

## **MEMORANDUM**

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Human Services Advisory Board  
Glenn Gerding, Chair

SUBJECT: 2010 Human Services Needs Report

DATE: January 11, 2010

### **INTRODUCTION**

Each year the Human Services Advisory Board presents a report to advise the Town Council on human service needs for Chapel Hill residents.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Chapel Hill Human Services Advisory Board is charged with the responsibility of assessing human service needs of Chapel Hill residents, identifying service gaps and ways to fill them, and advising the Town Council on funding needs at the beginning of the budget cycle.

Each year, the Board facilitates a request for proposals process and invites local human service agencies to apply for Town funds to serve Chapel Hill residents. The Board reviews agency proposals and prepares recommendations to the Town Council on funding levels for local human service agencies.

For fiscal year 2009-10, the Council approved Town allocations totaling \$357,900 for 46 non-profit agencies to address human service needs.

### **DISCUSSION**

The Board recognizes that current economic conditions create challenges for the Town in the upcoming budget season. Many of our residents are experiencing increased difficulty as well. The typically underserved and low income residents have an even greater need for access to human service programs during this time. Board members believe that reductions in federal and state funding continue to impact the nonprofit agencies serving the Town's vulnerable residents. In addition to the services they provide, the agencies also provide employment for a number of our residents. We urge the Town Council to assist these groups as much as possible as municipal funds are often the last refuge for many agencies and their clients.

On October 27, 2008 the Town Council accepted a recommendation to consolidate the process by which outside agencies seeking Town support are reviewed. As a result, the Board reviewed applications from several human service agencies previously funded directly in the Town budget. The agencies included Joint Orange Chatham Community

Action, Orange County Department on Aging, Retired Senior Volunteer Program and Friends of the Seymour Center. The Board requested and received a transfer of \$107,900 in funds previously linked to these agencies into the human services budget. The Board requests that these funds remain in the budget as we anticipate continuing to receive requests from these additional agencies. In addition to the four transferred agencies, the Board also received funding proposals from five other programs that had not sought Town support in recent years. In the view of the Board, this increase in demand reflects the needs of the community. Agencies providing services for substance abuse treatment, housing and senior citizens were among the new applicants.

The Board recommends that programs that support those residents most likely to be affected by the current economic conditions and high cost of living be given priority this year. We continue to support the Town's participation with the Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness and will review favorably programs that are consistent with the goals of preventing and ending homelessness. The Board is also concerned about the uncertain future of services for Latino residents in Orange County. El Centro Latino, which has been serving Latino residents for ten years, closed its doors in December due to lack of funds. The Spanish-speaking community is estimated to make up about 6 per cent of Orange County's population. The Board will continue to monitor planning for these services and will support efforts to fill this gap. The Board has reviewed the report from the Mayor's Mental Health Task Force and we anticipate that mental health services will remain a priority in our community. Programs that address these needs will continue to require resources from a variety of sources including the Town.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2010-2011**

The Board continues to recommend allocations to those agencies that can effectively address:

- at-risk youth programs
- mental health services
- self-sufficiency programs
- programs that are aligned with the efforts to address homelessness
- programs focused on the Chapel Hill-Carrboro public housing and low income communities

The Board will review agency proposals based on documented needs, agency capacity, program goals and the evaluation of outcomes for Chapel Hill residents.

#### 2009-10 Human Services Advisory Board members

Glenn Gerding, Chair

Lew Borman, Vice-Chair

Chandra Banner

Barbara Hall

Pat Richardson

William Powers

Rolin Mainuddin