Commissioner Clarke
- Five Public Health Challenges pg. 328

Commissioner Dunlap
- Revaluation Update pg. 336
- Homeless Court Proposal pg. 339
- Park and Recreation Projects pg. 358

Commissioner Leake
- Barber Scotia College Student Housing pg. 360
- Childcare and Kindergarten Financial Assistance pg. 363
- Prescription Drugs and Transportation for Seniors pg. 365
- Apprenticeship Program pg. 367

Commissioner Scarborough
- Homeless Update pg. 371
- Upward Mobility pg. 376
**Topic of Interest:** 5 Public Health Challenges: what are five biggest public health challenges/issues for Mecklenburg County currently are and what steps we are and need to be taking to address them.

**Response:**

The most recent Mecklenburg County Community Health Assessment (CHA) prioritized the prevention of premature death and disability from chronic disease as the number one public health issue in Mecklenburg County. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) tells us that half of premature deaths are the result of health behaviors and environmental factors, the leading ones being 1) Tobacco, 2) Nutrition and Physical Activity. A public health approach to addressing these health behaviors on a community level advocates for policies and environmental systems that help “make the healthy choice the easy choice.”

These three health behaviors are also part of what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) calls “Winnable Battles”; public health priorities with large-scale impact on health and known effective strategies to address them. Another concern is 3) HIV Disease, which is considered a Winnable Battle as is Teen Pregnancy. However in Mecklenburg the prevention of 4) Unintended Pregnancy at any age is a concern.

Finally, violence touches our community in a variety of ways. Because it’s complex and multifactorial components can be categorized as having preventable and protective factors, 5) Violence Prevention is considered a public health issue and one of great concern in Mecklenburg County. This is further evidenced by its high priority ranking in the 2013 Community Health Assessment.

1. **Tobacco**

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death, disease and disability. Smoking harms nearly every organ in the body and is a major risk factor for lung disease, stroke and heart disease, (CDC).

**Local Data**

- About 17% or almost 127,000 people in Mecklenburg County are current smokers (2014 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System).

- Current smoking rates in Mecklenburg vary depending on level of income and education. People without a high school diploma are three times more likely to smoke than people with a college degree. People who make less than $50,000 a year are three times more likely to smoke than those making $50,000 or more a year (2014 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System).

- Youth smoking has declined for both high school and middle school students to a low of 10% and 4% respectively. Concern now focuses on the rising popularity of E-cigarettes and marketing targeted to youth as well as rising rates of marijuana use (2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey).

- Nearly three out of four smokers are trying to quit (2014 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System).
What we are doing

- Implementing a comprehensive Board of Health ruling that includes smoke-free government grounds and a tobacco-free parks policy
- Promoting and referring to the NC Quit Line and other tobacco cessation resources
- Establishing youth-focused tobacco prevention programming
- Assisting with the adoption of tobacco-free policies in worksites, faith-based organizations, multi-unit housing complexes and other community sites.

What else should we do?

- Adopt smoke-free worksite policies to protect workers from second-hand smoke exposure.
- Levy a County tax on tobacco products (requires permissive state legislation). Increasing the cost of tobacco products is the single most effective strategy to keep youth from using tobacco products.
- Adopt smoke-free public spaces policies, including sidewalks.
- Enhance promotion of and referrals to cessation resources, particularly in pediatric healthcare settings.

*All of the above are included as recommended intervention strategies from the CDC’s Winnable Battles concept.

2. Physical Activity and Healthy Eating

Lack of physical activity and poor nutrition contribute to health conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and obesity. These conditions may lead to chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes (CDC). Increased physical activity is associated with lower rates of high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and premature mortality, independent of obesity (RWJ County Health Rankings). Access to affordable fruits and vegetables may be a particular challenge to low income and senior populations on a fixed budget. Access to physical activity opportunities may be limited by income, safety concerns and location.

Local Data

- 18% of Mecklenburg adults report participating in no physical activity (2014 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System).
- 82% do not eat the recommended five or more daily servings of fruits and vegetables (2014 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System).
Only 45% of Charlotte Mecklenburg high school students report getting the recommended 60 or more minutes of physical activity per day, five of the last seven days (2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey).

For some chronic diseases, social and economic determinants may have a greater impact on overall health status than race or ethnicity alone. For example, about 9% of both white and black adult residents report a history of cardiovascular disease. However, people without a high school diploma are 2.4 times more likely to report a history of cardiovascular disease than those with a college degree. People making less than $50,000 a year are 3.4 times more likely to report a history of cardiovascular disease than those making $50,000 or more a year (2014 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System).

What we are doing

- Establishing a community farmers market at the Beatties Ford Road Health Department that accepts SNAP/EBT
- Piloting a Healthy Corner Store Initiative in the public health priority areas
- Building health and wellness capacity in faith-based organizations
- Implementing the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) initiative and bike safety education classes
- Recently completed a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) on the Blue Line Extension to UNCC's campus
- Supporting over 100 school gardens and the corresponding nutrition education curriculum
- Transitioning the Healthy Weight, Healthy Child (HWHC) Coalition from Carolinas Healthcare System to MCHD (the coalition has an emphasis on childhood obesity prevention)
- Community garden coordination and instruction
- Breastfeeding education and support
- Coordinating the HWHC Youth Advisory Council and the Fresh Look at School Food initiative, which focus on improving the school food environment
- Partnering to implement the Open Streets concept

What else should we do?

- Encourage the adoption of healthy food policies in various settings (faith-based, worksite, schools, etc.)
- Increase capacity of faith-based organizations to engage in evidence-based health education/health promotion activities.
- Increase the number of food outlets that offer healthy options, particularly in the food access priority areas
  - Expand the Healthy Corner Store Initiative
Support and promote the acceptance of SNAP/EBT at all farmers markets (work with DSS to enhance promotion to SNAP recipients)

- Conduct additional Health Impact Assessments to assess the health implications of community design
- Increase breastfeeding-friendly locations
- Increase opportunities for active living:
  - Include health considerations in community design to improve walkability and healthy transportation options
  - Expand Safe Routes to School programming
  - Encourage the adoption of shared-use and open-use policies for more physical activity opportunities in communities
  - Expand the Open Streets initiative

3. Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

As of June 2015, there are an estimated 5,334 persons living with HIV/AIDS in Mecklenburg County who are aware of their status. However, as many as 1 in 8 are unaware of their infection. Current studies show that when people become aware of their infection and are provided with immediate linkages to prevention and care services, most take measures to reduce their risk of transmitting HIV to others.

Local Data

- 318 newly diagnosed infections were reported in Mecklenburg County during 2014, nearly 25% higher than reports from 2012 (255 cases).
• The recent increase in HIV disease has been primarily associated with identification of persons with late-stage HIV diagnosis (i.e., individuals who have been infected with HIV for several years but were not reported into local surveillance systems until recently).

• African Americans continue to experience the most severe burden of HIV, compared with other races and ethnicities.

• African Americans represent approximately 31% of the county’s population, but accounted for an estimated 70% of new HIV infections in 2014. HIV infection rates are nearly 12 times higher for African American females compared to White females, while HIV infection rates among African American Males are nearly 5 times higher in comparison to White males.

What we are doing

• Community-based counseling and testing
• Administer federal Ryan White Grant which provides services to people with HIV who do not have health insurance
• Education and outreach in the community
• HIV Case Management
• Surveillance and follow-up of HIV and other reportable sexually transmitted diseases
• Substance abuse and mental health services, specifically for this population

What else should we do?

• Conduct a media campaign in traditional and social media to promote evidence-based HIV risk behavior change
• Increase the number of non-traditional testing opportunities in the community
• Promote interventions to reduce HIV transmission among populations at greatest risks
• Assure rapid access to high quality HIV clinical services
• Support retention in care and adherence to medication use for those who are HIV positive

4. Unintended Pregnancy

Unintended pregnancy is understood as a pregnancy that was either unwanted or mistimed. These pregnancies are often associated with poorer birth outcomes for both mother and baby as compared to pregnancies that are planned. Women not intending to become pregnant may not be in ideal health and may be engaging in risky behaviors like consuming alcohol at the time of conception. Nationally, it is estimated that half of all pregnancies are unintended and more than 4 out of 5 pregnancies to women age 19 and younger are unintended (CDC). Unintended pregnancy has been linked to reduced economic mobility and can impact multiple social determinants of health across a woman’s lifespan including educational attainment, employment and poverty. The CDC recommends expanded use of long-acting reversible contraception as a highly effective way to reduce the number of unintended pregnancies.
Local Data

- Statewide, in 2011 only 42% of babies born as a result of an unintended pregnancy were at a healthy birth weight (NC State Center for Health Statistics).

- 12% of births in Mecklenburg County from 2010-2014 were to women who conceived 6 months or less following a previous delivery (NC State Center for Health Statistics).

- Only 9% of women who have just given birth in Mecklenburg County are on long-acting reversible contraception compared to 15% statewide.

- More than one-quarter of pregnancies among 15-19 year olds in Mecklenburg are repeat pregnancies.

What we are doing

- Provide birth control and family planning education in the Adult Health Clinic
- Provide case management to pregnant women to help them obtain family planning once they have given birth.

What else should we do?

- Increase the availability and promote the use of long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) across the community
- Assure that all women who have recently given birth have immediate access to the most effective contraceptive methods
- Help sexually active teen mother’s gain information about and use of effective types of birth control and connect them with support services that can help prevent repeat pregnancies, such as home visiting programs.
5. Violence

Violence is not traditionally understood as a public health issue but this is beginning to change as data illustrate the impacts on other community health indicators such as academic achievement, substance abuse and mental health. Violence prevention was identified as a top priority in the most recent Mecklenburg Community Health Assessment. In response, a planning group convened to examine both the causes and impact of violence in the community. Some of the priorities of this planning group include:

- Reframing the issue of violence as a preventable issue
- Identifying and focusing efforts on key risk factors and protective factors associated with violence
- Learning from neighborhoods and community members about the issues they face to better inform interventions

Local Data

- Homicide was the leading cause of death for the 15 – 24 age group in 2013 (NC Vital Statistics).
- From 2009-2014 there was a total of 35 domestic violence related homicides -- an average of almost 6 per year (Mecklenburg County Women’s Commission).
- Among Charlotte Mecklenburg high school students, 16% reported being bullied on school property in 2013 and 7% reported missing school because they felt unsafe (2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey).
- Over 13,000 children were reported abused or neglected during FY 2013-14, this is just over 5% of all children under the age of 18 (Council for Children’s Rights).

The following table details community attributes (protective factors) that research shows can protect against certain types of violence. Protective factors can be found at all levels of our social structure including at the individual, family, community and societal levels.

### Violence Protective Factors at the Community/Neighborhood Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Child Maltreatment</th>
<th>Teen Dating Violence</th>
<th>Intimate Partner Violence</th>
<th>Sexual Violence</th>
<th>Youth Violence</th>
<th>Bullying</th>
<th>Suicide</th>
<th>Elder Abuse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordination of services among community agencies</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to mental health and substance abuse services</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community support and connectedness*</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Connecting the Dots: An overview of the links among multiple forms of violence, CDC.*
What we are doing

- Chairing the Violence Prevention committee, which is working with Prevent Violence NC to develop strategies that focus on risk and protective factors that are common among many types of violence.
- Training police in crisis intervention techniques.
- Through the Child Development-Community Policy program (CD-CP) providing coordinated police-mental health intervention to children and families who are exposed to violence and other trauma.

What else should we do?

- Examine public health violence prevention program models from across the country for possible replication
- Improve law enforcement-mental health collaborative responses to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis
- Expand Child Development--Community Policing services to children and families exposed to violence and other trauma to reach the whole county including the 6 towns
- Create a trauma-informed health and human services workforce equipped to provide trauma-informed care
FY 2017 Annual Board Retreat
County Commissioner’s Topic of Interest
Submitted by: Commissioner Dunlap

**Topic of Interest: Revaluation Update**

Provide a status update on the County’s revaluation.

**Response:**

Each of the 100 counties within North Carolina, by statute, has the responsibility of reappraising all real property within their jurisdiction at full market value at least once every eight years. Mecklenburg County will be required to reappraise all real property within their jurisdiction no later than January 1, 2019. Mecklenburg County’s last revaluation had an effective date as of January 1, 2011.

Primary consideration in any successful revaluation is the quality of the data, which includes the property records, sales information, cost analysis, income and expense information, and market trends. The Mecklenburg County Assessor’s Office has dedicated themselves to quality and accountability, and is actively working to update and ensure the quality of the data that will be used in the next revaluation. In this report, we will detail the steps that have been taken, and the plans we have in place to prepare for the upcoming successful revaluation.

**Current Initiatives:**

1. **Field Canvasing** - Mecklenburg County has instituted the verification and update of all real property information within its jurisdiction on an ongoing basis. Mecklenburg County is adhering to the International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO) standards of one sixth (1/6) of a county review annually. In Mecklenburg County, that is approximately 60,000 properties inspected annually. The CAO appraisal staff began the field canvas project in 2014, and has reviewed 101,352 properties to date.

2. **Neighborhood Analysis and Review** – Following the 2011 revaluation, it became apparent that the neighborhood delineation within Mecklenburg County needed review and update. The County Assessor’s Office (CAO) has recently hired a Revaluation Coordinator that is currently in the process of reviewing all neighborhoods, both residential and commercial, for realignment. Prior studies and information, as well as current sales and statistical information are being employed to assure that neighborhoods within Mecklenburg County are properly identified and grouped.

3. **Improvement Analysis and Review** – Currently, Mecklenburg County property information includes 36 grades of quality. These numerous codes are cumbersome for staff and confusing for property owners. The CAO is reviewing the quality grades, with intentions of simplifying the grading system that describes the level of quality of a structure. We are also reviewing all other aspects of our property information, such as yard improvements, porches, patios, etc., for consistency.
4. Sales Analysis & Data Collection - Accurate and current sales, cost and income information are paramount to a successful revaluation. In 2015, the CAO instituted a residential sales verification letter, which has been quite successful. The CAO is sending letters to the purchasers of real property to verify the terms and gather information about the sale of the property. In 2016, CAO intends to expand this program to include commercial transactions. For commercial properties CAO will also be requesting income and expense information for properties that are income producing, and construction cost information. This information will be compiled to assist in the preparation of our schedule of values.

5. Offsite Appeal Locations – The Assistant Assessor and Information Systems Manager are working to identify offsite locations for informal assessment appeals, as well as Board of Equalization and Review (BER) appeals. It is important to make the appeal process convenient for the taxpayers of Mecklenburg County. In 2015, an offsite location at the Mint Hill Town Hall was secured and tested with great success. The CAO intends to identify and test at least two additional offsite locations for the appeals process.

6. Public Relations – Communications with our community has been an ongoing focus for the CAO. The County Assessor speaks to community groups, homeowners associations, and professional organizations, and Mecklenburg County Public Information assists in this effort. A preliminary informational revaluation brochure has been prepared by the CAO, and will be available for distribution to the public when finalized. As we approach the upcoming revaluation, the Assessor, along with senior management staff, will increase the number of public speaking engagements.

7. Quality Control – The CAO has recruited for, and will be interviewing and hiring, a Quality Control/Appeals Coordinator. This position will manage the assessment appeals (all levels), and will be responsible for the ongoing quality control needed in the real estate division. This quality control will include random sampling of appraisal work, property record cards, exemptions and exclusions, as well as identifying training needs and updating training manuals. We anticipate having this position fully onboard with the Assessor’s Office in the spring of 2016.

8. Information Technology – The CAO has recently upgraded the computer aided mass appraisal system (CAMA), and is in the process of correcting processes and integrating other technology into the system. The CAO is also keenly interested in acquiring an online assessment appeals module to assist taxpayers with the filing of their request. This module has the ability to track (for both the taxpayer and the CAO) the progress of the request, and a communications module for the taxpayer to communicate directly with the appraiser handling their request.

9. Processes & needs – The CAO is continuing to work with Mecklenburg County Business Process Management (BPM) to evaluate the needs and processes within the department. We are measuring performance, creating desired results, and developing strategies to attain successful outcomes, efficiency, and customer satisfaction.
Future Initiatives:

1. Land Analysis, Valuation & Review – The appraisal staff will assist with the ongoing neighborhood delineation, land updates and the pricing of land. Great emphasis will be placed upon equalization, and appropriate adjustments for factors affecting the value of land, such as traffic, flood/drainage, topography, etc.

2. Improvement analysis, valuation, and review – The appraisal staff will assist with the review, dissection and assembly of sales, income and cost information. Again, great emphasis will be placed on equalization and appropriate adjustments. The information compiled will aid in the development of the Schedule of Values (SOV). The SOV will include building component values (price per square foot of improvements), overall rates, rental rates, vacancy and expense rates.

3. Staffing – It will be important to hire field listing personnel, most likely on a temporary basis, to continue the field canvas project. In order to continue the review of improved properties at the rate of one sixth (1/6) of the county per year, and ensure the quality of our data, temporary help will need to be employed. Additional clerical staff help for data entry of property information will be required. Appropriate training and quality controls will be in place.

4. CAMA Valuation Modeling – Once proposed values have been developed, valuation modeling and testing will be performed. Testing will include manual review and statistical analysis.

5. Schedule of Values (SOV) – Tested schedule of values (SOV) models will be reviewed by a citizens review panel, as well as various members of CAO staff. The object of this review is to identify any lapses in valuation, and correct any errors. Once testing and review are performed, the final version of the schedule of values (SOV) will be submitted to the Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners for review, approval and adoption.

6. Staff training & testing – Prior to the mailing of value change notices, staff will be trained and tested on their knowledge of the revaluation and customer service skills. Staff will also be trained on informal appeals. Additional testing of offsite appeal locations, in conjunction with technology, will be performed.

7. General Reappraisal/Values Finalized – After adoption of the SOV, the CAO will apply the values to the property records within Mecklenburg County. Values will be finalized and quality control processes will be applied. Values will be on display, and available online, for stakeholders to review and analyze.

8. Notice of Values – Notices of the changes in value will be printed, and mailed for all real property parcels within Mecklenburg County.

9. Appeal Period – Informal appeals will begin immediately following the mailing of notices. CAO staff will be on hand to meet with taxpayers. Appeals that are not able to be resolved at the informal level will be heard by the Board of Equalization and Review (BER) after the close of the informal appeal timeframe.
FY 2017 Annual Board Retreat
County Commissioner’s Topic of Interest
Submitted by: Dunlap

Topic of Interest: Homeless Court Proposal

Please provide a status update on the homeless court proposal.

Response:

Background

The conversation about the possibility of a homeless court in Mecklenburg County began in March 2014 when an affordable housing advocacy group, Helping Homeless to Housing (HHH), met with Mecklenburg County Commissioner George Dunlap. HHH presented information about homeless court programs that are operating across the country. These courts seek to decriminalize “quality of life” crimes (trespassing, loitering, public intoxication, open container violations) for individuals experiencing homelessness, connecting them to needed services and housing instead of pursuing punitive measures.

Commissioner Dunlap submitted an inquiry for Community Support Services (CSS) to explore the need for a homeless court within Mecklenburg County. CSS worked with Criminal Justice Services (CJS) and the Mecklenburg County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO) to determine the number of individuals dealing with homelessness in Mecklenburg County who were booked in the jail during FY2014.

MCSO generated a report documenting that 294 homeless individuals were booked. Approximately 20 percent of the individuals in the sample were booked five or more times throughout the year, which meets “frequent booking” criteria. These individuals accounted for 46 percent of the total jail days from this sample. This information highlighted the need for improved justice system response for individuals experiencing homelessness in Mecklenburg County.

Mecklenburg County’s Criminal Justice Advisory Group (CJAG), a forum of key criminal-justice system decision makers, decided to include homelessness as a focus of its Street Campaign. The Street Campaign is focused on eliminating the cycle of frequent front-end users in the criminal justice system. The group developed a homelessness issues subcommittee to research the issue further, and determine how to effectively help homeless individuals who are interacting with the justice system.

The subcommittee began meeting in July 2015, and includes representatives from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD), CJS, CSS, HHH, the Public Defender’s Office, the Trial Court Administrator’s Office, and Urban Ministry Center’s Outreach and Engagement (UMC Outreach) team. The subcommittee members have developed a proposal and each group represented supports the recommendations.
Understanding the Problem in Mecklenburg County

The subcommittee requested two sets of information from CJS: a) the 40 homeless individuals with the most number of unique bookings and b) the 40 homeless individuals with the highest number of jail days. The group learned that within these two categories there are 58 unique “Front-End Users” (FEUs) -- individuals arrested for low-level offenses who cycle in and out of the “front-end” of the legal system -- in Mecklenburg County.

The following data from the report provided useful information for better understanding the problem:

- 90 percent of all FY15 offenses for these individuals were nonviolent, with nearly 70 percent of all FY15 offenses for these individuals being nonviolent misdemeanors.
- 76 percent of all FY15 offenses committed by the FEUs were misdemeanors.
- 49 percent of all FY15 offenses were "public order" offenses – in other words, victimless "quality of life" offenses associated with homelessness and poverty.

This information confirmed what was thought to be true - the majority of offenses committed by the homeless are not a threat to public safety, may be eligible for diversion, and do not require extensive punitive measures to be helped.

Initial Steps

The work and discussions of the subcommittee generated interest in how law enforcement can divert individuals from arrest and help them avoid the negative consequences of jail. CMPD and Urban Ministry Center’s Outreach and Engagement (UMC Outreach) team began a collaboration to divert homeless individuals from arrest for low-level "quality of life" offenses. This diversion approach is not focused solely on FEUs, but rather any individual experiencing homelessness who commits a divertible offense.

The collaboration began in early November 2015 with the introduction of an UMC Outreach referral process for police officers during CMPD’s Critical Time Intervention training. In the first two weeks of the new process, 14 outreach referrals were submitted by CMPD. The fact that this resource has been so utilized by CMPD demonstrates the need for a way to connect individuals to services rather than criminalizing homelessness.

Recommendations

Based on the research of the subcommittee, a homeless court is not the solution for helping the 58 FEUs. Homeless courts tend to help individuals after they have entered the justice system rather than diverting them from it. This later stage response results in unnecessary arrests and jail time for the person experiencing homelessness and is costly for the criminal justice system. Further, the 58 FEUs interact with many service providers, but do not receive the tailored support they are in need of from any specific group or agency. A homeless specialty court would not address this problem either.

The subcommittee recommends the creation of a Homeless Justice Team (HJT) consisting of a licensed mental health clinician, a senior social worker, and a Peer Support Specialist within the CSS Homeless Services Division. The HJT will focus on diverting the 58 FEUs from the justice system when possible by meeting them where they are, and connecting them with resources to help prevent occurrence of these
low-level “quality of life” offenses. When diversion is not possible, the team will work with Mecklenburg County courts and the jail to help the individual exit the system. The HJT will provide needed support that is currently missing from our justice system to help this group.

In addition to the HJT, the subcommittee recommends an addition of 45 units to the MeckFUSE program during FY17, and 20 more in FY18. MeckFUSE is a 45 unit Housing First Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) program for individuals experiencing homelessness with at least four arrests in the last five years. Community Support Services Department administers the program using Mecklenburg County funding, and MeckFUSE is operated by contract provider Urban Ministry Center. The program provides an ideal housing option for FEUs of our justice system. However, MeckFUSE is currently at capacity (45 individuals housed) and is unable to accept additional participants. Stable housing alone prevents justice involvement, reduces the likelihood of recidivism, and should be prioritized.

**Potential Costs**

The cost for the three HJT positions totals $239,687.05. This includes salary and benefits, phone, office supplies, training and travel, and licenses for the positions.

The total cost for MeckFUSE expansion is $1,260,000. Of that amount, the expansion cost to allow 45 additional participants in FY17 is $860,000. Adding 20 more participants in FY18 will cost $400,000. The expansion amount covers all expenses (subsidies, utilities, staff costs, etc.) to administer the program through a contract provider.

**Potential Savings**

By providing services for the 58 FEUs, who have an average of three arrests per year, the proposed program could potentially divert 148 jail admissions over the course of a year for misdemeanor charges (excluding arrests involving felony charges).

According to Mecklenburg County Criminal Justice Services, complete diversion of all 58 individuals from their history of misdemeanor arrests and average length of stay in jail for misdemeanor arrests could result in an annual reduction of approximately 7,252 jail bed days. This means there would be 20 fewer people in the jail on any given day throughout the year. All of this results in a cost avoidance of $145,040 per year for the jail alone.

**Conclusion**

By not pursuing a new paradigm to address the needs of the homeless, our community runs the risk of criminalizing vulnerable individuals who are in need of comprehensive, supportive services not incarceration. Use of the HJT approach, in conjunction with an expansion of the MeckFUSE program, will provide a humane answer to the challenges of homeless FEUs, and generate cost-savings for Mecklenburg County.

An in-depth proposal outlining the problem and proposed recommendation in greater detail is attached.
Homeless Justice Initiative
Changing How the Justice System Responds to Homelessness
A Proposal Submitted by the Criminal Justice Advisory Group - Street Campaign, Homelessness
Issue Subcommittee
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina
Presented to the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners - January 2016

Introduction

In March of 2014, an affordable housing advocacy group, Helping Homeless to Housing (HHH), met with County Commissioner George Dunlap and presented information about homeless court initiatives across the country. These courts seek to decriminalize “quality of life” crimes (trespassing, loitering, public intoxication, open container violations) for individuals experiencing homelessness, connecting them to needed services and housing instead of pursuing punitive measures. At a Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) meeting later that year, Commissioner Dunlap submitted an inquiry for Community Support Services (CSS) to explore the need for a homeless court within Mecklenburg County. CSS requested data from Criminal Justice Services (CJS) and the Mecklenburg County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO) regarding the number of individuals dealing with homelessness in Mecklenburg County who were booked in the jail during FY2014 to better understand the situation.

According to the data gathered by CJS and MCSO, 294 individuals were booked. Approximately 20 percent of the individuals in the sample were booked five or more times throughout the year, which meets “frequent booking” criteria. These individuals accounted for 46 percent of the total jail days from this sample, with the majority identified as homeless. Based on this information, it was clear that there was a group of individuals experiencing homelessness that were cycling in and out of the justice system and not receiving the support needed to remain independent and stable in the community.

Mecklenburg County’s Criminal Justice Advisory Group (CJAG) – a forum of key criminal-justice system decision makers – then decided to include homelessness as a focus of its Street Campaign. The Street Campaign is focused on eliminating the cycle of frequent front-end users in the criminal justice system. A subcommittee was created within the Street Campaign to explore the issue and consider whether a homeless court is needed in Mecklenburg County.

The group has been meeting regularly since June 2015 and includes representatives from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, CJS, CSS, HHH, the Public Defender’s Office, the Trial Court Administrator’s Office, and Urban Ministry Center’s Outreach and Engagement (UMC Outreach) team. These community partners often serve individuals experiencing homelessness who interact with the legal system. All parties are committed to improving outcomes for individuals experiencing homelessness in Mecklenburg County.
Homeless Front-End Users of the Justice System

The homelessness issue subcommittee recognized that more information was needed to better understand how individuals experiencing homelessness were interacting with the justice system. The group requested two sets of information from CJS: a) the 40 homeless individuals with the most number of unique bookings and b) the 40 homeless individuals with the highest number of jail days. The group learned that within these two categories there are 58 unique “Front-End Users” (FEUs) -- individuals arrested for low-level offenses who cycle in and out of the “front-end” of the legal system -- in Mecklenburg County. These individuals represent a low-risk to public safety yet a high-cost in time and money to the local justice system - both with housing these individuals in custody and with the time and money associated with attorneys and judges involved in their court cases. The pattern of recidivism for this group creates a financial burden for our community while failing to meet the needs of the individuals experiencing homelessness.

Examination of the Charges

When examining the charges of the 58 FEUs, it was clear the vast majority of offenses were misdemeanors and nonviolent in nature. The majority of these offenses were quality of life crimes, a direct result of someone living outside.

- 90 percent of all FY15 offenses for these individuals were nonviolent, with nearly 70 percent of all FY15 offenses for these individuals being nonviolent misdemeanors.
- 76 percent of all FY15 offenses committed by the FEUs were misdemeanors.
- 49 percent of all FY15 offenses were "public order" offenses. In other words, victimless "quality of life" offenses associated with homelessness and poverty.

This data confirmed what was thought to be true - the majority of offenses committed by the homeless are not a threat to public safety, may be eligible for diversion, and do not require extensive punitive measures to be helped.

Further, taking punitive action against individuals for low-level, non-violent offenses can cause significant collateral damage in their lives. An arrest record is stigmatizing and creates barriers to housing, employment, and other life opportunities. This criminalization of their homelessness perpetuates poverty and makes it more challenging for these individuals to recover; thus, alienating them from society.

Appendix 1 summarizes charges for the FEUs and highlights the low-level nature of most of these charges.

The Need for Increased Support for FEUs

Despite interacting at many intercept points and with many groups, no specific entity in Mecklenburg County provides support services to address the needs of FEUs. The lack of support for FEUs results in high-recidivism at a significant expense to the community.
To address this problem, the subcommittee recommends the creation of a Homeless Justice Team (HJT) consisting of a Licensed Mental Health Clinician, a Senior Social Worker, and a Peer Support Specialist within the CSS Homeless Services Division. The committee believes this approach will be a more effective solution to address the challenges of homeless FEUs than an official homeless court.

The HJT will prioritize FEUs experiencing homelessness in Mecklenburg County. A list will be generated on a monthly basis by Criminal Justice Services to determine the top 40 FEUs with the highest number of arrests and jail days. This list will guide the outreach and engagement efforts of the HJT and ensure that the work of the HJT is focused on individuals who are generating the highest expense for our community and have the greatest need for connection.

The HJT will focus on connecting FEUs to community resources such as to housing, physical and mental health care, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid benefits, and employment. Connection to services will ultimately save our community resources and money while addressing systemic problems to which individuals experiencing homelessness are vulnerable. On a monthly basis, the HJT will report progress, or lack thereof, to the Public Defender’s office and the presiding judge regarding individuals who are participating in the program.

The HJT will serve other individuals experiencing homelessness and interacting with the justice system on a case-by-case basis. Following is the criteria for participation among non-FEUs:

- Individual is identified as dealing with homelessness
- Individual has been arrested three or more times in the last year
- Individual has a documented mental health, physical health, substance use, or intellectual/developmental disability.

**Expected Outcomes**

With the support provided by the HJT, the following outcomes are expected for FEUs:

- Reduction in bookings for FEUs
- Reduction in arrests for FEUs
- Increased intervals of time between incidents of justice involvement for FEUs
- Reduction in transient/homeless related service calls for CMPD in high frequency response areas for FEUs
- Increased intervals of time between service calls to CMPD regarding a single FEU
- Increased connection to housing and other services (e.g., healthcare, mental health/substance abuse treatment, income benefits, and employment)

These outcomes have the potential to result in significant savings with respect to cost, time and resources for our community. The HJT will monitor and report these outcomes on a monthly basis. An issue of concern is the need for additional housing resources to assist in achieving these goals and the overall goal of housing these individuals.
The Need for Increased Permanent Supportive Housing

The majority of offenses for FEUs are the result of an experience of homelessness. Stable housing alone prevents justice involvement and should be prioritized. It is vitally important that Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) options, particularly Housing First PSH, be increased for this population.

Housing First recognizes housing as a basic human right. It is a “low-barrier” approach to housing that provides chronically homeless individuals with housing and wrap-around support services to help them maintain it. The Housing First philosophy of meeting people “where they are” aligns with the philosophy of intercept improvements proposed by this group.

Since many of the crimes for which FEUs are receiving jail time are an effect of homelessness, housing is key to preventing these offenses from occurring. With the support of housing the likelihood of recidivism is dramatically reduced. This concept has been demonstrated notably in our community through the MeckFUSE program. MeckFUSE is a 45 unit Housing First PSH program for individuals experiencing homelessness with at least four arrests in the last five years. Community Support Services administers the program using County funding, and Urban Ministry Center operates MeckFUSE as a contract provider. The program provides an ideal housing option for FEUs of our justice system. However, MeckFUSE is currently at capacity and is unable to accept additional participants.

Considering the clear fit between MeckFUSE and FEUs, the subcommittee recommends an addition of 45 units to the MeckFUSE program during FY17, and 20 units during FY18.

The Sequential Intercept Model

The research of the subcommittee was guided by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) Sequential Intercept Model. The Sequential Intercept Model is a framework for understanding how individuals dealing with mental health and/or substance abuse interact with different areas of the justice system. This model identifies five intercept points at which individuals interact with:

1) law enforcement and emergency services
2) initial detention and hearing
3) jails, courts, forensic evaluation and forensic hospitalization
4) reentry from jails, prisons, and hospitalizations
5) community supervision and community support services

Appendix 2 is a SAMHSA handout that provides a detailed overview of the model.

Improved Intercept Response within Mecklenburg County

The following is a basic description of how the HJT will work within the justice system in accordance with the Sequential Intercept Model. It is important to note that while the HJT will focus its efforts on FEUs,
other individuals interacting with the justice system for crimes of homelessness will benefit from these system improvements, particularly at Intercept 1.

Creating system change at this level involves significant collaboration with various community partners at different intercept points (CMPD, Criminal Justice Services Jail Liaison, the Public Defender’s Office, Mecklenburg County Jail, and UMC Outreach Team). Each of these groups was involved in developing this plan and supporting this recommendation.

Homeless Arrest Diversion (Intercept 1)

Arrest diversion at Intercept 1 seeks to help people before they are arrested and charged with an offense. If an officer interacts with an identified FEU, the HJT will be notified and will connect with the individual immediately if possible, but at least within 24 hours. At this level the HJT will begin the process of connecting the individual to services.

Along with the diversion efforts of HJT, the work of this decriminalization initiative has generated a broader Homeless Arrest Diversion Initiative (HADI) between CMPD and Urban Ministry Center’s Outreach and Engagement (UMC Outreach) Team. The diversion approach employed in this collaboration will not be focused solely on FEUs, but rather any individual experiencing homelessness who commits a divertible offense will qualify for participation. Appendix 3 details the HADI diversion process.

The opportunity to refer individuals experiencing homelessness through HADI began on November 7, 2015 after training approximately 40 officers on referring individuals to services as an option to divert arrest. Fourteen referrals have come in through the process in the first two weeks of inception. The fact that this resource has been so utilized by CMPD demonstrates the need for a way to connect individuals to services rather than criminalizing homelessness. The outcomes of the process further indicate the need for more ways to connect with individuals across various intercept points. In its first two weeks, HADI accomplished the following:

- Coordinated a bus ticket for one individual to go back to his home state where he has a housing opportunity
- Engaged one very vulnerable individual not previously known to the Outreach Team to work on his housing application
- Engaged and built rapport with four individuals who potentially qualify for Outreach Team services
- The police have more information on the housing prospects of eight individuals who are known to the Urban Ministry Center but do not qualify for Outreach Team services. The purpose of this communication has been to give police information that might be useful when responding to calls regarding an individual they referred, such as that the person is on the permanent supportive housing registry.

We see the need for specific positions designated for working with this population most illuminated by the last point. The Outreach Team can work with someone who is chronically homeless and/or has a
severe mental health condition, but they cannot work to connect someone to services who does not meet these specific criteria. Two of the fourteen people referred through HADI are routinely arrested and do not qualify for services from the Outreach Team. These two individuals have a combined 86 jail days in the last two years but are not recorded.

Pre-Adjudication Process at Initial Detention and First Court Appearance ( Intercept 2 )

If arrest diversion is not possible, FEUs may still be assisted in the pre-adjudication process of the court system. A “homeless flag” will be written on the officer’s citation when an individual experiencing homelessness commits an offense that cannot be diverted from arrest. The flag will notify the HJT, the Public Defender’s Office and judges in specific courtrooms if someone with whom they will interact is experiencing homelessness.

A representative of the HJT will go to the jail to meet with the identified individual and share about the program as an alternative to punitive measures. If the person is not one of the identified FEUs, the HJT will consider whether this person has a pattern of recidivism that may make her or him eligible for participation. “Fast track” courtroom 1150B will provide the setting for the courtroom component of this process. The courtroom process is as follows:

- The Public Defender (PD) arrives at court around 1:30 p.m., and first appearance video arraignment begins at 2 p.m.
- PD informs Judge that the individual may be eligible to receive services from the HJT and explains that this will help divert future interactions with the justice system.
- If judge agrees to the individual receiving services from the HJT, the PD takes this information and informs the appointed attorney.
- PD then approaches the district attorney pre-trial court date to notify them that the individual will be working with the HJT.

Jail and Court Processes ( Intercept 3 )

For FEUs who are not in custody, “fast-track courtroom” 1130A will provide a setting for engagement. The PD working at this session will listen to bonds of individuals being processed. If the PD comes across a flagged individual they will notify the HJT court and coordinate connection to the appointed counsel. The HJT will support attendance of scheduled court appearances for FEUs and provide status updates to court officials and facilitate communication between the court and service providers.

If an FEU is in jail, the HJT will make jail visits to provide information and encourage participation in the program. Coordination with jail officials and CJS Jail Liaison will begin at this point to ensure connection to services upon discharge. For individuals who are not identified FEUs, the HJT will provide screenings to determine program eligibility.

Assess and Re-Entry ( Intercept 4 )

At this stage, HJT will complete relevant assessments and begin re-entry planning. Such assessments include, but are not limited to, Coordinated Assessment, mental health and substance abuse screenings,
as well as other needs assessments. This information will be communicated to relevant community service providers that can support the individual following release from jail.

Community Corrections ( Intercept 5)

The HJT will actively work to connect FEUs to relevant services based on assessed needs. Services will include housing, mental and physical healthcare, substance use services, and supported employment. The HJT will collaborate with probation officers and support attendance of probation appointments.

Potential Savings

The program being proposed by the committee is unique in its focus on homeless FEUs - diversion initiatives in other communities tend to have a broader focus. By targeting individuals interacting most frequently with our justice system, we hope to achieve meaningful cost-savings while helping individuals with the greatest needs.

While the exact cost-savings of diversion programs are difficult to calculate due to the multiple interacting systems, other communities have documented fiscal benefits. National data indicates that jail diversion creates savings in the long-term by directing individuals to services and reducing their interactions with the justice system. Based on a report by the Vera Institute of Justice, the following are examples of such cost-savings:

- Project Link in Rochester, NY, and Thresholds Jail Program in Chicago, IL, documented cost savings between $18,873 and $39,518 per participant.
- New York City’s approach of increasing supportive housing for people with multiple stays in jail and homeless shelters (the same approach that guides the MeckFUSE program) showed cost offsets of $2,953 per person annually.
- Based on treatment data from programs across the country, it is two to three times more expensive for a person with serious mental illness to become involved in the justice system than to receive mental health services in the community.

By targeting services around the targeted 58 individuals, who have an average of three arrests per year, the proposed program could potentially divert 148 jail admissions over the course of a year for misdemeanor charges (excluding arrests involving felony charges). According to Mecklenburg County Criminal Justice Services, complete diversion of all 58 individuals from their history of misdemeanor arrests and average length of stay in jail for misdemeanor arrests could result in an annual reduction of approximately 7,252 jail bed days. This means there would be 20 fewer people in the jail on any given day throughout the year. All of this results in a cost avoidance of $145,040 per year (using the marginal daily jail cost of $20, as agreed upon with the Sheriff’s Office).

Projected Costs

The cost for the three HJT positions totals $239,687.05. This includes all expenses related to the positions.
The total cost for MeckFUSE expansion is $1,260,000. Of that amount, the cost to allow 45 additional participants during FY17 is $860,000. Adding 20 more participants during FY18 will cost $400,000. This amount covers all expenses (subsidies, utilities, staff costs, etc.) to administer the program through a contract provider.

**Conclusion**

Based on available data, our current criminal justice system is ineffective at meeting the needs of homeless FEUs. This ineffectiveness has resulted in an overuse of jail bed days, court docket space, and system resources for individuals charged with nonviolent, quality of life crimes, at a significant cost to the community.

By not pursuing a new paradigm to address the needs of the homeless, our community runs the risk of criminalizing vulnerable individuals who are in need of comprehensive, supportive services not incarceration. The approach of the HJT, in conjunction with an expansion of the MeckFUSE program, will provide a humane answer to the challenges of homeless FEUs with cost-savings for Mecklenburg County.
This report identifies and tracks Fiscal Year 2015 offenses associated with 58 pre-determined individuals who are either confirmed as homeless or likely to be homeless. This report was compiled and produced by Mecklenburg County Criminal Justice Services.

I. Offense Type

- 76% of the FY15 offenses associated with these individuals were misdemeanors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense Type</th>
<th>Offense Count</th>
<th>Offense Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Misdemeanor</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>76.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felony</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>19.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (^2)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infraction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>340</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. Violent and Nonviolent Offenses \(^3\)

- 90% of all FY15 offenses associated with these individuals were nonviolent, with nearly 70% of all FY15 offenses for these individuals being nonviolent misdemeanors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violent/Nonviolent and Offense Type</th>
<th>Offense Count</th>
<th>Offense Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonviolent</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>90.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misdemeanor</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>69.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felony</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>16.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infraction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Violent</strong></td>
<td><strong>33</strong></td>
<td><strong>9.71%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misdemeanor</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felony</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>340</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) For a full list of these individuals, see the Criminal Justice Services report dated July 30, 2015 and titled *Mecklenburg County Homeless Bookings*.

\(^2\) Other includes the ‘99’ offense codes (i.e. 2599, 8599, 9999, etc.). These codes do not have a default type or class and can vary based on the offense itself.

\(^3\) The violent/non-violent categorization in table 3 was conducted using the same logic applied during the Safety and Justice Challenge data analysis. Each offense code was categorized as violent or non-violent based on the following definition which originated with Pretrial Services’ PSA risk assessment tool: “offenses are considered violent when a person causes or attempts to cause physical injury to another person.”
### III. Offense Type and Class

- 41% of all FY15 offenses associated with these individuals were Class 3 misdemeanors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense Type and Class</th>
<th>Offense Count</th>
<th>Offense Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Misdemeanor</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>76.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>??</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>22.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>40.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NULL</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felony</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>19.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>??</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NULL</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NULL</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>??</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infraction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NULL</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 Percentages in sub-categories (such as those in sections 2 and 3) represent the percentage of the overall charges, not the percentage within the category. For example, Class 3 misdemeanors represent 40.59% of all charges, not 40.59% of all misdemeanor charges. As such, sub-categories will sum to equal the count and percentage of their master category.
IV. Offense Grouping

- 49% of all FY15 offenses associated with these individuals were ‘public order’ offenses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense Groups</th>
<th>Offense Count</th>
<th>Offense Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Order</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>48.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>22.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlled Substance</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>14.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>9.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DWI</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation Violation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder / Manslaughter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>340</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Homeless Arrest Diversion Initiative

The Homeless Arrest Diversion Initiative (HADI) is a collaboration between Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) and Urban Ministry Center’s Outreach and Engagement (UMC Outreach) team in conjunction with Mecklenburg County Community Support Services (CSS).

WHAT IS A DIVERTIBLE OFFENSE?

For the purposes of this initiative a “divertible offense” is defined as an offense in which an individual’s situation of homelessness was a factor and an offense in which there was no victim. Such offenses include but are not limited to:

- Drinking in public, public intoxication
- Trespassing
- Urinating in public
- Loitering
- Littering

THE PROCESS:

When an officer makes contact with an individual experiencing homelessness and they are committing a divertible offense the process is as follows:

1. Give the homeless subject a choice of arrest/citation or a referral for outreach services
   
   a. If an arrest or citation is most appropriate for the situation a referral can still be made for outreach services.

2. If the officer makes a referral in lieu of an arrest or citation the officer can transport the subject to the appropriate destination: mental health, shelter, detox, etc.

3. The UMC Outreach Team will follow up with the referral using the information provided
   
   a. The Outreach Operations Manager will assign an Outreach worker to follow up with the referral within 48 hours
   
   b. The Outreach team member responsible for processing all community referrals, the Outreach Operations Manager, will make contact with the referring officer to let them know the outcome of the referral
   
   c. If necessary, the UMC Outreach Team case manager can coordinate a plan with CMPD and service providers to prevent future offenses
   
   d. If an Outreach worker is unable to find the individual referred for services after five attempts they will be placed on “stand by” – the Outreach worker will no longer actively try to find this individual – and the referring officer will be alerted

4. Once the Outreach Team has made contact with the individual referred they will attempt to offer him or her the following services: (This is a non-exhaustive list and will depend on the individual’s needs)
a. Access to Mental Health services by scheduling appointments and potentially transporting the individual to scheduled appointments

b. Complete all necessary assessments for the housing process

c. Assist with basic needs like getting a North Carolina photo ID or food stamps

d. Discuss options for income (through disability income, employment, etc.)

e. Assist individual in accessing substance abuse treatment if desired
Homeless Arrest Diversion Initiative

The Homeless Arrest Diversion Initiative (HADI) is a collaboration between Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) and Urban Ministry Center’s Outreach and Engagement (UMC Outreach) team in conjunction with Mecklenburg County Community Support Services (CSS).

WHAT IS A DIVERTIBLE OFFENSE?

For the purposes of this initiative a “divertible offense” is defined as an offense in which an individual’s situation of homelessness was a factor and an offense in which there was no victim. Such offenses include but are not limited to:

- Drinking in public, public intoxication
- Trespassing
- Urinating in public
- Loitering
- Littering

THE PROCESS:

When an officer makes contact with an individual experiencing homelessness and they are committing a divertible offense the process is as follows:

1. Give the homeless subject a choice of arrest/citation or a referral for outreach services
   a. If an arrest or citation is most appropriate for the situation a referral can still be made for outreach services.

2. If the officer makes a referral in lieu of an arrest or citation the officer can transport the subject to the appropriate destination: mental health, shelter, detox, etc.

3. The UMC Outreach Team will follow up with the referral using the information provided
   a. The Outreach Operations Manager will assign an Outreach worker to follow up with the referral within 48 hours
   b. The Outreach team member responsible for processing all community referrals, the Outreach Operations Manager, will make contact with the referring officer to let them know the outcome of the referral
   c. If necessary, the UMC Outreach Team case manager can coordinate a plan with CMPD and service providers to prevent future offenses
   d. If an Outreach worker is unable to find the individual referred for services after five attempts they will be placed on “stand by” – the Outreach worker will no longer actively try to find this individual – and the referring officer will be alerted

4. Once the Outreach Team has made contact with the individual referred they will attempt to offer him or her the following services: (This is an non-exhaustive list and will depend on the individual’s needs)
a. Access to Mental Health services by scheduling appointments and potentially transporting the individual to scheduled appointments

b. Complete all necessary assessments for the housing process

c. Assist with basic needs like getting a North Carolina photo ID or food stamps

d. Discuss options for income (through disability income, employment, etc.)

e. Assist individual in accessing substance abuse treatment if desired
Action Steps for Service-Level Change at Each Intercept

**Intercept 1: Law enforcement**
- 911: Train dispatchers to identify calls involving persons with mental illness and refer to designated, trained responders
- Police: Train officers to respond to calls where mental illness may be a factor
- Documentation: Document police contacts with persons with mental illness
- Emergency/Crisis Response: Provide police-friendly drop-off at local hospital, crisis unit, or triage center
- Follow-Up: Provide service linkages and follow-up services to individuals who are not hospitalized and those leaving the hospital
- Evaluation: Monitor and evaluate services through regular stakeholder meetings for continued quality improvement

**Intercept 2: Initial detention/Initial court hearings**
- Screening: Screen for mental illness at earliest opportunity; initiate process that identifies those eligible for diversion or needing treatment in jail; use validated, simple instrument or matching management information systems; screen at jail or at court by prosecution, defense, judge/court staff or service providers
- Pre-trial Diversion: Maximize opportunities for pretrial release and assist defendants with mental illness in complying with conditions of pretrial diversion
- Service Linkage: Link to comprehensive services, including care coordination, access to medication, integrated dual disorder treatment (IDDT) as appropriate, prompt access to benefits, health care, and housing
- Court Feedback: Monitor progress with scheduled appearances (typically directly by court); promote communication and information sharing between non-specialty courts and service providers by establishing clear policies and procedures

**Intercept 3: Jails/Courts**
- Screening: Inform diversion opportunities and need for treatment in jail with screening information from Intercept 2
- Court Coordination: Maximize potential for diversion in a mental health court or non-specialty court
- Service Linkage: Link to comprehensive services, including care coordination, access to medication, IDDT as appropriate, prompt access to benefits, health care, and housing
- Court Feedback: Monitor progress with scheduled appearances (typically directly by court); promote communication and information sharing between non-specialty courts and service providers by establishing clear policies and procedures

**Intercept 4: Reentry**
- Screening: Ensure individuals under community supervision for mental illness and co-occurring substance use disorders link to necessary services
- Maintain a Community of Care: Connect individuals to employment, including supportive employment agencies; facilitate engagement in IDDT and supportive health services; link to housing; facilitate collaboration between community corrections and service providers; establish policies and procedures that promote communication and information sharing
- Implement a Supervision Strategy: Concentrate supervision immediately after release; adjust strategies as needed; change; implement specialized caseloads and cross-systems training
- Graduated Response & Modification of Conditions of Supervision: Ensure a range of options for community corrections officers to reinforce positive behavior and effectively address violations or noncompliance with conditions of release

**Intercept 5: Community corrections**
- Screening: Screen all individuals under community supervision for mental illness and co-occurring substance use disorders link to necessary services
FY 2017 Annual Board Retreat
County Commissioner’s Topic of Interest
Submitted by: Commissioner Dunlap

Topic of Interest: Park & Recreation Projects

1. How are the projects in the Park & Recreation Master Plan prioritized?

2. Explain the decision making process regarding the “slotting” of projects by fiscal years.

3. Explain the involvement of the Park & Recreation Advisory Board.

Response:
There are guiding principles that the Park & Recreation Department followed in 2007 to rank projects within categories and select projects from those categories in preparation for the bond package that should continue to be used. All of these projects were submitted for consideration after the recession. The process utilized by the Board of County Commissioners to rank projects resulted in the Park & Recreation projects not being completed in the priority order that was initially planned. The impact of this outcome was not as critical for the Park & Recreation Department in comparison to Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) and Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC). Consistency in the park and recreation prioritization process is important for credibility with all involved and most importantly the citizens.

Guiding Principles:

1. Make data driven decisions based on the master plan and current conditions: The 2008 Master Plan and the 2014 update are citizen driven with input from professional staff, advisory boards and the Park and Recreation Commission. The plan sets standards, identifies gaps in service and is comprehensive by covering all aspects of the park and recreation department.

2. Provide geo equitable distribution of projects: this guiding principle assist with filling gaps in services and facilities work to ensure projects are occurring in all three regions (North, Central and South) of the county.

3. Include projects in all categories based on priorities in the master plan: The plan identifies a clear list of needs so projects should fit those needs. Consider service gaps, completing phased projects, partnership opportunities and building on land banked properties.

4. Address deferred maintenance: All projects are not new. The master plan identifies and ranks maintenance and repair needs for all facility types so a reasonable funding allocation to address these needs is warranted.
The Park and Recreation Department utilize these four guiding principles during discussions with the Park and Recreation Commission; the six towns; and, our partners to select projects out of the following categories when funding is available:

1. Greenways
2. Parks – Regional; Community; Neighborhood; Park/School; and, Nature Preserves
3. Community Centers – new and expansion of existing facilities
4. Nature Centers
5. Aquatic Facilities
6. Specialized Facilities, Skate parks, sports plex, stadiums etc.
7. Deferred Maintenance – various projects

One remaining caveat for this next capital funding round is to complete the remaining projects in the 2008 Bond Issue. The projects approved in the 2008 Bond represents funding commitments to the citizens that we serve.
Topic of Interest: Barber Scotia College Student Housing

Explore a partnership with representatives/County leaders for Barber-Scotia College with the interest in creating a program that will house students from (Mecklenburg, Cabarrus, and Catawba) on its campus while educating them? The program would remove students/children from a socially challenged environment and place them in an environment that is focused on education while gaining exposure to college life (e.g., living in dormitories).

Response:
There continue to be significant challenges to executing the approach described above. The single largest, however, appears to be a conflict with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (MCV), most recently reauthorized by The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015. As defined in MCV, “homeless children and youth” are those who meet any of the following criteria:

- Awaiting foster care placement (to be deleted in December 2016)
- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or other similar reason (including those who are “doubled-up”)
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Abandoned in hospitals
- Having a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place neither designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings and
- Migrating children who qualify as homeless because they are living in any of the circumstances described above

The MCV legislation expressly prohibits segregating students and youth who meet the definition of homeless within the Act. This prohibition means that students who are covered by MCV may not be sent to a separate program within a school, let alone an entirely separate school, regardless of intent. Students who meet the MCV definition of “homeless” must receive a placement based on the “best interest” of the child. This usually means continuing the child’s education in his/her “school of origin” for the duration of homelessness. Another option is any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the homeless student is actually living are eligible to attend, with transportation provided. There is to be no separation from a mainstream school environment based on homelessness.
There are only four exceptions to this prohibition: Orange County, CA; San Diego County, CA; San Joaquin County, CA; and Maricopa County, AZ. Even if the proposed school was to broaden the potential base of students beyond those who meet the MCV definition of homelessness, other challenges remain.

Barber-Scotia College is a private school affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) and located in Concord, NC, outside of Mecklenburg County’s borders. In the 2015 fall semester, only 50 students were enrolled for the institution’s 148th year of operations. Barber-Scotia currently offers three programs: Religious Studies; Business; and Renewable Energy. In 2004, Barber-Scotia College was stripped of its accreditation by SACS (the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, now known as AdvancED). The college pursued accreditation with the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS), but failed to be accredited by TRACS within the five-year application period (now expired). Cabarrus County Schools (CCS), the K-12 district that serves the county in which Barber-Scotia is located, also is unaccredited. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) is AdvancED accredited, as are Hickory City and the Catawba County school districts, and it is unclear whether or how this proposed school would be accredited.

Much would likely depend on which district actually was the “district of record” for these students. As each Local Education Agency (LEA) is an entity of the state, and responsible for the education of students in a defined geography, it would appear that CCS would be the “home” for the students assigned to Barber-Scotia. This would require a school to be established by CCS on the Barber-Scotia campus, with a school ID to be granted by the state. Another option would be the establishment of a charter school, each of which is treated as an LEA, chartered to the state, and open all North Carolina students.

This highlights funding inequities between Catawba, Cabarrus and Mecklenburg counties, as each LEA would be forwarding their per-pupil local allotments to the proposed school based on actual enrollment. It would be unsurprising if more students from Cabarrus took advantage of the opportunity to attend classes on a college campus. The outcome would be a smaller budget for the proposed school than if it were populated by Mecklenburg County students alone.

Another potential point of contention could be management of the school. This is certainly not a reason not to proceed, but does illustrate the complexity of such an undertaking. Selecting the principal, teaching staff, and courses offered may cause unwelcome controversy. This could be exacerbated by the idea that Mecklenburg County tax dollars would be spent outside of the County’s borders, and the perception that these funds are supporting a private, religiously affiliated institution. Creating a private K-12 school to accomplish these goals is an option that would require no financial support from Mecklenburg County.

Additionally, the City of Concord has demolished two dormitory facilities on the Barber-Scotia campus due to their advanced state of disrepair; this calls into question the school’s ability to house the students of the proposed school. Kennedy Charter, a K-12 public school, is currently on the Johnson C. Smith University campus in Charlotte. While Kennedy Charter is affiliated with the Elon Homes for Children, the school does not offer student residences. Kennedy Charter was recommended for non-renewal of its charter by the North Carolina Charter School Advisory Board. This recommendation will be reviewed by, and voted upon, by the North Carolina State Board of Education in February 2016.
CMS also has no options for student housing, but provides magnet schools in which students attend classes on Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) campuses and at the University of North Carolina – Charlotte as early as their freshman year of high school. Exploring opportunities to make investments of this type within Mecklenburg County would appear to be necessary before pursuing a partnership such as this, regardless of the merits of the proposal.

Lastly, it was recently announced that Barber Scotia has cancelled its spring semester courses. According the announcement, Barber Scotia intend to resume its classes in the fall of 2016.
Topic of Interest: Childcare and Pre-Kindergarten Financial Assistance

Explore the option of providing childcare and pre-kindergarten financial assistance to low-income families with children that are performing well academically?

Commissioner Leake’s understanding of the criteria for childcare and pre-k financial assistance is that only children that are from low-income families with low academic performing children qualify for child care and pre-kindergarten financial assistance. Commissioner Leake views this practice as “penalizing” low-income families that have young children that perform well academically (i.e., spell their name, recite their alphabets). Commissioner Leake would like the County to provide childcare and pre-kindergarten financial assistance for low income families, regardless of the academic level of the child. {This question is similar to Commissioner Leake’s inquiry from the 2015 Board Retreat regarding child care vouchers}

Response:
Academic progress of the child is not a condition of eligibility for any Child Care assistance programs provided through the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services (DSS). Child Care and Pre-kindergarten financial assistance for low income families is currently provided with no regard of the academic level of the child.

Regarding eligibility for other Child Care programs provided in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area, academic progress of the child is not a condition of eligibility for any of the following Child Care assistance programs: (Child Care Subsidy, Smart Start, NC Pre-K, or Bright Beginnings). Eligibility criteria for each specific programs is as follows:

Child Care Subsidy is provided for individuals who qualify solely on the basis of income eligibility. Academic progress of the child is not a condition of eligibility. There are some exceptions in which the service is available without regard to income such as:

- Children who receive child care services in response to an identified need during a Child Protective Services Investigation or Foster Care case;
- Children who need child care services and meet eligibility criteria for child welfare services;
- Children receiving foster care services who are in the custody of a county department of social services (DSS) and have been placed either with an adult other than their parents or in a licensed foster home.

Child care costs vary per child and per the quality of the facility they attend. The demand for Child Care Subsidies is greater than the current supply; thus each County is responsible for establishing priorities for services. Because the demand is so high, the current allocation only serves existing families, as well as any new referrals based on the top two categories (Child Protective Services and Employment).
**Smart Start** provides child care services to working poor families and other teen parents whose children are 0-5 years of age and are not eligible to enroll in kindergarten. Additionally, Smart Start funds provide subsidy support to specific recipients of Smart Start designated programs. Smart Start subsidy funds are restricted to purchasing care in 4- and 5-star licensed child care programs. Academic progress of the child is not a condition of eligibility. Families must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Families with income less than or equal to 200% of Federal Poverty Level by family size, and,
- Families who have an employment, high school education or post-secondary education need.

**Bright Beginnings** (Title I) eligibility is based on educational need – early childhood screening (gross motor, fine motor, cognitive, counting and language skills), a parent interview, a parent survey, and observations by the screener are used to determine the educational need. Children who demonstrate the greatest need are ranked highest and placed first. Academic progress of the child is not a condition of eligibility.

**NC Pre-K** requires the child to be 4 years old on or before August 31 of the program year. A child that meets the age requirement is eligible for NC Pre-K if the child is from a family whose gross income is at or below 75% of the State Median Income.

- The TANF level does not impact eligibility for NC Pre-K -- but it must be tracked. However the TANF level does help with the secondary criteria for Title I – to determine which child should be placed first if both have the same educational need.

Academic progress of the child is not a condition of eligibility.

**Early Head Start/Head Start** Eligibility requirements are as follows:

- Early Head Start, except when the child is transitioning to Head Start, requires that a child must be an infant or a toddler younger than three-years old. A pregnant woman may be any age. For Head Start, a child must be at least three years old, or turn three years old by the date used to determine eligibility for public school in the community in which the Head Start program is located; and, not be older than compulsory school age. For Migrant or Seasonal Head Start, a child must be younger than compulsory school age by the date used to determine public school eligibility for the community in which the program is located.

- Income eligibility requirements are as follows:
  - A pregnant woman or a child is eligible, if the family’s income is equal to or below the poverty line; or, in the absence of child care, would be potentially eligible for public assistance. If the family’s income is above the poverty line, a program may enroll a pregnant woman or a child who would benefit from services.

Academic progress of the child is not a condition of eligibility.
FY 2017 Annual Board Retreat
County Commissioner’s Topic of Interest
Submitted by: Commissioner Leake

Topic of Interest: Prescription Drugs and Transportation for Seniors

Please provide the funding amount allocated for transportation and prescription drugs for seniors. In addition, scenarios are requested of various funding increases for transportation and prescription drugs for seniors that summarizes the financial impact. For example, an additional $1 million will provide transportation services for (X) seniors and cover ($X) in prescription cost.

Response – Prescription Drugs:
Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services (DSS) has budgeted funding of $7,000 available to assist eligible individuals with medical supplies and medication needs. Customers in need of this assistance must have previously applied for Medicaid and have been denied or eligibility is pending. Requests for individuals who have active Medicaid cases (authorized or certified status) will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for assistance in emergency or crisis situations. Funds are distributed based upon resident need; no funding is set aside solely for seniors.

In many instances, MedAssist referrals are completed after determining whether or not the needed prescription is available through MedAssist. DSS staff will provide the MedAssist application to the customer and advise what information they need to take with them. If MedAssist does not carry the medication, the customer is not able to purchase the medication and the medication is for a life-threatening condition (high blood pressure, antibiotics, diabetes, etc.), DSS staff will work with local pharmacies to secure the best pricing for the medication. The pharmacist/vendor will verify the expense of a maximum 30-day supply of medication for the customer.

Q: How many persons could we assist with additional funding?

A: This is difficult to project for three reasons. First, the type of medicine needed per client varies. Second, the per client medicine cost varies. Third, reimbursement provided by DSS to MedAssist is at cost (which is drastically cheaper) for purchasing the medication, versus if we use another pharmacist/vendor where the County would be required to pay the full retail value. Below, is an estimate based on total FY2015 spend, divided by the number of customer served, based on incremental funding increase:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY2015</th>
<th>Additional Customers Served via Additional Funds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Customers</td>
<td>Funds Spent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>311</td>
<td>$5,329</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# of clients served
Response – Transportation:
While transportation services for seniors is currently provided through Medicaid or North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) grant funding, such services are coincidental to the seniors’ qualifications for eligibility, and trip purposes are limited to those allowed by the funding source (almost exclusively to medical providers). The only funding dedicated solely to seniors in Mecklenburg County for the purposes of medical, pharmacy, grocery shopping, senior centers, paid employment, and community recreation facilities is Elderly General Purpose (EGP) transportation, funded through local ½ cent sales tax. The Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) allocates approximately $112,000 to DSS annually for the EGP program. This program has served 85 customers FY16 to date but has been closed to new customers for several years. Increased funding would provide additional transportation for seniors as follows:

Transportation—based on a year-to-date average (vendor) one-way trip cost of $18.50 (including ambulatory and wheelchair), on an average miles/trip of 7.6:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Funding</th>
<th>Number of new customers @ 1 round trip/week for six months</th>
<th>Number of new customers @ 1 round trip/week for 1 year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
<td>1,126</td>
<td>563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2,000,000</td>
<td>2,252</td>
<td>1,126</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FY 2017 Annual Board Retreat
County Commissioner’s Topic of Interest
Submitted by: Commissioner Leake

Topic of Interest: Apprenticeship Program

Explore the option, including cost, of creating a County apprenticeship program for 500-1,000 “at-risk” teenagers ages 14-18. In addition, companies that receive funding via the Business Investment Grants (BIG) should be required to hire teenagers that participate in the apprenticeship program?

Response:

Current Programs

The County provides and/or participates in a number of programs designed to provide opportunities for young people in “at risk” environments. Below is a summary of each program:

- **Recreation Employment Corps**
  Established by Park and Recreation in 2012, this program is a 40-week job training program for teens ages 14-17. The teens are selected from the communities surrounding recreation centers and they are paired with a full time Park and Recreation employee who serves as their mentor. The program offers basic job training, life skills, and provides an overview of the Park and Recreation field as a possible career. The teens primarily assist with customer service, programs, events and recreation center operations. In 2016, a total of 43 teens will be hired for the program. Current budgeting and available staffing resources allow them to work 10 hours per week earning $7.25 per hour.

- **Mayors Youth Employment Program**
  The goal of the Mayor’s Youth Employment Program (MYEP) is “to improve neighborhood quality of life through a community engagement strategy that ensures children are safe, succeeding in school, and supported by their community.” Students must be 16 years of age at the time of application. MYEP participants are motivated high school students recommended to the Program by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Career Development Coordinators who refer from all campuses. Students referred may include those associated with various community partners, such as Communities In Schools and Right Moves For Youth. MYEP participants receive job mentoring, coaching and valuable hands-on experience in a County department.

  In 2015, the County had 83 MYEP interns in 11 County departments. The internships paid $8.00 per hour and averaged about 20 hours per week, for 8 weeks.
**Library Volunteer Program**
The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library regularly utilizes Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) students as volunteers in the Library. The Library offers a specialized *Teen Summer Volunteer Program* designed to provide workforce development skills for teens within the context of volunteering. Well-trained teen volunteers are often as effective as adult volunteers.

Last summer, 134 teens participated in the program and they were trained, supervised and evaluated. The teens volunteer at the Library location most convenient for them (most within their own communities).

Based on the success of the existing summer teen volunteer program and heavy demand for additional opportunities from teens around the County, the Library is working on a plan to expand the program into non-summer months. This will expand the cadre of teen volunteers well beyond current numbers.

In addition, the Library provides teens with the opportunity to complete CMS community service hours by volunteering. In FY2015, 134 teens, aged 13-18, completed over 6,100 volunteer hours.

**Community Partnerships**

- **Goodwill Industries**
  Mecklenburg County Talent Acquisition staff currently partners with Goodworks (the job placement division of Goodwill Industries) to identify potential applicants for entry level opportunities as Case Managers with the Department of Social Services. In January, the program will expand to include entry level positions at the Child Support Enforcement agency. Goodwill also offers a mentoring/job training program for teens called the *Career Leadership Academy for Youth (CLAY)*. County Talent Acquisition staff is currently exploring opportunities to partner with this program.

- **Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC)**
  Mecklenburg County Talent Acquisition staff currently partners with Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) to administer the Veteran’s Apprentice Program with the Land Use and Environmental Services Agency (LUESA). Talent Acquisition staff is currently gathering information from CPCC regarding partnership in a teen-oriented apprenticeship program.

- **Mecklenburg EMS Agency (Medic)**
  Medic leadership is interested in creating a program to assist recent high school graduates in developing the skills needed for career as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). Applicants would need to demonstrate a passion for helping people and an interest in the medical field. Interviews would be competency-based to ensure a good fit between the applicant and the organization. Training to become an EMT would occur both in the classroom and on the job; a provisional offer of employment could occur after obtaining state certification as an EMT. Additional work is needed to determine the feasibility of this program, the community partnerships needed to launch the program, the anticipated enrollment, cost to provide the training, and expected impacts on Medic.
**Current Costs**

Below is a summary of the current costs of the programs associated with opportunities the County currently offers to teens.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name</th>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>Number of Hours Per Week</th>
<th>Number of Weeks</th>
<th>Hourly Rate</th>
<th>Total Hours Worked (approx.)</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>FICA (7.65%)</th>
<th>Current Cost (Approx.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recreation Employment Corps</td>
<td>14-17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>$7.25</td>
<td>17,200</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>$9,540</td>
<td>$134,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MYEP*</td>
<td>16-18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$8.00</td>
<td>13,280</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>$8,127</td>
<td>$114,367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Programs</td>
<td>13-18</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>6,100</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>36,580</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>$17,667</td>
<td>$248,607</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The City currently reimburses 25% of the County’s cost.

**Program Expansion**

Additional research must be completed to determine how best to expand existing programs. As noted above, the County already partners with CPCC, Goodworks and Medic and each organization has expressed interest in offering support (in different ways) to assist in the development of programs to provide job training for teens.

In addition, there are a number of community resources that provide job training for teens (many of whom are in at-risk environments). For example, Communities In Schools, Right Moves for Youth and Youth Business Connector all provide similar services. Staff is currently contacting these organizations and others to identify additional opportunities for partnership and collaboration via internships, apprenticeships and volunteer opportunities for at-risk teens.

**Expansion Costs (Approximate)**

Given the County’s normal operations of 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, many teens are unable to work during regular school hours. As a result, any expansion of existing programs would focus on summer employment (similar to MYEP) so that program participants could spend more time at work, learning jobs that they would not normally be exposed to. If the County were able to expand existing programs or offer additional programs similar in nature to those already in place, below is a high level estimate of potential costs. These costs are based primarily on work during the summer months of June, July, and August. There are two options. The first option would add 500 positions and the second would add 700. The hourly rate of $8.00 per hour is consistent with the rate offered to MYEP interns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Number of Teens</th>
<th>Number of Hours Per Week</th>
<th>Hourly Rate</th>
<th>Number of Weeks</th>
<th>FICA (7.65%)</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$8.00</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>$73,440</td>
<td>$1,033,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$8.00</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$68,544</td>
<td>$964,544</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional Staffing Resources

County staff currently experiences periods of peak demand when filling existing positions at Park & Recreation and the MYEP program. Additional expansion of volunteer, intern or apprenticeship programs would require the Human Resources Department to hire a Volunteer Coordinator as a dedicated resource to manage the increased volume associated with coordination with departments, paperwork completion, background checks, job placement locations, and interventions for inappropriate matches. The position would most likely be classified as a Volunteer Coordinator with a market rate of $45,430 annually and a total compensation cost of approximately $61,300.

During non-peak months, this position would partner and collaborate with community organizations to identify opportunities for at-risk teens with the County or in the community. In addition, this position would work to improve or expand existing County programs by developing additional job development opportunities for youth. The position would also design programs that develop applicant pipelines for hard to fill positions or positions with frequent vacancies (ex. Code Inspectors and Human Services Specialists).

Business Investment Program Grant Recipient Participation

Business Investment Program [BIP] grant recipients are encouraged to become actively engaged with the Mecklenburg County community through various forms of outreach which could be expanded to include hiring apprentices. However, the BIP is a “but-for” program in which a company certifies that the incentive is the deciding factor for locating in Mecklenburg. Requiring additional expenditures by the recipients to accommodate an apprenticeship program will negate the benefits of the grant and place Mecklenburg County in an uncompetitive position to attract jobs. Any requirement to accommodate apprenticeships will require additional resources and staffing to ensure it does not negatively impact the overall program.

Economic Development staff will evaluate the potential number and types of apprenticeships that could be made available to Mecklenburg youth through the BIP program. This will include any funding needed to pay wages for the apprentices and if any new staffing would be required for the program.
Topic of Interest: Homelessness Update

1. What progress has been made regarding homelessness services?
2. How many homeless residents are in housing?
3. How many homeless residents have jobs and/or being trained to perform in the new jobs that have come to Mecklenburg County in 2014-15?

Response:

Background

Community Support Services (CSS) is the County’s lead department for homeless services and the many agency collaborations needed to understand homelessness in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, and to identify the resources and innovative solutions to end and prevent homelessness.

The following information details specific programs and services provided by the CSS Homeless Services Division, services provided through contract agencies, and community partner-driven initiatives and collaborations around homelessness.

Progress in the Past Year

**Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Our Heroes (Community Initiative to End Veteran Homelessness):**
The County participates in the leadership of Housing Our Heroes and partners with the City of Charlotte, the Veterans Administration, non-profits, and local business representatives. To date, 342 formerly homeless veterans have been housed since the initiative began in July 2014. Approximately 40 veterans are still in need of housing. The Housing Our Heroes Implementation Team continues to work toward ending veteran homelessness in the community.

**Housing First-Charlotte Mecklenburg:**
The County participates in the leadership of Housing First-Charlotte Mecklenburg along with the City of Charlotte, non-profits, the shelters, Charlotte Center City Partners, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, and others. The goal is to end Chronic Homelessness by December 31, 2016. To date, 197 chronically homeless individuals have been housed since February 1, 2015. It is estimated that there are over 400 chronically homeless persons still in need of permanent housing.
Coordinated Assessment (CA):
Since May 2014, Charlotte-Mecklenburg has operated a coordinated assessment system, a best practice intervention to target scarce resources for individuals and families impacted by homelessness. Approximately 400 people per month are assessed. Typically, three-fourths are new assessments and one-fourth of assessments are individuals being re-assessed because of changes in their situation. Approximately 350 people are referred to emergency shelter monthly. Documented housing placements hover between 50 and 60 monthly, but this is probably an undercount, because comprehensive information is not yet being received.

CA also seeks to divert new entries to emergency shelter through a diversion program. During a pilot program, the approximate cost of diversion per household totaled $230, and 99 households were diverted. Very few households returned to shelter after the pilot. Given that the average length of stay at the Salvation Army Center of Hope is 39 days, and the cost of one night of stay is estimated at $20, the average cost of a shelter stay is estimated at $780. Diversion appears to be a lower cost alternative.

CA has an effective process for prioritizing chronically homeless individuals and placing them in supportive housing. CA is currently working with Corporation for Supportive Housing to design a parallel system for families requiring rapid rehousing. This process has involved meetings with funders/stakeholders, and results are expected by spring 2016.

Shelter Plus Care:
The County administers the federal Housing and Urban Development Shelter Plus Care grant to provide permanent supportive housing to formerly chronically homeless individuals and families with disabilities. The housing number under SPC is currently 238.

- Employment data: Because the population is disabled, few are able to achieve and sustain employment. Currently, 19 clients are employed; 18 clients are in supportive employment with Promise Resource Network, a non-profit partner, and one client is in a paid job training program.

Moore Place:
The County provides the social work staffing for Moore Place, which is operated by the Urban Ministry Center and houses 85 formerly chronically homeless clients. It is expanding to an additional 35 beds in 2016.

- Employment data: Two residents of Moore Place are regularly employed. One person is intermittently employed. Five residents have had job training at Goodwill. Two residents have trained for Peer Support Specialists. Two residents are taking college classes to prepare for future employment. Three residents do volunteer work regularly.

MeckFUSE:
Based on a national best practice, the MeckFUSE program offers housing and supportive services to 45 frequent users of the jail and shelter systems. All of the participants also have physical and/or behavioral health needs. Preliminary results show that after one year in MeckFUSE participants have reduced their number of arrests and jail stays as well as their usage of other public systems. For example, the average number of hospital visits per participant was ten in the year before entry into FUSE, and two in the year after entry.
FUSE uses master-leasing, an approach under which the provider of supportive services signs the lease, rather than the tenant, as a means to more rapidly house difficult to house persons. FUSE stands for Frequent Users Systems Engagement. Funded by Mecklenburg County, the program is administered by the County’s Community Support Services Department, and is operated by Urban Ministry Center.

- **Employment data:** Many MeckFUSE participants have identified income, employment, and job skills training as primary goals for them upon admission to the program. MeckFUSE staff responded to this request by assisting their efforts and developing ways to help them meet their goals. Prior to Urban Ministry Center HousingWorks hiring a SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery) specialist to assist with social security (SS) benefit applications, MeckFUSE staff assisted participants by working with them to submit a computerized SS benefits application and then connected them with lawyers who specialize in disability benefits if the initial application was denied. This is still a possibility, but most participants have chosen to work with the in–house SOAR specialist.

Participants have been linked to Jacob’s Ladder for job training and job placement, and also benefited from a HousingWorks-developed agreement with Goodwill Industries that includes Goodwill staff completing monthly orientations and job training interviews at Moore Place. MeckFUSE staff referred participants to Grace-Mar Services, a local program that assists with job placement for eligible clients. Recently, through building relationships with TCA staffing and Select staffing, work is being done to develop pathways to sustained employment. Those partnerships are pending currently with no job placements at this time, but placement opportunities are anticipated.

- 4 MeckFUSE participants are currently employed. Four additional participants have worked in permanent job roles this year.
- 15 participants are actively seeking part time or full time employment. Some of those seeking work have SS benefits, so they have to work very limited hours.
- 17 participants are receiving SS disability payments.
- 10 participants have pending SS disability payment applications. One has an application that will be submitted by CMC Hospital staff.
- 2 participants are receiving SS retirement benefits.

**Scattered Site Housing** (reported by Urban Ministry Center)

- **Employment data:**
  - 2 people are employed.
  - 2 people have worked intermittently but not maintained employment.
  - 2 people have earned money selling art at Urban Ministry Center art shows but have not otherwise been employed.
  - 1 person had been involved in job training through Goodwill.
  - 1 person had been involved in classes at CPCC with the intention of obtaining future employment.
Housing Stability and Supportive Services Partnership Fund:
CSS has awarded $2,320,109 in funding to six agencies since the fund was established. Households served through this collaborative partnership total 281, including 33 new households served through the most recent award.

The second year of this collaborative partnership yielded two successful Requests for Proposals through which four agencies received supportive services funding. These funds, joined for the first time with subsidy assistance through the Foundation for the Carolinas and the City of Charlotte Emergency Solution Grants, provide supportive housing to 118 homeless families and individuals.

In addition, CSS contracted with Urban Ministry Center to provide supportive services to homeless individuals who receive housing subsidies through the Charlotte Housing Authority.

Contracts with CSS vendors
- Salvation Army Center of Hope:
  - Added 62 Shelter Beds to partially relieve over-crowding
  - An evaluation of the Rapid Rehousing Program, conducted by the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute, found that 58 percent of the participants were employed either part-time or full-time.
  - 75 percent of clients were re-housed within four months of entering the Shelter
  - A majority of the clients received subsidy for three months or less
  - Ten percent of clients returned to shelter

- Men’s Shelter of Charlotte: In FY 15
  - 1702 unduplicated individuals were served.
  - 197 clients increased their income through employment and/or benefits.
  - 450 moved to more appropriate housing.

Focus on Data: CSS hired two management analyst positions to improve data quality and guide decision-making. One is the Homeless Management Information System Administrator who is assessing data accuracy, quality and timeliness. The other is the Housing and Homeless Research Analyst who will design a dashboard that will track key indicators requested by the Housing Advisory Board of Charlotte-Mecklenburg and the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The County funded a series of reports on homelessness prepared by the UNC Urban Institute, and as lead department, Community Support Services will continue to fund the series in 2016. The reports, which are initiated by the Housing Advisory Board of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, include the annual Point-In-Time Count, a snapshot of homelessness in Charlotte-Mecklenburg gathered on one day in January, and a Cumulative Estimates of Homelessness Report.
Some data points include:

- In order to afford a two-bedroom apartment at fair market rent in Mecklenburg County, a full-time, (40-hour per week) earner must earn at least $15.98 per hour. A person making minimum wage must work approximately 88 hours per week to afford a two-bedroom unit (Housing Instability in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, 2015).

- As of January 2015, there are 31,723 household applicants on the Charlotte Housing Authority Housing Choice Voucher Waiting List. Seventy-one percent of these households applying for assistance with housing are extremely low income and the average median household income for all households is $10,000. Only 200-240 vouchers become available each year for housing assistance. (Characteristics of Charlotte Housing Authority’s Housing Choice Voucher Waiting List, 2015).

- Forty-six percent of renter households were cost burdened (paying more than 30 percent of their gross income to housing costs) in Mecklenburg County in 2013. (Housing Instability in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, 2015).

**Business Investment Grants and Homelessness**

The Economic Development Office is not currently engaged with any job training efforts. The Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners Economic Development (ED) Committee will be developing a workforce development strategy in the first half of 2016. Connecting the homeless to jobs and job readiness may be considered as a part of that strategy with the ED Committee considering resources and funding needed to help support the strategy element.

**Conclusion**

The County's efforts to end and prevent homelessness in Charlotte-Mecklenburg include several robust programs and services within the Community Support Services Department and among several key community partners. Two major initiatives underway -- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Our Heroes, work to end veteran homelessness; and Housing First Charlotte-Mecklenburg, the effort to end chronic homelessness -- include the County in significant leadership and staff participation. In addition, CSS is the department liaison for the BOCC and Charlotte City Council appointed Housing Advisory Board of Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

With the County's adoption of the housing first approach, and its leadership and staffing of the community-wide Coordinated Assessment system to better identify available shelter and housing resources for the homeless, the County's role in combatting homelessness is increased. Because housing first as an approach to homelessness works best with supportive services, help with employment opportunities for individuals and families is key. Increased economic stability is an aim of the housing first approach.

In addition, successful contract partnerships and collaborations with community agencies give the County needed support in understanding the needs around homelessness and tackling the solutions and innovative best practices that will most benefit our customers.
Topic of Interest: **Net Job Growth**

How many jobs have been created in Mecklenburg County over the last three years?

**Response:**
Based on data from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) published by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Mecklenburg County has seen a strong net increase in job growth in recent years. The chart below shows cumulative monthly job growth for Mecklenburg County and other large counties in North Carolina. Mecklenburg County gained 6,907 jobs in the first half of calendar year 2015, and 75,516 jobs since June 2012. As seen in the table below, from June 2014 to June 2015, the US job growth percent change was 2.0% compared to 4.7% for Mecklenburg County, which was the 13th highest percent increase in the nation at the county level.

Data from the QCEW excludes self-employed workers, most agricultural workers on small farms, members of the Armed Forces, elected officials in most states, most employees of railroads, some domestic workers, most student workers at schools, and employees of certain small nonprofit organizations.
### Employment by Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic of Interest: Unemployment Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the unemployment rate for Mecklenburg County over the last three years?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Response</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on data from the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) published by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Mecklenburg County has seen a 3.1 percentage point decrease in the unemployment rate since November 2012. The chart below shows the trend in the unemployment rate for Mecklenburg County and Wake County.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Employment and Average Weekly Wage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>9,575,250</td>
<td>140,594,927</td>
<td>2.0%*</td>
<td>$968</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mecklenburg County, NC</td>
<td>35,065</td>
<td>637,319</td>
<td>4.7%*</td>
<td>1,082</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Industry</td>
<td>34,465</td>
<td>567,047</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>1,091</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural resources and mining</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>982</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>2,612</td>
<td>30,678</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>1,115</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>1,013</td>
<td>32,968</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>1,288</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade, transportation, and utilities</td>
<td>7,513</td>
<td>131,505</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>21,785</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>1,548</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial activities</td>
<td>4,486</td>
<td>68,527</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>1,695</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and business services</td>
<td>8,797</td>
<td>131,446</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>1,292</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and health services</td>
<td>3,184</td>
<td>58,771</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure and hospitality</td>
<td>3,112</td>
<td>74,900</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
<td>3,039</td>
<td>15,485</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>70,272</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>1,020</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percent changes are calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics using an adjusted version of the final 2014 quarterly data as the base data.*

---

### Unemployment Rate, Unadjusted

![Unemployment Rate Chart](chart.png)
Topic of Interest: Improving Employment

What can Mecklenburg County do over the next (3) years to move the dial to ensure a steady increase in the creation of new jobs and decrease in the unemployment rate?

Response

The Economic Development Department is guiding the Board and Economic Development Committee through the process of developing a comprehensive strategy to address job creation through the following areas:

1. Enhanced job attraction and retention efforts
2. Workforce development strategies
3. Small business creation & support strategies
4. Building strong communities connected to employment centers
5. Using County resource to enhance and grow tourism economy.

These strategies when fully implemented will help grow the number of jobs offered and the number of enterprises offering jobs in the County as well as helping prepare Mecklenburg residents to access those jobs.