



CALL TO ACTION: BUILDING A STRONG COMMUNITY FOR ALL RESIDENTS

FAIRFAX COUNTY
HUMAN SERVICES





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In recent years and with finite resources, programs across the Fairfax County human services system have implemented various changes in order to improve program efficiencies and effectiveness. Nonetheless, to have the greatest impact moving forward, we must now make large-scale adjustments that modernize the human services system to better serve all residents. As noted in *A Path Toward Tomorrow: The 2016 Fairfax County Human Services Needs Assessment* report, all members of the Fairfax County community must work together to address the growing number and complexity of needs facing individuals and families.

The following information builds on this discussion, outlining a call to action for stakeholders of the human services system. These call to action items modernize and strengthen the foundation of our system and encourage public and private organizations to work together in the most effective way to address challenges.



The following call to action items outline proposed improvements to the human services system in the areas of comprehensive resource planning, service integration, performance management, and communication. **These action items must be addressed in order to better serve the community.** These items are not prioritized in any particular order and, in many cases, overlap and support one another. Additionally, they are not intended to be a comprehensive list of actions, nor should they limit the human services system. Rather, they are intended to serve as a catalyst to promote discussions and launch ideas for transformation. In coordination with government colleagues and community partners, these action items will help us move toward a fully integrated human services model and facilitate the long-term success of our community.

Call to Action: Comprehensive Resource Planning

Historically, resource planning and allocation within the human services system has been conducted by funding individual areas or challenges as they arise rather than evaluating issues as a whole. This is an unsustainable practice if we aim to truly address challenges in our community and move away from the status quo. **The human services system must develop a five-year strategic resource plan to proactively match critical needs in our community with available resources.** This plan will collectively manage finances in areas such as personnel, capital facilities and maintenance, information technology, and operational costs. It should be based on strategies developed collaboratively with others, including those outside of our traditional partners, enhancing long-term planning and assuring good stewardship of funds. In time, this plan will allow for improved comprehensive forecasting to better prepare the system for growth and changes within the community.

Call to Action: Service Integration

Traditionally, many human services programs have been delivered separately from each other, singularly working to assist individuals and families. While many changes have been made to strengthen the delivery of programs and services, continuing adjustments are critical as demand across the county grows. **The human services system must establish a foundation for common intake and eligibility processes, data collection and reporting, and the sharing of information in real time across programs and services.** To reduce or minimize other barriers, the human services system should further develop co-located services and place-based initiatives (targeted programs administered within a specific geographic area) that allow residents the flexibility to access services when and where they are most needed. A fully integrated human services model will unify the system by fostering more flexibility, increasing capacity, and improving resource management.

Call to Action: Performance Management

The ongoing promotion and execution of performance management activities remains imperative to allow the human services system to know where to allocate resources and boost outcomes for residents. **Therefore, the human services system must publicly and regularly report on performance data.** This transparent discussion of successes and challenges will allow all stakeholders to collectively identify how best to plan, act, and continuously improve upon our efforts. To be successful, investments must be made in modern information technology systems to support this work.

Call to Action: Communication

The human services system is comprised of many diverse stakeholder groups, including government, residents, providers, the faith community, and boards, authorities, and commissions. **Due to this variation, the human services system must adopt business processes that increase interaction and support effective communication with all partners.** This includes utilizing contemporary tools that effectively disseminate information through social media, integrated website interfaces, and online screening tools. Boards, authorities, and commissions must speak as “one voice” with consistent and clear information in order to effectively meet the human services needs of our residents.

This Call to Action asks the human services system and its partners to commit to actions toward a shared vision. As we reflect on strategies and implement change, it is important to remember that a coordinated response is essential for a thriving community and the overall success of addressing future key needs in human services. The call to action items are critical to effectively meet the challenges that residents currently face, which are more complex and widespread than in the past and jeopardize the quality of life that our community values.



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