

Executive Summary

Focus Areas for Children and Families in the Charlottesville/Albemarle Area Portfolio of Agency Budget Review Team Community Agency Investments

Presented on behalf of The Charlottesville/Albemarle Commission on Children and Families Outcome Measurement Work Group with the assistance of Jessica Owen, B.A., Mary Frances Porter, M.A., and Helen Hess of UVA's Community Psychology Department; 2004

I. Goals:

The Commission charged its Outcome Measurement Work Group to guide the funding of “effective and efficient programs that are responsive to identified community needs” and to “review data presented by CCF’s *Stepping Stones* and the CCF Needs Assessment to prioritize community strengths, needs, service gaps, and to recommend funding priorities.” This work is organized in three phases:

Phase One: To raise awareness about the service needs of children and families in the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County, available data was compiled from 45 sources, organized into 20 Focus Areas requiring attention to promote a healthy community for children and families, and disseminated to community agencies and local funders. The full Needs Assessment can be viewed on the CCF website at <http://www.ccfinfo.org>. **CCF and its Outcome Measurement workgroup invite local programs, citizens, and researchers to continue to submit data to the Commission that will promote understanding of the needs of local children and families.**

Phase Two: Because the Outcome Measurement Work Group advises the localities specifically on the community agency allocation and review process (approximately \$2.4 million in FY05), the workgroup created a portfolio of current non-profit investments as they relate to the Focus Areas identified by the Needs Assessment. UVA graduate students compiled an inventory of the FY03 budget, outcome, beneficiary, and programming method information from the 40 community agency programs allotted FY05 funds by the Agency Budget Review Team to identify:

- The Focus Areas in which the ABRT is investing;
- What the investments look like in terms of dollars, beneficiaries served, and methodology of service delivery;
- And, how the products of their investments are being quantified through outcome measurement.

Phase Three: To further understand community needs and assets, CCF will facilitate roundtables to initiate discussions about emerging trends within Focus Areas, potential gaps in programming and data, and to inform outcome measurement guidelines. In addition, the CCF is seeking resources to complete a comprehensive human services inventory, which would reflect community strengths and the extent to which effective programming funded by other sources may be addressing the needs of Charlottesville/Albemarle residents. **The final product will be a document that identifies service gaps, defined as domains where there is high need and modest investment, as funding priorities, is updated annually, and makes policy and program recommendations to develop strategies to reduce identified needs.**

II. Portfolio of Investments in Focus Areas (Phase Two):

The full portfolio of community agency investments can be viewed on the CCF website at <http://www.ccfinfo.org>. **The portfolio reflects only those programs funded by the Agency Budget Review Team, and is not inclusive of publicly funded City and County departments, agencies, or private and civic groups.** Although some investments address several Focus Areas, individual programs are only represented in the one Focus corresponding most closely to their program outcomes; points of intersect between Focus Areas are discussed as emerging and overlapping issues.

Strong, Stable Families and Communities:

Affordable and Accessible Health Care: \$105,543 (11.5% of total FY03 funding) invested in 6 programs

Programming strengths include the comprehensive and empirically supported methodology, which incorporates outreach, accessibility, prevention, and intervention efforts. Emerging and overlapping issues include new barriers to accessing healthcare amongst the growing Latino community, who are more likely to have inadequate formal education and to encounter language barriers. Also, the number of individuals who are not provided health insurance by employers has grown due to the closure of a few large employers in the area and the rising costs of insurance premiums, which can be too high for small employers to afford. **Outcome measurement could be improved by including community-wide outcomes that specifically identifying how many clients are working;** additionally, if each program standardized their client screenings we would have a better idea of how effectively services are being delivered across programs.

Family Violence:

Domestic Violence: \$157,694 (29.2 % of total FY03 funding) invested in 3 programs

Programming strengths include the comprehensive intervention approach, which incorporates direct residential services, case management, referrals, outreach, legal help, and training of volunteers and allied professionals. **Emerging and overlapping issues include an increase in the number of clients who are staying in the shelter for longer periods of time due to the lack of available housing. Outcome measurement could be improved by including specific information about the wellbeing of children in families experiencing domestic violence.**

Support to Parents/Adults:

Stresses of Single Parents and the Working Poor: \$120,419 (21.8% of total FY03 funding) invested in 3 programs

Programming strengths include the provision of services to the whole family system with a strengths-based and empirically validated approach, and the focus on addressing the many legal challenges that the working poor face in their daily lives. **Emerging and overlapping issues include the fact that more and more grandparents among the poor are raising children, and that there is a growing elderly population in poverty in general with distinct needs. Another issue that is exacerbating the stresses of the working poor is the rising housing costs and location of public housing coupled with a rapid population growth through Region 10. Housing issues bring many clients through the door of these programs. Outcome measurement could be improved by specifically identifying how many clients support families and how large these families are so that the number of beneficiaries would be clearer.**

Parenting, Especially of Challenging Children: \$78,780 (79.2% of total FY03 funding) invested in 2 programs

Programming strengths include the strengths-based and empirically validated prevention and capacity building efforts that involve children, parents, and fifteen different community agencies. These prevention efforts are particularly geared towards remedying problems in schools. **Emerging and overlapping issues include the increased demand for services for clients who do not speak English. Outcome measurement could be improved by including information about how programming addresses the reported need for parenting skills to cope with children who are curfew-breaking or otherwise incorrigible outside of the academic arena. Also, because there is a heavy investment in capacity-building, prioritizing and coordination within this Focus Area, outcomes might be more compelling if they included a measure of dollars saved or services condensed as a result of strategic prioritization and coordination efforts.**

Adult Substance Abuse: \$6,758 (6.8% of total FY03 funding) invested in 1 program

Programming strengths include the empirically-validated legal approach to rehabilitating people with substance abuse problems. Emerging and overlapping issues include the potential of substance abusing clients to need help finding employment and housing. **Outcome measurement could be improved by including longer-term follow-up data regarding the success of individuals in maintaining employment and housing, in addition to staying drug-free. Also, outcome data regarding the well-being of the children of substance-abusers could inform other Focus Areas, such as Youth Substance Abuse and Behavior Problems/Delinquency.**

Prosperous and Safe Neighborhoods and Communities:

Housing Costs/Maintenance: \$22,153 (16.6% of total FY03 funding) invested in 3 programs

Programming strengths include the empirically-validated and comprehensive case management, emergency cash assistance, and transitional housing intervention approach to coping with housing cost problems such as maintenance and upkeep. Programming also incorporates elements of prevention by addressing the needs of families who have not yet been evicted and by providing services that remedy underlying issues that create financial crises. **Emerging and overlapping issues include the increased rate of unemployment and high debt, which contribute to housing crises. Addressing housing needs could indirectly reduce needs associated with other Focus Areas, such as Domestic Abuse, Stresses of the Working Poor, and Substance Abuse. Outcome**

measurement could be improved if each program reported the number of individuals in each family assisted, which would enable us to have a better idea of exactly how many beneficiaries were being served.

Job Opportunities, Training & Adult Education: \$42,836 (38.1% of total FY03 funding) invested in 1 program

*Programming strengths include the training in English literacy intervention. **Emerging and overlapping issues include the aging population of clients. These elderly clients often have health problems, which inhibit them from maintaining employment with jobs that demand physical labor.** Another issue related to employment opportunities for parents is **the need for affordable childcare that does not impede their ability to maintain employment or realize promotions and increases in wages.***

Programming in this Focus Area could help parents cope with the academic needs of children, thus reducing needs associated with the Parenting Challenging Children Focus Area. Outcome measurement could be improved, and would be more relevant to the identified needs, if programs included a measure of how many clients were able to find employment after having achieved their personal literacy goals.

Healthy Children and Adolescents:

Early Childhood Development: \$836,107 (19.2% of total FY03 funding) invested in 4 programs

*Programming strengths include the empirically-validated and strengths-based approach to prevention, which incorporates accessibility issues, as well as capacity-building efforts for childcare providers. **Emerging and overlapping issues include the fact that welfare reform policy has led to more parents entering the workforce, resulting in an increased need for childcare.** Programming in this Focus Area could, therefore, alleviate needs associated with other Focus Areas, such as Stresses of Single Parents and the Working Poor. In addition, because programming in this Focus Area targets developing cognitive skills, investments should prevent needs identified in the Student Performance Focus Area. . **Outcome Measurement could also be improved by providing information on how many families seeking childcare (and the number of children in those families) are assisted through outreach efforts.***

Student Performance: \$82,195 (43.5% of total FY03 funding) invested in 3 programs

*Programming strengths include the comprehensive empirically-validated and strengths-based approach to prevention, which incorporates academic and social skills training, school and neighborhood-based sites, home-visits, and parental involvement. **Emerging and overlapping issues include the fact that, given all of the other stresses of the working poor, and the low educational attainment of many adults, often parents do not have the time or skills to help their children with academic activities.** Outcome measurement could be improved if SOL scores and/or matriculation rates were reported on a community-wide level. Importantly, investments in student performance should yield an increase in the wage-earning potential for beneficiaries, thus curtailing the risk factors for various forms of delinquency to which they, and, in the future, their children, could be exposed, thereby reducing the needs associated with the Behavior Problems/Delinquency Focus Area.*

Productive Activities for Non-Caucasian Youth: \$78,539 (18.4% of total FY03 funding) invested in 5 programs

*Programming strengths include the empirically-validated and strengths-based approach to prevention, which incorporates skills training, activities, mentoring, and transportation services. **Emerging and overlapping issues include the fact that the working poor have few time-off benefits for after-school supervision of their children and often need their older children to provide childcare for their younger children.** Importantly, investment in this Focus Area could lead to a reduction in substance abuse and delinquent behavior in schools and communities. **Outcome measurement could be improved by including information from delinquency reports of participants. Also, because programming is likely to be more effective if youth identify with the philosophy behind the programs, youths' ratings of satisfaction could be an informative outcome.***

Local Foster Care Homes & Community Based Facilities: \$7,726 (5.4% of total FY03 funding) invested in 1 program

*Programming strengths include the strengths based approach to outreach and prevention, as well as emergency counseling, referral and shelter intervention services. Emerging and overlapping issues include the fact that community factors such as poverty, as well as familial factors such as family violence, teen-pregnancy and trouble parenting challenging children, exacerbate adolescent vulnerabilities in this Focus Area. Investments in this Focus Area should prevent needs associated with the Behavior Problems/Delinquency Focus Area, as the goal of programming is conceptualized as diverting kids from the costly juvenile justice system. **Outcome measurement could be improved if efforts addressing the need for cost-effective solutions were quantified by reporting the number of children that were actually diverted from the department of social services and/or the juvenile justice system.***

Areas for Additional Study:

Needs of the Elderly: \$419,106 (11.9% if total FY03 funding) invested in 1 program

*Programming strengths include the strengths-based and community-based approach to providing a comprehensive set of services, incorporating outreach and case-management, and addressing accessibility issues. **Emerging and overlapping issues include the fact that the elderly population is increasing as people are living longer and is going to increase more dramatically as the baby-boomer generation ages. Healthcare matters, such as malnutrition and a lack of insurance, housing cost and maintenance problems, transportation difficulties, and community safety needs are among the concerns of the elderly population served in this Focus Area. Investments in supporting caregivers in this Focus Area might alleviate needs associated with the Stresses of the Working Poor and Job Opportunities Focus Areas, in the same manner as childcare programming, by allowing caregivers to maintain employment. Also, because there are a number of elderly people raising children for family members, programming in this Focus Area could lead to positive outcomes for young beneficiaries. Outcome measurement could be improved if the number of elderly people raising children for family members were reported along with indicators of the children's well-being. Outcomes should be linked to local needs data as it becomes available.***

Adult Crime and the Adult Criminal Justice System: \$153,040 (21.6% of total FY03 funding) invested in 4 programs

*Programming strengths include efforts to reduce the problem of overcrowding in jails, and investments in mental and physical health treatment and life-skills training. **Emerging and overlapping issues include the fact that sentencing laws have become increasingly stringent over the last decade and a half, meaning that significantly more people are incarcerated for longer periods of time, while funding for in-prison programming has been cut. Outcome measurement could be improved if the number of people who were diverted from prison and jail was reported, as well as the amount of dollars saved. In doing so, these funds could have the potential to be ear-marked for reinvestment in high-incarceration neighborhoods, which could yield community-wide outcomes, such as a community-loan pool, one-stop shopping for job counseling and placement services, and geographically targeted hiring incentives for employers.***

Technical Assistance & Capacity Building: \$41,836 (14.3% of total FY03 funding) invested in 2 programs

*Current programming strengths include providing and coordinating volunteers for programs in public schools, nursing homes, senior, child care, medical and rehabilitation centers, as well as housing, environmental, animal, refugee, immigrant, migrant and community youth organizations. There are technical assistance efforts available for writing grants, facilitating board meetings, and providing and developing staff support to create more efficient criminal justice programs and policies. Feedback from agencies regarding their interest in technical assistance/capacity building includes **expressed needs for training on how to conduct focus groups and outcome measurement, assistance with strategic planning, program evaluation, financial management, board and fund development, and information about local needs and best practices.** Investing in needed technical assistance could yield long term outcomes, such as sustainable community and faith based organizations, improvements in conditions for their beneficiaries, the leveraging of funds to reach more beneficiaries, a reduction in the income gap, and increased civic engagement.*