (a critical data source for prevention initiatives), provides analytical and design support for the point-in-time survey of homeless persons (essential in monitoring the ten-year plan to end homelessness), designs, implements, and analyzes complex county-wide surveys (transportation, human services, gang activity, household demographics, etc.) Abolishment of this position would significantly reduce an already under-resourced survey, statistical analysis, and demographic analysis capability in the county. (LOB 001-69-275)	1/1.0	\$80,403
Children and Families		
Restore funding for Child Care and Referral (CCAR) program (2 separate cuts of \$1,725,917--the other in "Safety Net"--each affecting 250 children) Maintaining the CCAR funding at the current level will help approximately 500 low-income working families to attain and maintain economic self-sufficiency and support children's school readiness and success. Child care subsidies enhance the ability to maintain self sufficiency and to not enter or return to welfare programs. The Human Services Council wants to make sure that the number of children served by the CCAR program remains the same as it is with the FY 2009 revised budget. (LOB 001-67-239)	0/0.0	\$1,725,917
Restore funding for the Clinic Room Aide (CRA) program. Clinic Room Aides provided care during 755,200 clinic visits, managed 15,370 medication orders, and screened over 64,000 students for hearing and vision in FY 2008. There is a demonstrated need for a trained and consistent health-care provider in the school clinic setting to deal with increasingly complex health conditions utilizing evolving medical technology and treatments (e.g., care of children with asthma, diabetes, seizure disorders, and allergic reactions) on a daily basis. School Health Services in Fairfax County utilizes one of the most effective and least costly staffing models in Virginia. Elimination of the CRA substitute pool and reduction of school clinic coverage will result in Fairfax County Public School staff needing to provide short (1/2 hour - 1 day) and long-term (2 - 3 months during vacancy) coverage in addition to their regular job duties. (LOB 001-71-299)	0/0.0	\$750,000
Restore funding to the Alcohol and Drug Services' Assessment and Referral Center in order to provide access to treatment services for 179 individuals annually. (LOB 106-75-414)	1/1.0	\$80,824

Children and Families (continued)		
Restored funding for Probation Officer positions will maintain VA code-mandated coordination of the Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) which reviews an average of 100 court client cases per year adjudicated as a child in need of supervision (truant or runaway) and provides written report and recommendations to judges for every case. These positions will conduct family assessments to support IDT decision making, provide family counseling services to youth and families diverted from formal court intervention, provide progress and evaluation reports for the Court, and coordinate Juvenile Drug Treatment Court. As a result, 76 (of 190) of the families provided counseling will be served with restored funding, including non-English speaking Latino families. This allows JDRDC to incorporate evidence-based programming into existing services to youth and families in the least restrictive environment within the local community while preserving public safety, which meets the VA code that directs JDRDC services to divert youth and families whenever possible, and the County Human Services initiative for Systems of Care Reform Goals for Children at Risk of Residential Placement. (LOB 001-81-314)	4/3.0	\$280,000
Restoration of this funding and positions will enable the continued provision of intensive family preservation services to families who are at significant risk of abusing or neglecting their children, thereby reducing the need for more intrusive involvement in the future and maintain the continued decline in the number of children coming into foster care. In addition, the restoration of these resources would assist foster care staff in meeting the new mandates which have increased their work significantly. For example, frontline foster care social workers must now satisfy monthly visitation requirements which have effectively tripled workload for staff. The restoration of these positions is important in ensuring balance in workload and supporting best practices in comprehensive case management for children and their families involved with the Department of Family Services. (LOBS 001-67-242 & 001-67-243)	4/4.0	\$266,304
Restoration of the 1/0.5 SYE merit Mental Health Therapist in Victim Assistance Network will enable the continuation of community outreach and Domestic and Sexual Violence Services' prevention activities. In FY 2008, approximately 80 programs were presented, primarily educating middle and high school students about healthy relationships and violence-prevention. Other prevention activities would be preserved, as well. (LOB 001-67-233)	1/0.5	\$33,288
Restore funding for Alcohol and Drug assessment, stabilization, and treatment services for 102 individuals annually at the Adult Detention Center. (LOB 106-75-413)	1/1.0	\$80,824
Restore funding to maintain 16 residential treatment beds at Cornerstones, a treatment program that serves individuals with severe mental illness and substance abuse problems. Without the restored funding, the program will close three beds. (LOB 106-75-420)	1/1.0	\$84,325
Restore funding for three locally-funded Head Start classrooms. If these three Head Start classrooms remain open, at-risk children from low-income families will continue to receive educational care that supports school readiness, along with health screenings, mental health evaluations, dental care, and nutrition, which are critical to their future success in school. Head Start also assists the childrens' parents make progress toward their own educational, literacy, and employment goals. (LOB 001-67-227)	2/2.0	\$596,966

Maintaining Independence		
Restore funding to keep open the Wakefield Senior Center. Closing Wakefield will require relocation of approximately 400 registered senior adult participants to other centers resulting in wider service areas for the Little River Glen and Lincolnia Senior Centers that may create longer transport times and it will disrupt established relationships with friends which are essential to reduce social isolation. If both Wakefield and Pinn Senior programs close it will create service capacity problems at the Little River Glen Senior Center and the waiting list for services may increase. (LOB 001-50-168)	2/2.0	\$128,773
By restoring funding to keep open the Groveton Senior Center, participants will not have to move to the Gum Springs Community Center. This relocation would have impacted approximately 700 registered senior adult participants and disrupted the coordinated services they receive from other human services agencies at South County. (LOB 001-50-167)	1/1.0	\$67,103
Restore funding for disabilities services planning and development contracts, for which a funding reduction of 15% is proposed. (1) 53 individuals and their families will be able to maintain their intensive long-term case management services provided by Brain Injury Services, thereby significantly increasing their ability to remain productively and safely in the community. Additionally, this funding would reduce the average wait for services from 4 years to 2 years. Currently there are 52 people on the wait list for services. Services to 15 young adult Fairfax County nursing home residents will be restored. (2) This funding for contracts through the Northern Virginia Regional Commission will maintain operations at their current level by helping individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing attain/retain employment, education, housing, and an improved quality of life. (3) Restoring funding to the Legal Services of Northern Virginia contract will increase the number of low-income individuals with disabilities receiving legal representation to help with benefits eligibility and civil rights legal assistance in the areas of transportation, housing, public accommodation, and more. (LOB 001-67-232)	0/0.0	\$86,182
Restore funding for a work enclave located at the Pennino Building. The sheltered workshop provides service to both the County and to the individuals trained and employed. The restored contract funding will be managed by the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB). (LOB 001-67-216)	0/0.0	\$133,070
Restore funding to purchase developmental day services for 16 non-Medicaid funded individuals. As a result, 16 (of 70) individuals currently receiving these services will have their day services maintained. (LOB 106-75-417)	0/0.0	\$466,142
Restore funding for purchase of sheltered and group employment services for 41 non-Medicaid funded individuals. As a result, 41 (of 354) non-Medicaid funded individuals currently receiving these services will have their day services maintained. (LOB 106-75-406)	0/0.0	\$705,082
Transportation		
Restore funding for summer transportation associated with Therapeutic Recreation camps (provide the service using General Fund support instead of imposing additional fees on parents). There are no other summer therapeutic recreation options for children with severe intellectual, physical, emotional, and sensory disabilities. When Saturday transportation services were cut during the 1990s, program participation immediately dropped 50%. Over 90% of parents rely on transportation. Increased fees as high as \$170 per week may be prohibitive for many families. (LOB: fee initiative)	0/0.0	\$125,000

Infrastructure		
Restore funding for four positions that provide contracts and financial management, and accounts receivable services on behalf of Consolidated Community Funding Pool, Comprehensive Services Act, Community Services Board, and Department of Family Services programs. Two positions manage and audit the contractual obligations and processes of the Consolidated Community Funding Pool, including approximately 200 contracts with community-based organizations. Contract compliance monitoring site visits also are conducted. These functions are key components of the county's strategy to maximize the efforts of community-based nonprofit organizations, especially critical now as the county's nonprofit partners are struggling to meet the basic needs of families and individuals. A third position manages and monitors more than \$40 million in Comprehensive Services Act expenditures and grants, including state reporting requirements to receive state matching funds. The fourth position is actively involved in financing strategies proposed by the Josiah H. Beeman Commission, such as optimizing Medicaid and state Children's Health Insurance Plan revenues for individuals receiving mental health services. Currently, approximately \$100,000 in fees-for-service is collected. (LOBS 001-68-260, -266, -267, -268)	4/4.0	\$227,129
Restore contract funding for non-profit training and development to increase the capacity and effectiveness of community-based nonprofit organizations. This is a critical dimension of the county's overall strategy for maximizing the efforts of community-based nonprofits in the county. It is a key resource to support the managerial effectiveness of nonprofit managers and Board members. To better reflect the system-wide nature of this funding, it will be transferred to the Department of Systems Management for Human Services' budget from the Department of Housing and Community Development. If this funding is eliminated, there will be no funding available in FY 2010 to continue the county's longstanding program of nonprofit training and development. (LOB 001-38-127)	0/0.0	\$160,000
Total	32/30.0	\$8,911,563

Every Crisis Provides an Opportunity

The Human Services Council hopes that these considerations and the specific recommendations outlined in the attached tables will aid the Board of Supervisors in their deliberations on the FY 2010 proposed budget.

The Council notes how the human services system is continually developing new approaches to service delivery that better serve and meet the expectations of the community, especially in light of limited resources. The Human Services enterprise is no stranger to reinventing itself, constantly improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the human services system. Moreover, this has been accomplished with a remarkably low administrative overhead cost of 2 percent—exceptional for a private or public organization. Consider these examples of successes:

- Behavioral and affordable health care system improvements
- Redesign of Services: Clinic Services; Healthcare Access Assistance Team (HAAT); Area Agency on Aging Intake Process; Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Restitution Process
- Moving to an outcome-based system
- More than \$40 million in cumulative savings since 1996 human services redesign

You and the community will need to make many difficult, possibly unpopular, choices. Yet, this arduous process also presents opportunities. For example, it reinvigorates the continuing efforts by the County and its employees to foster continuous improvement and initiative. These actions represent what we think are the best possibilities for mitigating the impact to the thousands of Fairfax County's most vulnerable residents who rely upon the human services from the County.

The Council urges caution so that budgetary decisions do not compromise the investment, momentum, and energy that the county and our partners have built in addressing human services needs in the community. Important endeavors such as preventing and ending homelessness, and preserving and developing affordable housing will suffer if this forward momentum is slowed or stopped altogether.

We must also look out for the nonprofit community, our crucial human services partners in leveraging community resources. The needs are skyrocketing and we must ensure that our community's basic health, safety, welfare, housing, and sustenance needs are sustained. These nonprofit organizations save the county money and service populations that are sometimes unreached by the broader safety net. The services they provide fill significant supply/demand service gaps. The financial health of our nonprofit partners is key to a vibrant community-support network. People's basic needs are at stake.

This is an ongoing process, and the Council will continue to work with Mr. Haywood and the Human Services Leadership Team to pursue mitigation strategies and potential service delivery alternatives. The Human Services Council will be an active participant in this process throughout the months to come.

Thank you.

rcm

cc: Human Services Council
Anthony H. Griffin, County Executive
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