

Department of Neighborhood and Community Services

LOB #163:

PREVENTION

Purpose

Prevention involves the coordination of a Human Services system-wide approach to ensuring that all Fairfax County children and youth are healthy and successful. Prevention works at the population level to identify, implement, and support a comprehensive set of prevention strategies to address specific identified issues (e.g., mental health and suicide, substance abuse, bullying, obesity) and to promote child and youth development and well-being. The primary purpose of Prevention is to ensure a collaborative, cross-sector and cross-system approach when addressing issues in the community that require interventions at multiple levels and by multiple partners.

Description

Prevention is a business unit in the Regional Services and Center Operations (RSCO) division. The Prevention unit leads the development and implementation of population-level strategies designed to promote the health, well-being, and success of Fairfax County's children and youth. There is a particular emphasis on identifying and addressing disparities and inequities based on race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, disability, geography, or other circumstance. This work will lead to better outcomes in a variety of areas – such as substance use, mental health, academic achievement, and obesity – improving quality of life and diverting or saving public resources that would otherwise need to be directed to cost-intensive treatment and remediation.

The unit's work and structure are informed by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's "core concepts of prevention," which dictate a population-level focus, an interdisciplinary approach, an array of strategies across the spectrum of intervention types (e.g., programs, policy, community mobilization, provider education), and systems coordination. In practice, this is the type of work epitomized by a collective impact approach, the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem. Successful examples of collective impact initiatives, including the Opportunity Neighborhood effort in the Mount Vernon area, share the same five conditions: a common agenda and shared vision for change, a shared measurement system to identify needs and measure progress, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and a backbone support organization. The Prevention unit serves as a "backbone" to convene, manage, and support the work. The network of Opportunity Neighborhood partners are able to enhance the existing pipeline of services and supports necessary for fostering student achievement and positive youth development, family resilience, and a culture of community engagement, connectedness, and success. This effort has led to positive trends across several key measures including school attendance, discipline, parent engagement and volunteerism.

Prevention unit work falls into four broad categories: prevention strategy leadership, internal (system) and external (public) communications, data and evaluation management, and provider support.

The Prevention unit does not provide direct services to children, youth, and families. Through its work, the Prevention unit instead strives to increase the capacity of partner organizations to deliver such services and to align their work in a comprehensive plan to address population-level outcomes for children and youth. In particular, the Prevention unit works to increase providers' capacity to: link to, access, and provide resources, identify and address issues, implement quality programs and services, and collaborate and align with other providers and resources to address gaps, facilitate continuous improvement, and ensure a comprehensive approach to prevention.

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The Prevention Unit coordinates and supports the Successful Children and Youth Policy Team (SCYPT), a high-level policy group charged with developing a common approach to child and youth health and well-being. SCYPT membership consists of elected and appointed leaders from Fairfax County Government and Fairfax County Public Schools, as well as community leaders from a number of sectors. The SCYPT's key activities include developing a high-level policy agenda focused on the success and well-being of children and youth; developing specific recommendations on policy and funding; encouraging and driving action among leadership in key sectors and organizations; and coordinating/linking major initiatives throughout the County.

Benefits

Successful children and youth: The ultimate benefit of the work done by the Prevention unit are the following outcomes for all children and youth, with an emphasis on identifying and addressing disparities and inequitable outcomes:

- Children get a healthy start in life.
- Children enter kindergarten ready to succeed.
- Children and youth succeed academically.
- Children and youth are healthy.
 - Children and youth are physically healthy.
 - Children and youth are socially, emotionally, and behaviorally healthy and resilient.
- Children and youth are safe and free from violence and injury.
- Youth earn a post-secondary degree or career credential.
- Youth enter the workforce ready to succeed.
- Youth contribute to the betterment of their community.

These benefits will eventually be seen as lower rates of substance abuse, increased graduation rates, fewer disparities in poor birth outcomes, and so on. The Prevention Unit is developing a data monitoring system that will track these, and other, indicators, facilitating the monitoring of progress and the identification of issues of concern.

Mandates

This Line of Business is not mandated.

Trends and Challenges

Cross-sector and interdisciplinary collaboration: This is most evident in the collective impact movement. The Institute of Medicine, the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and many other leading organizations have all highlighted the importance of such strategies. In Virginia, the Department of Health and the Virginia Center for Health Innovation are leading efforts to develop "Accountable Care Communities" throughout the commonwealth, using the same principles.

Data-driven decision-making: Funders, boards, and communities are increasingly holding service providers accountable for results. But providers cannot achieve results if they are not focused on the right issues. Making decisions, identifying priorities, and informing continuous improvement efforts must be made by accessing and reviewing available data.

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Population focus: As described earlier, the prevention field is shifting from an emphasis on individuals and programs to an emphasis on populations and strategies that impact the health and well-being of everyone.

Changing demographics and changing needs: By taking a population-level and disparities-focused approach to reviewing data to inform decisions, strategies are able to be developed to take into account changing demographics, such as the number of recently immigrated and reunited families, and the increase in the number of families living in poverty.

Alignment of multiple strategies: Multiple large-scale strategies, such as the Community Health Improvement Plan and the Strategic Plan to Facilitate Fairfax County's Economic Success, overlap with and have complementary goals to the work around successful children and youth. The Prevention Unit is uniquely situated to help ensure the alignment of these strategies.

Emphasis on equity: The Economic Success Plan highlights the importance of social equity, and the recently completed Equitable Growth Profile highlights the impact equity can have on our local economy. The Prevention Unit's emphasis on disparities and equity strives to ensure that all decisions focused on improving outcomes for children and youth are made through an "equity lens."

Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #163: Prevention			
FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$81,392	\$203,704	\$299,751
Operating Expenses	54,830	34,223	30,000
Total Expenditures	\$136,222	\$237,927	\$329,751
General Fund Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$136,222	\$237,927	\$329,751
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	5 / 5	5 / 5	5 / 5
Total Positions	5 / 5	5 / 5	5 / 5

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Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Number of organizations supported	NA	NA	77	85	90
Percent of customers satisfied with Prevention Unit services	NA	NA	94%	90%	90%
Percent of customers reporting improved knowledge of available resources	NA	NA	78%	80%	80%
Percent of customers reporting increased opportunities for collaboration	NA	NA	87%	80%	80%

The Prevention Unit began operations in FY 2015; therefore, only one year of data is currently available.

The extent to which each organization is “supported” by the Prevention Unit varies. Services include training, support in strategy development and implementation, in-depth technical assistance, project management, referral and assistance, and more. Since the nature of this support can change based on the project or initiative, and can vary within the course of the year even for individual organizations, these metrics are not restricted to a specific type (or specific types) of support.

As the initiatives in which the Prevention Unit is involved grow in number and complexity, the number of organizations supported is anticipated to grow, even as some currently supported organizations may cease to work directly with the Prevention Unit.

Customer satisfaction rates are high especially for a new service unit. The residents of Fairfax County like knowing there is a single place they can always turn to when looking for a resource or connection, and that the Prevention Unit strives to constantly share resources and valuable information. As the community’s capacity to identify and access resources grows, they may not need to rely so heavily on the Prevention Unit; therefore, 80 percent is the future estimate.

Collective impact is, at its heart, a continuous improvement process. By bringing people together to address an issue, they can learn from each other, identify and address gaps, and hold each other accountable. The Prevention Unit serves as a convener and facilitator; 87 percent of respondents claimed that the Prevention Unit helped them collaborate with others. As the community’s capacity to engage and collaborate with each other grows, they may not need to rely so heavily on the Prevention Unit; therefore, 80 percent is the future estimate.

The ultimate measure of the Prevention Unit’s success will be the community’s enhanced capacity to effectively address community issues. As systems and processes become better identified, and as the Prevention Unit’s services and capabilities become more refined and effective, the percentage of customers reporting this improved capacity will likely increase. That said, the fact that 78 percent of respondents are already reporting improved capacity to address community issues in a short time frame shows the great promise of the Prevention Unit.