



## Fairfax County Alliance for Human Services

### **FY 2018 BUDGET**

**AHS PERSPECTIVE ON THE BUDGET:** AHS is pleased that the County Executive has proposed only a few cuts in human services and additional funding for several significant programs. We are concerned, however, about the human services priorities that could not be funded, especially Diversion First.

We continue to note that economic recovery is still out of reach for many in our community. The FY 2018 Budget documents, information provided by agency heads to the Human Services Council (2/21/2017) and the AHS (3/2/17), and the 2016 Human Services Needs Assessment provide ample evidence that the demand for services continues to grow and that many needs are not being met. For example:

- Last year, over 250 families were not able to receive shelter services at Artemis House, the County's 24-hour emergency shelter for victims of domestic and sexual violence, stalking, and human trafficking. Fairfax County has approximately 66% fewer emergency domestic violence beds than the national standard.
- In FY 2016, the emergency shelter program served 2,784 homeless people. The “family” population included 455 adults and 618 children in 324 households.
- From 2009 to 2015, there has been a 48% increase in the number of individuals receiving Medicaid, SNAP, or TANF cash assistance benefits. This increase equals approximately 42,000 more residents receiving assistance.
- Between 2008 and 2014, poverty increased almost 55%. In 2014, nearly 74,000 County residents were living below the poverty level. More than 181,000 (16% of County residents) are living on income under 200% of poverty (\$47,700 for a household of 4 in 2014). Many will not qualify for public assistance.
- This year, 32% of children entering FCPS are eligible for free or reduced price meals.
- Currently, the Child Care Assistance and Referral Program has a waiting list of over 2,000 children. The Head Start/Early Head Start waiting list is over 400 children.
- Currently, 96 individuals are on a wait list for residential treatment for substance abuse and co-occurring mental health disorders.
- From FY 2013 to FY 2016, the number of clients receiving home delivered meals grew by almost 13%.

**We therefore urge the Board to approve the County Executive's recommendations for human services programs (the level funding and the much needed increases), to adopt the Advertised Real Estate Tax Rate, and to make no additional cuts in human services**

**funding. Furthermore, we urge the Board to use the Budget's available balance to pay for unfunded human services priorities.**

**We also recommend that the Board build some flexibility/adaptability into the FY 2018 Budget.** Given the uncertainties about the economy and about the impact of changes in federal policy, the County should have the ability to respond to emerging needs without cannibalizing existing programs (*e.g.*, a contingency fund or reserve) .

## **UNFUNDED PRIORITIES**

**Diversion First:** AHS is especially concerned about this initiative. The County Executive had hoped to be able include another \$5.3 million for this program. The Board has adopted the multi-year plan for development of this integrated program, but full implementation requires adequate funding. We urge the Board to find the resources to build on the investment the County has already made, which is already providing positive results. (FY 2018 Advertised Budget, Vol.2, pp 190-191)

**No Contract Rate Increases:** The proposed Budget does not include contract rate increases for community providers of human services in the (especially non-profits). Such increases are aimed at keeping pace with inflation and pay and benefits and are periodically funded so that service delivery levels are not reduced to accommodate the increased cost of doing business. An increase of \$3.41 million was included in the FY 2017 Budget, and the FY 2016 Budget included an increase of \$3.49 million.

## **PROPOSED FUNDING INCREASES IN HUMAN SERVICES**

**AHS supports all the human services funding increases in the County Executive's Budget. We would like to highlight :**

**Community Services Board Support Coordination:** An increase of \$2.3 million and 12 positions, including baseline funding of \$1.2 million (to reflect funding approved by the Board as part of the FY 2016 Carryover Review), is required to provide mandated case management services to support individuals with developmental disabilities in the community and comply with current state and federal requirements.

**Expansion of the Healthy Families Fairfax Program:** As previously approved by the Board as part of the FY 2016 Carryover Review, funding of \$670,000 in the Department of Family Services will be used to appropriate additional federal revenue to expand the program, which is an accredited home visiting program offering families at risk of abusing their children an opportunity to learn parenting skills and receive emotional support and case management services. The increase is completely offset by revenue for no net impact on the General Fund.

**Position for Human Trafficking Prevention:** An increase of \$130,000 will fund one position for a Human Trafficking Policy and Prevention Specialist in the Dept. of Family Services. This position has been created in response to recommendations from the Board-initiated Sexual

Violence Task Force and testimony at public hearings that highlighted the impact of human trafficking on victims and families. This position will serve as the primary point of contact on sexual violence and human trafficking on Fairfax County and will work to engage the community to ensure that victims have access to advocacy and support services, that perpetrators are held accountable for their actions, and that prevention and educational programs are offered throughout the community.

### **OTHER ISSUES OF CONCERN**

**Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities:** Last year AHS expressed concern about the new requirements for the combined service delivery system for individuals with ID and DD. At that time, the projected additional annual cost was \$2.9 million. Current estimates are, however, much higher. AHS urged the Board and the CSB to work together to provide the appropriate services for all those eligible under the new system and to ensure that these services are provided equitably.

We are pleased that the Board and the CSB are working together on this issue, and we support the CSB's proposed redesigned delivery system for these services. We agree with the CSB that the "current cost trajectory is unsustainable and unaffordable." We know that it will disrupt longstanding expectations and disappoint many families, but we believe that it is a responsible approach.

**Long Range Human Services Planning:** Last year AHS said that we agreed with the County Executive about the wisdom of multi-year planning and budgeting and commented that we would like to see coherent plans and strategies for sustaining critical human services programs and for meeting changing and growing needs built into the budget. Mr. Long has included a number of significant human services "disbursement priorities" for FY 2019 in his Multi-Year Budget discussion, and we think he is on the right track with these and the other priorities he identified. It is not, however, enough to acknowledge these needs and requirements. The important question is: what will we do as a community to meet them?

We had high hopes that, with the 2016 Human Services Needs Assessment in hand, the Board and the community would have the opportunity to use documented, substantive information about community needs and the circumstances driving those needs to focus efforts and more effectively align resources, programs, and services to meet demands. While the Board seemed interested in the Human Services Needs Assessment Report, no commitment has been made to use it to guide program and resource planning for human services.

We haven't given up on this hope. When resources are scarce, this planning for Human Services is even more important. The Report is still relevant; AHS stands ready to help actually use it.