AHS PERSPECTIVE ON THE BUDGET: AHS is pleased that the County Executive has proposed significant additional funding for human services programs where demand is growing and needs are changing. We are especially pleased that he has recommended contract rate increases to preserve service delivery levels and increased funding for programs that support early childhood development and school readiness and for programs and services that require multi-agency collaboration—Diversion First, fighting the opioid epidemic, and gang prevention.

AHS recognizes that FY 2020 comes at the end of ten years of constrained budgets and funding shortfalls, but we continue to note that economic recovery is still out of reach for many in our community. The importance of moving One Fairfax from words to action in the planning and delivery of all public services is demonstrated in the FY 2020 Budget documents and in the 2019 Human Services Issue Paper, which provide numerous indicators of persistent disparities and growing and changing needs:

- Opioids are now the number one cause of unnatural death in Fairfax County, and annual opioid deaths increased from 64 in 2015 to 114 in 2017.
- In 2017, there were 77,177 Fairfax County residents (approx. 7% of the population) who earned less than 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).
- In 2017, over 286,000 residents, including 84,000 children, (approx. 25% of the population) lived in households with incomes less than 300% of the FPL—about the amount considered a living wage.
- In FY 2018, 55.7% of people receiving County behavioral health services had incomes below $10,000.
- In FY 2018, the Emergency Shelter Program served 2,669 people. The “family” population included 418 adults and 597 children in 279 households.
- During the winter of 2017-18, hypothermia prevention shelter and meals were provided to 1,085 homeless adults.
- Approximately 700 FCPS students in the 8th, 10th, and 12th grades report being gang members at some point in their life.
- In FY 2018, the combined total of SNAP, TANF, and Medicaid applications was approximately 56,000. Ongoing caseloads continue to increase. In FY 2019 it is anticipated that the average monthly caseload will exceed 100,000.
- In FY 2018, Fairfax County's Domestic Violence Action Center served 998 victims. Served with them were 1,365 children, mostly under the age of 12.
- 7.4% households in the County include no one over the age of 14 who speaks English proficiently, making them “linguistically isolated.”
AHS supports all the human services funding in the County Executive's proposed budget. A few we would like to highlight are:

**Contract Rate Increases**: An increase of $3.22 million will support contract rate increases for a variety of programs and providers. The increase is partially offset by $520,000 in revenue, for a net cost to the County of $2.7 million.

**Special Ed Graduates**: An increase of $2.47 million for the Community Services Board (CSB) will support 148 of 187 June 2019 special education graduates of FCPS turning 22 years of age who are eligible for day support and employment services.

**Early Childhood & School Readiness**: An increase of $1.39 million for the Dept. of Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS) will support early childhood care and school readiness initiatives. The funding includes:
- An increase of $670,000 to replace grant funding that provides early childhood education and family services for 36 at-risk preschoolers.
- An increase of $540,000 to support early childhood care education services for 36 at-risk preschoolers in comprehensive early childhood programs in community-based settings.
- An increase of $180,000 to implement an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation System, which will provide coordination and consultative services to community early childhood education programs.

**Expand SACC Capacity**: An increase of $601,589, as previously approved by the Board as part of the FY 2018 Carryover Review, will increase the capacity of the School-Age Child Care program at elementary schools throughout the County.

**Expanded Capacity at Artemis House**: An increase of $1.01 million for the Dept. of Family Services will expand the capacity of Artemis House from 56 beds to 86 beds. Artemis House is the County's only 24-hour crisis shelter for victims (and their children) of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and human trafficking. Funding of $500,000 was approved by the Board as part
of the FY 2018 Carryover Review to support partial-year costs of expansion, starting Dec. 2018. The FY 2020 funding will support a full year of operations.

New Bailey's Homeless Shelter: An increase of $640,000 will support the new Bailey's Crossroads Homeless Shelter, which is scheduled to open in FY 2020.

New Lewinsville Multi-Service Center: An increase of $550,000 will support the opening of the new center, which includes a senior center, an Adult Day Health Care Center, and an expanded number of apartments. The senior center has increased in size and will be able to serve twice as many participants.

School Health: An increase of $670,000 will allow the Health Dept. to fill 2 new and 2 existing School Public Health Nurse positions to meet the growing demand for services due to the increase in the school population and the growing number of students with special health conditions.

Epidemiologists: An increase of $430,000 for the Health Dept. will provide 3 new Epidemiologist positions, which will enhance the County's ability to prevent and control infectious diseases, develop the capability to monitor the health of the community, and develop new efforts to reduce health inequities.

Park Social Equity: An increase of $100,000 will provide for reduced membership rates at RECenters and additional scholarship programs for classes and programs to help advance equitable opportunity for all residents.

Opportunity Neighborhoods: An increase of $220,000 will support the expansion of the Opportunity Neighborhood (ON) initiative into the Annandale area of Human Services Region 2. ON coordinates the efforts of multiple County agencies and community-based programs to promote positive outcomes for children and youth. ON is currently operating in Mount Vernon and Lee Districts, the Bailey's/Culmore area, and Herndon/Reston.

Healthy Minds Fairfax: An increase of $450,000 for this Dept. of Family Services program will expand contracted multicultural mental health services for youth, implement a contracted Psychiatric Consultation Program for pediatricians and family doctors who treat children who need psychiatric services, and expand contracted mental health crisis response services in order to increase the number of youth served.

Fighting the Opioid Epidemic: A total increase of $2.8 million will be used to continue to address the growing opioid epidemic in Fairfax County. The largest portion, $2.09 million, will go to the CSB primarily to provide medical detoxification services, to expand the use of Medication Assisted Treatment, and to provide Substance Abuse Prevention Programming in FCPS. Additional funding is included in the Police Dept. for 5 positions (approved as part of the FY 2018 Third Quarter Review) and operating expenses to begin implementing the Opioid Task Force Plan.
Diversion First: A total increase of $2.22 million will support the Diversion First initiative, a multi-agency collaboration between the Police Dept., Office of the Sheriff, Fire and Rescue Dept., Fairfax County Court System, and the CSB to reduce the number of people with mental illness in the County jail by diverting low-risk offenders experiencing a mental health crisis to treatment rather than incarceration. FY 2020 is the 2nd year of a 5-year implementation plan. Of this total, $1.23 million is for human services and will allow the CSB to support 6 positions for the Jail-Diversion Team; provide mental health case management services; and provide funding for housing assistance, medical screening, and specialty docket evaluation. The rest of the funding will allow the Police Dept., the Fire & Rescue Dept., and the Office of the Sheriff to support diversion services at the Merrifield Crisis Response Center 24/7 (recognized as a best practice in crisis intervention), and will allow the Juvenile & Domestic Court to provide increased supervision of the pretrial cases requiring mental health services.

Gang Prevention: An increase of $350,000 for the Police Dept. is associated with costs to provide Intervention, Prevention, and Education (IPE) services, as well as for intensive services for reunifying families, both in partnership with Northern Virginia Family Service. Gang prevention is a multi-agency collaboration between the Police Dept., Office of Public Affairs, Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court, NCS, and FCPS.

HUMAN SERVICES RESOURCE PLAN

Last year we said that we believed that the Human Resources Plan was off to a good start. It has indeed turned out to be the promised “living document,” responding to changing needs and trends. The Plan continues to be helpful to human services advocates in giving us a better understanding of unmet needs and the resources required to meet those needs. We have observed that the Board, County staff, and the rest of the community also find it helpful.

We noted last year that the Plan does not yet take into account the services provided by our community's non-profit agencies, nor does it include human services capital funding needs. AHS suggests that the Board's Budget Guidance include direction to begin work on this phase of the Plan.

Because the Plan is not organized by agency or department, but rather by needs, it assists with planning integrated services. AHS emphasizes again that the goal of such planning should be the improvement of services, not reducing costs.

We are especially pleased to see that the funding needed for multi-agency collaborative programs like Diversion First, fighting the opioid epidemic, and gang prevention is presented as a total for all agencies, not just for human services.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Last year AHS commented on the County Executive's announced “countywide strategic planning effort,” emphasizing that community engagement and participation should be included from the outset. In his message to the Board on his FY 2020 proposed Budget, Mr. Hill described his
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“outreach campaign to engage the community and receive feedback from residents, businesses, and other community partners on what a successful Fairfax County looks like to them.”

In addition to a short survey, staff has conducted four community conversations across the County as well as a meeting with representatives of all County boards, authorities, and commissions. It is not yet clear how much real community input was feasible at these sessions, nor is it clear how the community input will be used in developing the Strategic Plan.

Because AHS feels that community engagement and participation is important throughout the Strategic Plan process, we are pleased that the Plan Timeline now includes “Phase 4: Community Engagement on Priority Areas” during April – July 2019 (“Conduct inclusive, broad-based community engagement on key priority areas, indicators and strategies.”) We hope that the Board will ensure that the development of the Strategic Plan will include additional significant opportunities for robust and meaningful community participation.

**FUNDING FOR MULTI-YEAR PLANS**

**School Readiness/Early Childhood Programs:** The Board's Budget Guidance for FY 2019 and FY 2020 noted the importance of the new Equitable School Readiness Strategic Plan and directed the Successful Children and Youth Policy Team (SCYPT) to develop a 5-year plan for expansion of early childhood services with identification of requirements from both the County and Schools “to ensure that future budget discussions are informed by specific requirements.” We have learned that SCYPT is working on this plan and hopes to be able to present its recommendations in October, in time for FY 2021 Budget development.

AHS notes that the proposed FY 2020 Budget provides an additional $1.39 million to support early childhood care and readiness initiatives, but only 36 more children will be served. Furthermore, according to a December 2018 update provided to the Board, all center-based Head Start and Early Head Start programs are fully enrolled, with a waiting list of 345 children (for both programs). The Human Services Resource Plan includes funding for early childhood and school readiness programs in FY 2021 and FY 2022, but, without information about specific requirements, it is impossible to know whether or not these resources are adequate.

AHS urges the Board to provide additional guidance on this issue for the next two fiscal years.

**Human Services Resource Plan:** According to the Human Services Resource Plan, an additional $38.2 million will be required to meet unmet human services needs in FY 2021 and FY 2022, and that figure does not include the “unfunded” FY 2020 items that will “roll over” into FY 2021.

AHS recommends that the Board's Budget Guidance for FY 2020 and FY 2021 address this issue, along with other significant funding issues, including the recommendations of the Affordable Housing Resources Panel, the impact of increased Metro funding requirements, implementing the body-worn camera program, and employee compensation.