



FY 2024 Recommended Budget Budget Question

Board Question #: 11

BUDGET QUESTION: Please provide responses to the following list of questions regarding DSS reviewed regional agencies.

RESPONDING DEPARTMENT/OFFICE: DSS

RESPONSE: Responses to each question regarding individual regional agencies are provided below:

American Red Cross – If funding is not approved will they not come to the aid of those in Spotsylvania?

Response: The American Red Cross (ARC) representative has advised Spotsylvania emergency management coordinators that the locality should not rely on the ARC to be a core support in localities during emergencies, citing a drastic reduction in their volunteer resources. The ARC has advised they can be utilized as a support to the core structure, when resources are available, depending on how widespread the emergency is. There is no information from ARC to suggest that the funding request has any impact on their ability to assist.

Disability Resource Center – Please provide an overview of the value associated with the Disability Resource Center.

Response: The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides various classes and groups for disabled citizens with the option for their families to participate as well. They provided one-on-one services for citizens who need extra time and attention. They support independent living and employment counseling services. Citizens can donate medical supplies such as wheelchairs, canes, and other reusable supplies to the DRC and they will repurpose them and give them to those in need in the community. DRC has a few apartments on site that are leased only to disabled citizens to give them independent living experiences and a rental history they can later use when applying to regular rental properties. They serve as a one of the DSS employers who contract to accept citizens enrolled in the Virginia Initiative for Education and Work (VIEW) program. The participants volunteer at the DRC facility, which provides the individual with valuable work experience to make them more marketable and competitive in the job market. Due to these reasons, DRC is a considered a valuable resource to the community.

Failsafe – Do we have outcomes associated with this program?

Response: Upon request, the Failsafe program provided the attached statistics.

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Fredericksburg Food Bank – Does the Fredericksburg Food Bank duplicate services provided by other regional agencies?

Response: No, the Fredericksburg Food Bank does not duplicate services provided by any of the other regional partner agency applicants.

Mental Health America – Are the services provided by Mental Health America a duplication of the services provided by the Rappahannock Area Community Services Board (RACSB) or the nationwide hotline 988? They state that their system is not replicated anywhere in VA. How are the services provided utilized and helpful to those in the community?

Response: No, the services provided by Mental Health America (MHA) are not a duplication of the services provided by the RACSB or the 988 Hotline. Yes, the MHA resource is useful to those in our community.

The MHA serves as a resource citizens can get personalized assistance to navigate the complex mental health arena and assist citizens to connect to resources to address their needs.

MHA reports the RACSB has wait times of up to six months for non-emergency services. For this reason, RACSB often refer these callers to MHA helpline. MHA reports this is also true for other organizations across the region and providers who are not accepting new clients.

The MHA reports they engage in consistent communications with local mental health resources to ensure they have the most up-to-date information to connect citizens with. This is especially critical during the current nationwide mental health crisis, which has resulted in a sharp increase in mental health service needs and decreased resource availability. Having a community resource to assist families/adults with this process is a valuable benefit.

The 988 hotline is managed at a national level and is not part of MHA. However, MHA reports the switch to the 988-hotline service has increased the number of citizens who are seeing help, driving citizens to the MHA helpline service after the initial crisis, while they are looking for a provider for sustained support.

Micah Ministries – Is Micah Ministries part of the Continuum of Care (CoC)? Has Micah Ministries provided tents to homeless individuals in the past then sent people on their way?

Response: Yes, Micah is an active part of the CoC and consistently assists with citizens in need. Yes, Micah provides tents to homeless individuals they are working with.

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CASA – Please provide some background on why the number of individuals served in Spotsylvania is significantly higher than the other localities. How does this program positively impact the county?

Response: In comparison to Stafford County, who has similar population numbers as Spotsylvania, our socioeconomic demographic is different. Spotsylvania County has a higher number of citizens who fall under the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) threshold, resulting in more of our citizens needing supportive community services due to lower income ranges. CASA is a community support service. CASA reports that it positively impacts the community by guiding more successful outcomes for the children in the community. CASA also provides a valuable checks and balance to the local child welfare system and process.

Healthy Families – Does Health Families help minimize DSS caseloads?

Response: Yes, the in-home services provided by Healthy Families contributes to DSS's ability to reduce the number of children that are reported to be abused and/or neglected. The support and education that this program provides is a critical piece to assisting families to become more appropriate and healthier in their interactions and caretaking of children.

Loisann's Hope House – Is Loisann's Hope House part of the CoC? How does Loisann's Hope House help address the problems faced by DSS?

Response: Loisann's Hope House is an active member of the CoC. They have a good reputation in the professional community for being available, responsive and impactful with families. They assist DSS by providing families with complex issues the wrap around support needed to stabilize the situation.

Thurman Brisben – Please provide additional information on Thurman Brisben.

Response:

Thurman Brisben is not an active member of the CoC. Thurman Brisben's program is unique from the other regional shelter partners in that it is selective on who they will accept into their program. Thurman Brisben will not accept citizens who are actively struggling with mental health and/or substance abuse issues. This makes them a limited resource to DSS and the community. Many citizens dealing with homelessness have active mental health and/or substance abuse challenges. Thurman Brisben does not assist with these clients, citing they are a danger to the other residents. DSS and other community partners rely on the CoC and other shelter providers (Micah, Hope House, etc.) to help these individuals and families find shelter, while also finding supports to assist with their mental health and substance abuse issues. These other providers fill this gap, while still keeping their other residents safe.

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Thurman Brisben has the potential to access a large amount of federal funds to serve this community, but state their vision/concept does not align with the federal requirements. As stated in their presentations, they have chosen to not comply with those requirements to secure that funding, to stay true to their mission.

Thurman Brisben reports to have success with their program and methodology, citing strong success with those they serve.

Food Connections – Please provide an overview of the value associated with Food Connections.

Response: The biggest advantage for DSS participants with Food Connections is their match program. DSS clients can double their benefits up to a certain amount, if they use their benefits at the farmers market, purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables. This is not available at grocery stores.

Food Connections also provides educational services to the community as well. Food Connects highlights the value of the program bringing fresh produce that was grown locally, creating a mutually beneficial financial impact for the buyer and seller in the community.



FailSafe-ERA Support and Services - (June 2021 – July 2022)

House Bill (HB5148) Earned Sentence Credit proposed to shorten the sentences of several thousand inmates assigned to Virginia prisons, July 2022, with 8-10% of that number returning to Planning District 16 (PD16). As of November 2022, 70 inmates transitioned from State prisons through probation and parole. Through agreement with probation and parole, FailSafe provided information about our services. Many were reluctant to commit to the full FailSafe-ERA Right Road Reentry program that provides intensive case management, life skills training, mental health counseling, and substance abuse treatment.

Most of our clients were/are inmates from the Rappahannock Regional Jail, while the other returning citizens are referred by family members, social services, and word of mouth. In addition to the 84 letters with information sent to jail/prison, FailSafe-ERA provided reentry support and services to families and individuals residing in PD16 as follows:

Case Management	Fred	Stafford	Spotsylvania	KG	Caroline
# Seeking reentry support	13	31	28	2	0
Total Active Cases in Right Road Program	2	7	5	1	0
Total closed/inactive cases	11	24	23	1	0
# Receiving shelter (Hotel/Oxford House)	0	2	1	1	0
# Received job leads/employment	9	15	12	1	0

Family Support	Fred	Stafford	Spotsylvania	KG	Caroline
# Family Support Group	6	13	15	1	0
# Enrolled in Youth Program	8	5	10	0	0
# Families received School Supplies	3	5	7	1	0
# Families received Christmas Support	23	25	30	2	0

Resulting from the numerous non-committal responses from the returning citizens, FailSafe-ERA, through signed MOU with Rappahannock Regional Jail and agreement with Stafford CCAP (Community Corrections Alternative Program), will provide weekly pre-release training at both facilities (approximately 1300 plus inmates); and post-release services through a coordinated effort with both facilities in calendar year 2023 and going forward. We find a more successful transition with those individuals who participate in pre-release services.

In addition, with the rise in youth offenders and delinquency cases in our juvenile courts, we have further expanded our programs to include youth impacted by or at risk for incarceration.