

Healthy Families ❖ Thriving Communities Collaborative Council

1112 11th Street NW, Suite B
Washington, DC 20009
Phone: (202) 299-0900
Fax: (202) 299-0901

Testimony of Jacquelyn Henry
On Behalf of the Healthy Families/Thriving Communities Collaborative Council
before the
Committee on Human Services, DC Council
Concerning the
The Child and Family Services Agency's FY2010 Budget Hearing
April 3, 2009

Good afternoon Chairperson Wells and members of the Committee on Human Services. I am Jacquelyn Henry, Executive Director of the Healthy Families/Thriving Communities (HFTC) Collaborative Council and I am speaking on behalf of the seven Collaboratives. As CFSA's community partner I would like to take this opportunity to share our support and concerns regarding the CFSA FY2010 budget.

We are pleased to see that the Mayor continues to recognize the important role the Collaboratives play as key partners with CFSA in supporting families at risk of entering or already in the child welfare system. In addition, the budget continues to fund the Partnership for Community-Based Services; the effort through which over 65 CFSA In-Home unit staff are now co-located with the Collaboratives. We are, however, at this time uncertain if funding for the seven Collaborative family support workers to support this initiative is carried forward in FY2010.

The budget does significantly reduce funding for the Collaborative Council, proposing that our CFSA funded activities focus on documentation, quality assurance, evaluation and training supports to the Collaboratives. While we agree that these functions are critical, I do want to let you know what activities will be lost under this plan.

First, the Council provides significant support to the Collaboratives by providing internal and external communication and coordination. This includes facilitating cross Collaborative assistance for the executive directors, program managers and finance staff. Council staff also spends a great deal of time serving as the liaison between the Collaboratives and our public agency partners, including CFSA, DHS, the Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness, the Children's Youth

Investment Trust and others. The Council also provides support and technical assistance to our Board of Directors, its standing committees, and to the Boards of each of the seven Collaboratives.

The Collaborative Council's resource and program development efforts have had an impact well beyond our work with CFSA, leveraging city funds to strengthen the capacity of the Collaboratives to serve our highest risk families. Over the past five years, the Council has supported the development of the following initiatives, which have cumulatively provided over \$1.2 million in services to the residents we serve, including:

- DC DHS Fatherhood Initiative
- Department of Mental Health's Systems of Care
- Second Responder anti-violence initiative
- Truancy reduction
- Federal Fatherhood program

In addition, the Council has giving voice to the families served by the Collaboratives through our participation in a number of city wide avenues, including:

- The Mayor's Advisory Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect
- The Medical Care Advisory Committee
- The DYRS redesign work group
- The DC Jobs Council
- The Fair Budget Coalition
- The DMH Children's Roundtable
- The Affordable Housing Alliance
- The Truancy Taskforce
- The Reconnecting Disconnected Youth Work Group
- The Behavioral Health Association

As we look ahead, we will be greatly impacted by so deep a reduction; however, we will utilize what resources we are given to the fullest extent possible to both support and coordinate the work of the Collaboratives and to advance the use of family centered, strengths and community based services.

Finally, as we testified before this committee at the recent CFSA Oversight hearing, we continue to be concerned over the lack of funds to support the Rapid Housing Program. This effort provided housing to youth aging out of foster care, for families with children at immediate risk of placement and for families otherwise ready for reunification. We urge this committee to explore all avenues, including the possible use of federal Recovery Act funds, to identify resources necessary to support youth and families through the Rapid Housing Program.

Thank you.

