

LOB #169:

THERAPEUTIC RECREATION

Purpose

Therapeutic Recreation Services (TRS) works with community members to enhance the quality of life and strive for the independence for Fairfax County residents with disabilities and those at-risk. TRS operates a variety of programs to meet the specific needs of individuals of varying ages with varying disabilities. Programs are also offered that support older youth in the foster care system in forming healthy, positive permanent relationships with caring adults and peers through group and individual mentoring activities.

Description

Therapeutic Recreation Services is a business unit in the Access to Community Resources and Programs division. TRS offers a variety of recreation-based programs to help individuals of varying ages and abilities maintain or increase various skills through access to and participation in recreational based programming. TRS offers over 22 (unduplicated) programs at multiple locations throughout Fairfax County, serving over 1,500 (unduplicated) individuals each year for a total attendance of over 20,000. TRS has programs available for individual's ages 15 months through 100+ years with a variety of disabilities including; intellectual disabilities, autism, emotional disabilities, specific learning disabilities, physical disabilities and/or sensory disabilities. Additionally, programs are available to support older youth in foster care in developing social, leisure and life related skills. Programs are offered on a spectrum of services including foundational level programs which provide a high degree of structure and supervision to support individuals developing a variety of leisure skills and a wide range of activities; transitional level programs which are designed for individuals who have developed some independent leisure skills do not require as much support and can be successful in community-based activities as they continue to develop their skills for independent leisure functioning; and ending with integrational level programs which are designed for participant who want to participate in general recreation programs as an opportunity to demonstrate learned skills in a supported or independent recreation environment.

Therapeutic Recreation programs operate in a variety of spaces such as schools, community centers, churches, recreation centers, and parks. For the transitional programs TRS operates in more of a community-based model where the participants are responsible for getting to one of two local pick-up locations Integrational programs take place mostly in NCS teen and community center general recreation programs. TRS provides the training, staffing support, guidance and education to help ensure that individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in general recreation programs offered at NCS.

All TRS merit management positions require the individual to acquire and maintain his/her Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) credential by meeting certain eligibility requirements and pass a knowledge based exam. A CTRS license ensures that the staff have the skills, knowledge and abilities needed to utilize a wide range of activity and community-based interventions and techniques to improve the physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and leisure needs of their clients. While the TRS merit staff coordinate all angles of the programs and services, approximately 150 seasonal staff and over 500 volunteers to facilitate and support the numerous programs throughout the year.

FairfaxFamilies4Kids, located within TRS, is a youth mentoring program for youth ages 12 to 21 currently living in foster care or out of foster care. This specialized mentoring program allows youth the opportunity to participate in group and individual mentoring, and spend quality time in the community engaged in regularly scheduled, structured group activities. Activities are focused on developing interpersonal and social skills, life skills needed to transition to a safe and successful adulthood, job and career skills, and self-improvement skills.

Benefits

Engaged participants: Research supports the concept that people with active, satisfying lifestyles will be happier and healthier. TRS provides programs which are based on the individuals' interests, needs and abilities, allowing them to better engage in recreation activities and transfer the skills learned to all areas of their life. Ultimately, it allows them to generalize their therapeutic outcomes to their life outside of the program, resulting in greater health maintenance over time. TRS aims to improve an individual's functioning and keep them as active, healthy and independent as possible in their chosen life pursuits. TRS programs help individuals with disabilities and those at risk by helping them to increase or maintain their: access to leisure opportunities, exposure to leisure opportunities, overall quality of life, socialization/interaction with peers, connection and involvement in the community, overall health, and life skills. Without programs like the ones that TRS offers, individuals with disabilities are at risk for many of the factors that lead to isolation, poor physical health, and poor mental health among other things.

Caregiver support and respite: TRS also recognizes the challenges that come with caring for an individual with a disability. Providing care for others can be stressful and has the potential to contribute to depression and serious illness. Over 80 percent of TRS participants are living with a caregiver. Therefore, offering programs that are 2 to 8 hours in duration allows the caregiver to have respite time which refers to short term, temporary care provided to people with disabilities in order for their families to take a break from the daily routine of care giving.

Mandates

This Line of Business is not mandated.

Trends and Challenges

Increases in autism: Currently, 1 out of every 68 children born in the United States will have autism. The number of Fairfax County Public School students with autism has grown exponentially from 235 in FY 1997 to 2,098 in FY 2013. The steady increase in these numbers indicates an increased need to accommodate this significant growth. As this number increases, TRS will need to adjust and reallocate resources in order to continue providing quality programming and services for people with disabilities. TRS has seen an increase of about 15 percent of individuals with autism in its programs over the last 3 years.

Longevity: People with disabilities, in general, are living longer. TRS has seen this trend within programming, as adult social club members are now in their 50s and 60s. They remain able to participate in programs due to certain adaptations and modifications.

Inclusive programming: As the trend towards more inclusive programming continues to rise, TRS is seeing a trend towards serving individuals with more specialized needs, therefore requiring lower staff to participant ratios to maintain a safe and successful environment. Participant needs include behavior management, medical procedures, personal care assistance, dietary, and physical assistance. TRS has managed to reallocate resources to maintain the needed ratios but if the trend continues, TRS may need to reduce participant options in order to maintain the needed staffing ratios to keep up with the trend of higher need participants needing services.

Department of Neighborhood and Community Services

Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #169: Therapeutic Recreation			
FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$1,235,710	\$1,305,588	\$1,434,799
Operating Expenses	450,856	558,036	536,481
Total Expenditures	\$1,686,566	\$1,863,624	\$1,971,280
General Fund Revenue	\$149,665	\$144,257	\$149,687
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$1,536,901	\$1,719,367	\$1,821,593
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	11 / 11	12 / 12	12 / 12
Total Positions	11 / 11	12 / 12	12 / 12

Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Number served	19,470	20,461	20,766	21,181	21,605
Cost per session	\$76.00	\$76.71	\$77.40	\$77.68	\$77.99
Percent satisfied	95.0%	93.0%	90.0%	90.0%	90.0%

Total attendance increased due to focus on marketing and outreach to new/different community groups (i.e. social workers in intellectual disability services) as well as revamping the dates and locations of some programs to better accommodate families, which helped increase participation in targeted programs. Service quality results indicate a continued high level of satisfaction with the therapeutic recreation programs. Total and projected increases in therapeutic recreation programs are due to increased collaborations with County and community partners as well as creative programming to maximize resources.