



Fairfax County Alliance for Human Services

FY 2022 BUDGET

AHS PERSPECTIVE ON THE BUDGET: AHS strongly supports the proposed budget's major increases focused on the extraordinary demands created by the COVID-19 pandemic and the already existing struggles and disparities exacerbated by the disease's effects on our community. We are pleased that the County Executive has also managed to sustain funding for human services programs that meet the needs of our most vulnerable people and to even recommend increases for some of these services. Resources for the County's ongoing and continually growing and changing needs must also be part of our planning. AHS therefore asserts, as we did last year, that it is more important than ever that the Board maintain its commitment to human services and to protecting the health, safety, and well-being of our community.

We therefore urge the Board to approve the County Executive's recommendations for health and human services funding—the level funding and the much needed increases—as well as the increased funding for multi-agency priorities.

AHS urges the Board to direct staff to consistently and proactively apply the equity lens in all engagements and communications with the community. The “One Fairfax” vision will progress only if elected leaders and County staff intentionally and strategically tear down the racial and social barriers in the delivery of public services. As the Chairman's Task Force on Equity and Opportunity has recommended, it is wise to COMMUNICATE WITH PEOPLE IN WAYS THEY ARE USED TO COMMUNICATING!

We urge the Board to adopt the advertised \$1.15 Real Estate Tax Rate. The additional \$27.14 million will give the Board the ability to add funding for priorities and to strengthen community investment.

AHS is very concerned that, once again, the planned addition of the value of one cent of the Real Estate Tax Rate to the Affordable Housing Development and Investment Fund has not been recommended. We understood why, but, at the same time, we urge the Board to:

- *At the least, retain the half-penny for affordable housing and carry forward (once again) in its new Budget Guidance document the same commitment to affordable housing that was included in the Guidelines for FY 2021.* Specifically, the Board should again endorse the AHRP's recommendation that the County assist in the production of 5,000 new affordable units over the next 15 years and commit to the plan to identify one cent of the Real Estate Tax Rate (in addition to the current half-penny) for this purpose.
- *Also include in its Budget Guidance direction to staff to maximize resources from every available source in order to make additional County funding available for the Affordable Housing Development and Resource Fund during FY 2022.*

AHS supports all the health and human services funding in the County Executive's proposed budget. We would like to highlight the following:

Public Health Nurses (PHNs) Supporting COVID-19/School Health: An increase of \$3 million will support 35 new positions previously funded through the CARES Act Relief Fund to support contact tracing. The positions will continue to support contact tracing, testing, and vaccination efforts during the pandemic. Eventually, these positions will be redeployed to the School Health program to address the nurse to student ratio. This will bring the nurse to student ratio to 1:1,990, just under the 1:2,000 target.

Funding for COVID-19 Mass Vaccination Efforts/Emergency Preparedness: An increase of \$1.1 million will fund 13 new positions previously funded through the CARES Act Relief Fund to support the County's mass vaccination efforts. Eventually, these positions will be used to expand the Health Department's ability to prepare and respond to public health events.

Sexual Abuse Specialist Positions (DFS): As previously approved by the Board as part of the *FY 2020 Carryover Review*, an increase of \$166,899 will fund 2 additional positions in Protection and Preservation Services to increase the number of staff who specialize in sexual abuse ongoing cases.

Support Coordination (CSB): An increase of \$1.1 million and 9 positions plus operating expenses will provide support coordination services to individuals with developmental disabilities.

Affordable Housing Positions (HCD): An increase of \$207,728 will fund 2 new positions and operating expenses to support the creation, rehabilitation, and preservation of affordable housing, with an emphasis on the recommendations of the Affordable Housing Resource Panel and Phase II of the Communitywide Housing Strategic Plan to produce 5,000 units of affordable housing in the next 15 years.

Coordinated Services Planning (CSP) Positions (NCS): An increase of \$904,296 will support 11 additional positions in the CSP call center that were previously approved by the Board as part of the *FY 2020 Carryover Review*. These positions were funded through the CARES Act Relief Fund and will continue to address the increase in calls for service.

New Lee District Community Center (NCS): An increase of \$492,928 will support the new Lee District Community Center, which is expected to be fully operational in FY 2022.

New Sully Community Center (NCS): An increase of \$410,377 and 9 new positions will support operations and programs at the new Sully Community Center, which is scheduled to open in the last quarter of FY 2022.

Diversión First: A total increase of \$617,863 will support the Diversión First initiative, a multi-agency collaboration between the Police Dept., Office of the Sheriff, Fire & Rescue Dept., the 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 incarcerations.

Opioid Use Epidemic: An increase of \$1.2 million will be used to continue to address the growing opioid epidemic. The Board of Supervisors established the Opioid Task Force to help address the problem locally. The primary goal is to reduce death from opioids through prevention, treatment, and harm reduction strategies. This increase will fund 6 new positions in the Office of the Sheriff for the jail-based Medication Assisted Treatment program within the Adult Detention Center, one new Health Dept. PHN position to provide support for opioid-exposed infants and families, and CSB operating expenses for peer support services to assist with resource navigation and contracted detoxification and residential treatment services.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES RESOURCE PLAN

Ever since 2017, when the first HHS Resource Plan was developed, it has been helpful to human services advocates in giving us a better understanding of unmet needs and the resources required to meet those needs. The FY 21-23 Resource Plan was revised to align with the County's Revised FY 2021 Proposed Budget, and, since then, as far as AHS is aware, no additional work on it has been done. There is, therefore, no up-to-date HHS Resource Plan that addresses current and future human services needs and required resources.

AHS understands that staff intends to restart and perhaps redesign the HHS Resource Plan after the FY 2022 Budget adoption and Strategic Plan approval. We recommend that Resource Plan development continue to be a collaboration of HHS staff, the Department of Management and Budget, and the Human Services Council, with input and involvement by other appropriate boards, commissions, and authorities and the community. We also recommend that the new Plan take into account the services provided by our community's non-profit agencies, as well as include human services capital funding needs.