



Legislation Text

File #: 16-263, **Version:** 1

TITLE:

Report on Human Services Assessment

PURPOSE: To provide background information for board discussion on existing human services, identify gaps in services, and what are the greatest needs.

DEPARTMENT: Economic and Community Development

CONTACT INFORMATION: Annette D. Stone, AICP Economic and Community Development
Director

INFORMATION: Staff was asked to look into the Human Services systems in place in Orange County and to identify any gaps in services that might exist. Orange County, Chapel Hill and Carrboro annually collaborate to provide funding to the many non-profits that help provide vital programs for human service needs throughout the community. Last year, over \$1.7 million was awarded to non-profits in Orange County who serve the youth, elderly, disabled and disadvantaged members of our community. One of the first steps in identifying gaps is determining what the greatest needs are.

Staff members from Carrboro, Chapel Hill and Orange County, along with Human Service Advisory Board members and members from the Third Sector have been working to this summer to streamline the application process for human services funding. A copy of the draft application is attached (Attachment A). The application requires applicants to explain how the program supports the goals of the respective elected board. Included in the application, applicants must identify which human service needs are being met and for what populations with the programs proposed. In 2012, Chapel Hill worked with the UNC School of Government to develop a Human Service Needs Assessment (Attachment B). This report lays out the priority funding areas; Affordable Housing, Affordable Healthcare, Education, Family Resources, Jobs/Jobs Training, Food and Transportation. The report is being updated this year as a Capstone Student project and will be expanded to include Carrboro. That report is due to be completed December 2016.

Carrboro staff with the assistance of UNC graduate student, Griffen Rice, conducted interviews and collected surveys from nonprofits and Carrboro business owners. Attached is a matrix of interviews that were conducted (Attachment C) and surveys that were distributed to both non-profits (Attachment D) and the Carrboro business community (Attachment E) in an effort to identify gaps. A frequent comment is the need for public restrooms, which the Town is planning on providing in the newly renovated Town Commons. Another survey suggested adult day centers that could provide a variety of services from health and wellness education to job training to life skills building and other therapeutic activities similar to programs such as the Farm at Penny Lane, Art Therapy Institute and Club Nova.

The Farm at Penny Lane is located on 40 acres in northern Chatham County. The program uses a holistic and sustainable approach to enhance the quality of life for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness by offering opportunities to become healthier and more self-sufficient. The farm is in development and currently

includes a community garden, a greenhouse, an apiary with nine beehives, a flock of heritage-breed chickens, and a walking trail. A group of Carrboro, Chapel Hill and Orange County officials toured the facility on August 12th to learn more about the program including the tiny houses planned for construction.

The Art Therapy Institute (ATI) is an organization of mental health professionals dedicated to the healing power of the arts. They provide clinical art therapy services to diverse populations, empowering clients to develop their identities through the art-making process. They also offer training to allied professionals and seek to raise awareness in the general community the benefits of arts-based therapy.

Club Nova is designed to serve individuals who have been diagnosed with mental illness such as schizophrenia or bi-polar disorders. The Clubhouse provides a variety of services such as assistance with housing, support in furthering education for vocational or personal enrichment, social and relationship building opportunities. These types of adult day centers can provide life enriching opportunities that extend beyond basic life sustaining needs of food and shelter.

Providing for those with mental and physical disabilities, the most vulnerable including children and the elderly, and other disadvantaged members of our community is a high priority for the Town of Carrboro. Carrboro spends more per capita to provide human services than Orange County or Chapel Hill. Funding programs that meet the greatest needs and identifying gaps should be an on-going process for the Town.

FISCAL & STAFF IMPACT: No additional fiscal impacts at this time.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the Board discuss the report.