

Response to Questions on the FY 2015 Carryover Review

Request By: Supervisor Hudgins

Question: In various venues we have heard the success of Opportunity Neighborhoods (ON), including a presentation to the Human Services Council in February 2014: “FY 2014, 2015, and 2016 Trends & Work Priorities Affecting the Human Services System,” along with multiple presentations to the Successful Children and Youth Policy Team (SCYPT) Committee and Leadership Fairfax. The County and FCPS staff have conveyed the priority and/or success of the Opportunity Neighborhoods pilot program. The Program was unveiled in South County in 2012, and reports indicate positive results for that community. The next phase has been discussed, with implementation in North County; however, this next step has been on hold for nearly two years. It appears clear that there is a return on investment for ON.

Please provide what is needed in funding and time-frame to begin implementation of the next phase of ON in FY 2016 in North County.

In addition, how does the increase of \$650,000 for the Prevention Fund support ON program efforts?

Response: Goals of Opportunity Neighborhood (ON)

The premise of ON is that children and youth do better when the major influences on their learning and development – family, schools and communities – work together to ensure that they are physically, emotionally, and socially prepared to learn and succeed in life. With a focus on common goals and outcomes (i.e., children are prepared for school entry, succeed in school, graduate from high school and transition successfully to college and careers; and families and communities support youth success), Opportunity Neighborhoods facilitate collective planning, action, and impact across sectors: government, education, nonprofit, faith, civic, and philanthropy.

Region 1/Mount Vernon ON – FY 2016 Activities and Budget

The current Region 1 ON in the Mount Vernon and Lee Districts was established in 2011. Boundaries were determined by the high school pyramid and the boundaries of the three elementary schools. The Region 1 ON model includes the boundaries of Mount Vernon Woods Elementary School, Riverside Elementary School, Woodlawn Elementary School, as well as Whitman Middle School and Mount Vernon High School. The Region 1 effort has led to positive trends across several key measures including school attendance, discipline, parent engagement and volunteerism. Programmatic areas of focus include: 1) learning and enrichment opportunities to address individual challenges and maximize strengths; 2) supports for successful transitions at key points including kindergarten entry, between elementary school and middle school, and middle school to high school; 3) school- and community-based enrichment opportunities before school, after school, weekends, summers, and during extended school breaks; 4) access to medical, dental, mental health and social services; 5) access to quality early learning experiences; 6) addressing the needs of adults (including language, employment, housing, nutrition, etc.) to ensure that the adults in the lives of children in youth have the resources, capacity, and

resilience to support them; and 7) cultivating a culture of engagement, connectedness, and where children and youth have strong aspirations and feel connected to a family, school, and community support network that believes in and invests in their potential.

The Region 1 ON has a budget of \$290,400, and had previously been largely funded through grants from Capital One and the Virginia Departments of Education and Criminal Justice Services. In addition, both NCS and DFS contribute additional resources through their regular operating budgets. NCS funds after school programming and provides project management support to ON and DFS funds the Neighborhood Networks program. As part of the *FY 2015 Carryover Review*, \$155,000 of the \$650,000 included for the Prevention Incentive Fund will be used in FY 2016 to support ON after-school programming, school readiness activities, and resident engagement in Region 1. In combination with remaining grant funds, support is available for FY 2016.

Region 1/Mount Vernon ON – FY 2017

In FY 2017, in order to sustain current ON activities in Region 1/Mount Vernon, NCS and DFS will continue to fund ON activities through their regular operating budgets but as grant support ends, additional resources totaling \$290,400 will also be needed beginning in FY 2017 to support the continuation of key ON activities (Resident Engagement, Youth Leadership Development, Early Literacy, School Readiness, Academic and Life Skill Enrichment, Youth Employment) and other administrative functions.

Region 3/Reston – FY 2016 Activities and what is needed to Fully Implement ON

Potential ON locations are identified based on an assessment of a community's challenges and assets using social, cultural, health, education, safety, and economic indicators as well as a survey of neighborhood residents and mapping of available community resources and services. Region 3/Reston is the next location for ON expansion based on a review of available data and because the collaborative structure and approach of ON could help advance preliminary collaborative efforts already underway in the area.

To support the expansion of ON to Reston, NCS will build upon current work underway in the community, through existing neighborhood-focused contracts with Cornerstones funded by NCS and Housing and Community Development. The convening of key stakeholders in Reston is scheduled to begin in October 2015. Funding of \$75,000 included in the *FY 2015 Carryover Review* for the Prevention Incentive Fund will be used in FY 2016 to support an assessment and thorough analysis of trends and comprehensive look at needs and assets in Reston, the first phase for establishment of ON in that region. A key tenet of ON is to align programming with the identified needs, interests, and gaps in services in a particular community. This assessment will inform the community as to which specific ON strategies and programming are needed in the neighborhood, as well as the expected programmatic goals and outcomes. In addition, this information for how best to implement an effective ON program in Region 3/Reston will be used to develop a budget request to be discussed during the FY 2017 budget process.

Staff will provide additional information on the successes of the ON efforts and more clearly define the FY 2017 requirements at an upcoming Human Services Committee of the Board.