

Charlottesville/Albemarle Commission on Children and Families
“Staying Ahead of the Curve”
on issues related to child and family well-being

Adopted February 4th, 2004

Background

As a result of the 2002 CCF retreat and subsequent follow-up discussions at CCF meetings, the CCF Executive Committee was charged with several tasks. These included:

- (1) Identify ways to obtain more frequent interaction/meetings with City Council, Albemarle County Board of Supervisors and School Boards to share policy recommendations and exchange information on needs and resources. Establish a calendar for regular communication and meetings with policy makers.
- (2) Develop criteria for when Commissioners and staff should take action on time-sensitive issues;
- (3) Develop a means for addressing emerging policy and program issues.

In August 2003, the Executive Committee was asked by members to expand this task and:

- (4) Develop additional criteria for Commissioners to consider when voting to adopt or endorse public policy statements and positions.

Purpose

This document provides (1) general guidelines for increasing interaction and information exchange with policy makers and (2) draft criteria for CCF members and staff to take action on time sensitive issues and issue policy statements and (3) suggestions for addressing emerging Issues for local residents.

Issue I: Obtain more frequent interaction with policy makers to exchange information on needs and resources

Strategy: Adopt an ethic of considering whether new CCF data, reports, or recommendations merit Charlottesville City Council/Albemarle County Board of Supervisors or City/County School Board's attention. If we conceive of specific action or recommendations that we would like them to consider, then request a spot on their agendas in addition to CCF Annual Report presentation

Premise: To adopt an ethic means to be pro-active with information that the CCF collects and analyzes. CCF may at times provide only factual information and at other times may take a position on an item. All guidelines must relate to data.

1. Data, reports, or recommendations must be relevant, recent, reputable, derived from more than one source, if possible, and have comparative state and national data if available.
2. For those data, reports and recommendations that are forward that are not specifically voted on or approved by the CCF but rather by the Executive Committee or staff; factual information only is to be provided.
3. Data, reports, or recommendations approved by the full CCF may include a position of the CCF.
4. CCF staff will review the agendas of the respective boards ahead of time in order to know if CCF should be a voice for any item on the agenda.
5. Presentations to the respective boards should include at a minimum, one staff and one CCF member.

Issue II: Criteria for Taking Action on Issues

Strategy: Commissioners may take action if the **issue** meets all of the following criteria:

- ✓ Is within CCF's eight priority areas pertaining to the well-being of children and their families: safe and supportive families, children (0-6) healthy and ready to learn; healthy, positively involved adolescents; effective coordinated system of services; treatment/intervention for troubled youth; educational and economic opportunities; safe and vital neighborhoods; and an engaged and informed community.
- ✓ Represents a documented need among local children and their families (reliable published data supports action on the issue.)
- ✓ Has regional significance – not solely a City or a County concern.
- ✓ Has cross-cutting implications that affect the well-being of children and families in the community.

Commissioners may take a public stand if the issue meets the above criteria and:

- ✓ Is consistent with the four CCF roles of information source, advisor, coordinator, catalyst
- ✓ Does not negatively affect staff's capacity to deliver promised deliverables or anticipated outcomes

- ✓ Or is accompanied by additional in-kind (volunteer), staff or financial resources to address the issue

Process: Commissioners may take action if the following process is followed:

- ✓ Commissioners approve action at a public meeting. No decisions can be made over email or telephone.
- ✓ When time does not allow for discussion at a Commission monthly meeting, the Executive Committee can approve action. No decisions can be made over email or telephone.
- ✓ With both cases, consensus will be sought among members. If the Chair determines that a full consensus is not achievable, then he/she will call a vote. If there is significant divergence of opinion, members may consider refraining from a public statement.

III. Addressing Emerging Issues

Strategy: Commissioners may seek to explore an issue that appears to be emerging for Charlottesville/Albemarle community, yet is not yet well documented through research or represented in current CCF work groups and activities. This may represent a hunch, perceived trend, or anticipated need.

To initiate action or exploration on an emerging issue:

- ✓ CCF members, staff, and citizens or area professionals and public leaders may bring notice of emerging issues to CCF monthly meetings (as part of “members’ or public comments) and seek majority approval for further study.
- ✓ A request for attention may also be generated by the City Manager or County Executive Offices in accordance with CCF’s charge as advisory to City Council and Albemarle County Board of Supervisors.
- ✓ Further study will include exploratory focus groups to better understand and define the issue and report back to CCF members with preliminary findings.

Capacity:

- ✓ Focus groups will be dependent on CCF member, volunteer, and staff capacity to organize meaningful studies and meetings, or the allocation of additional staff resources. With the current staffing structure, CCF staff and members can manage a maximum of 3 focus groups annually.