



CHILD CARE AND LEARNING CENTER: RAPPAHANOCK COUNTY COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT & EXPANSION OPPORTUNITIES

Mary Bissell, Tiffany Allen & Anne Holton
February 13, 2019

LISTEN TO THE MUSTN'TS

Listen to the MUSTN'TS, child,
Listen to the DON'TS
Listen to the SHOULDN'TS
The IMPOSSIBLES, the WON'TS
Listen to the NEVER HAVES
Then listen close to me—
Anything can happen, child,
ANYTHING can be.

Shel Silverstein



INTRODUCTION



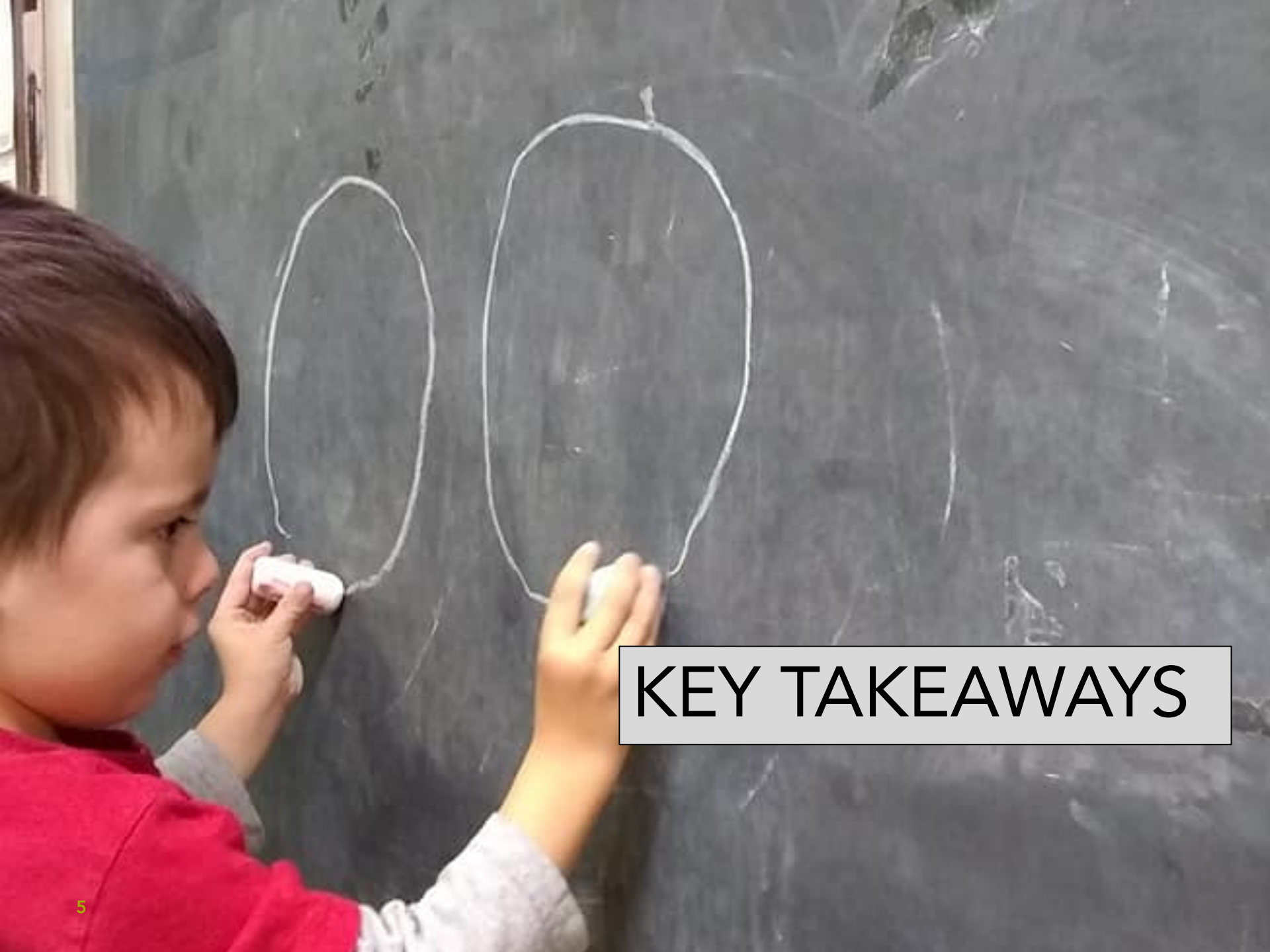
PRESENTATION OUTLINE

ChildFocus


February 13, 2019

- ▶ Key Takeaways
- ▶ Project Overview
- ▶ Community Assessment: Key Findings
- ▶ Recommendations and Next Steps





KEY TAKEAWAYS



There is no power for
change that is greater than
a community discovering
what it cares about.

Margaret Wheatley

Photo: Cameron Harrington

KEY TAKEAWAYS: COMMUNITY

- Rappahannock County is a **vibrant and cohesive rural community** with **strong roots and deeply held values**.
- *Community* is highly valued, but there are diverse, **sometimes conflicting viewpoints on the role of government, private entities, and families** in determining community directions and providing services.
- “Place” plays a central role in individual and community self-identity: **change can be perceived as a fundamental threat to “the way of life”** residents value most.



Rappahannock has one of the largest wealth gaps of any U.S. county. If you're poor, the supports just aren't here to get you to the middle class.

Community Service Provider



KEY TAKEAWAYS: COMMUNITY

- ▶ The gulf between the haves and have nots and the **"been here's"** and **"come here's"** is pervasive; there is significant **distrust of "outsiders"** and **the government**.
- ▶ Even with the most impressive array of community services, a **strong culture of "pride and independence"** and **"distrust of helpers"** may make it difficult to convince some families to seek out support even when it is offered.
- ▶ Increased attention is needed to **coordinate the efforts of the county government, private social service providers and the faith community** and **create a true coalition** to maximize community resources (mixed delivery grant coalition could be a strong base).

There is sometimes a lot of energy about what can we can all do to make things better. But there are a lot of people who don't think change is better at all.

Community Volunteer

KEY TAKEAWAYS: COMMUNITY

- Regular and honest **conversations with “influential skeptics and naysayers”** (in both one-on-one and community settings) **will be critical in identifying and resolving stubborn roadblocks.**
- While the demographics of the community are largely white, **additional work is needed to reach out and integrate under-represented and “often invisible” minority communities**, including small population of African-American and Latino families and the most isolated pockets of families living in “deep poverty.”
- County residents rely heavily on out-of-county services, but new approaches are needed to educate regional entities on Rappahannock County needs and **exert pressure to pay attention to and include in-county services in their budgets.**



KEY TAKEAWAYS: COMMUNITY

- Any community expansion efforts, including those undertaken by CCLC will require **widespread buy-in to ensure success and sustainability.**
- Building the necessary partnerships to solicit and integrate feedback and buy-in from key community stakeholders may **slow down expansion efforts in the short term but improve growth and sustainability in the long-term.**

The secret of truly sustainable social change is that it requires the patience to find joy and transformation in incremental progress – a balance of ambition and practicality – vision and implementation.

MaryLee Allen
Children's Defense Fund

KEY TAKEAWAYS: CCLC

- CCLC is widely perceived as **positive, unique and highly valuable community resource** in Rappahannock County.
- There is **widespread pride and satisfaction** among parents and staff on the **"high quality of the program"** and its **"life-changing impact"** on children.
- CCLC has a strong reputation as **"small but mighty"** force in the community, an entity that is **"unusually innovative and forward-thinking"** especially for such a small county.





KEY TAKEAWAYS: CCLC

- Vast majority of stakeholders interviewed **supported CCLC's commitment to expanding their services and reach**, although opinions differed on focus and direction.
- Many recommended that CCLC focus on expanding access and services in its **"sweet spot of early childhood"** and work to cultivate outside partnerships to expand broader family and community supports.
- CCLC has a **"rock star board"** that has **"unusually deep bench strength for an organization of its size,"** but there is also a small group who believes **"board thinks they know what is best for the community."**

CCLC is well-respected in the community as an early childhood expert. They should build out from their “sweet spot” and not try to be all things to all people.

Former CCLC Parent

KEY TAKEAWAYS: CCLC

- Critiques on CCLC's accessibility focused on two key groups:
 - **"middle income families in the donut"** (i.e., income too high for financial aid but insufficient to cover tuition); and
 - **Low-income working families, especially those with jobs outside the county who struggle with transportation, unpredictable and late work hours and need for before and after care**





KEY TAKEAWAYS: CCLC

- Despite its robust tuition supports for low- and middle- income families, some stakeholders still think of CCLC **"as pretty much a program for wealthier kids."**
- Some perceive that **CCLC makes decisions in isolation without enough attention to building and nurturing "community partnerships"** (e.g., "when you know people, you can do things on your own.")



PROJECT OVERVIEW

SCOPE OF WORK: KEY QUESTIONS

1. What are CCLC's most significant strengths and challenges?
2. What are the most pressing local needs for children and families?
3. Are there potential partner organizations to help develop a common vision?
4. What funding streams might be tapped to help develop and sustain programs?
5. What is the best way to build partnerships and develop a common plan?
6. Are there other promising models in similarly situated counties?



DATA SOURCES



- ▶ 24 one-on-one interviews with community stakeholders as identified by CCLC board
- ▶ 3 additional focus groups with CCLC parents and staff and local education experts
- ▶ Interviews with state and national early childhood and family poverty experts (e.g., Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, etc.)
- ▶ One-on-one and group conversations with CCLC board members and new executive director
- ▶ On-line survey to over 424 Rappahannock County residents with 46 respondents
- ▶ Extensive review of demographic data from multiple sources
- ▶ State and federal programs and funding sources (including *Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance*)
- ▶ Research on model early childhood and family support programs in similarly situated rural counties
- ▶ RappNews and Foothills Forum

A young girl with curly hair is smiling and looking towards the camera. She is wearing a light blue shirt with colorful polka dots. She is inside a tunnel, possibly a playground slide, with other children visible in the background. The lighting is bright, suggesting an outdoor setting.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT: KEY FINDINGS



CHILDREN IN RAPPAHANNOCK COUNTY

- 1,365 children
- 31% of school-aged children are classified as disadvantaged
- 2.2% in school are English Language Learners

85.5% White

23% Two or more races

5.2% Hispanic or Latino

3% Black or African American

.1% American Indian and Asian

Source: Rappahannock County Public Schools, 2017

WHAT ARE CCLC'S MOST SIGNIFICANT STRENGTHS?

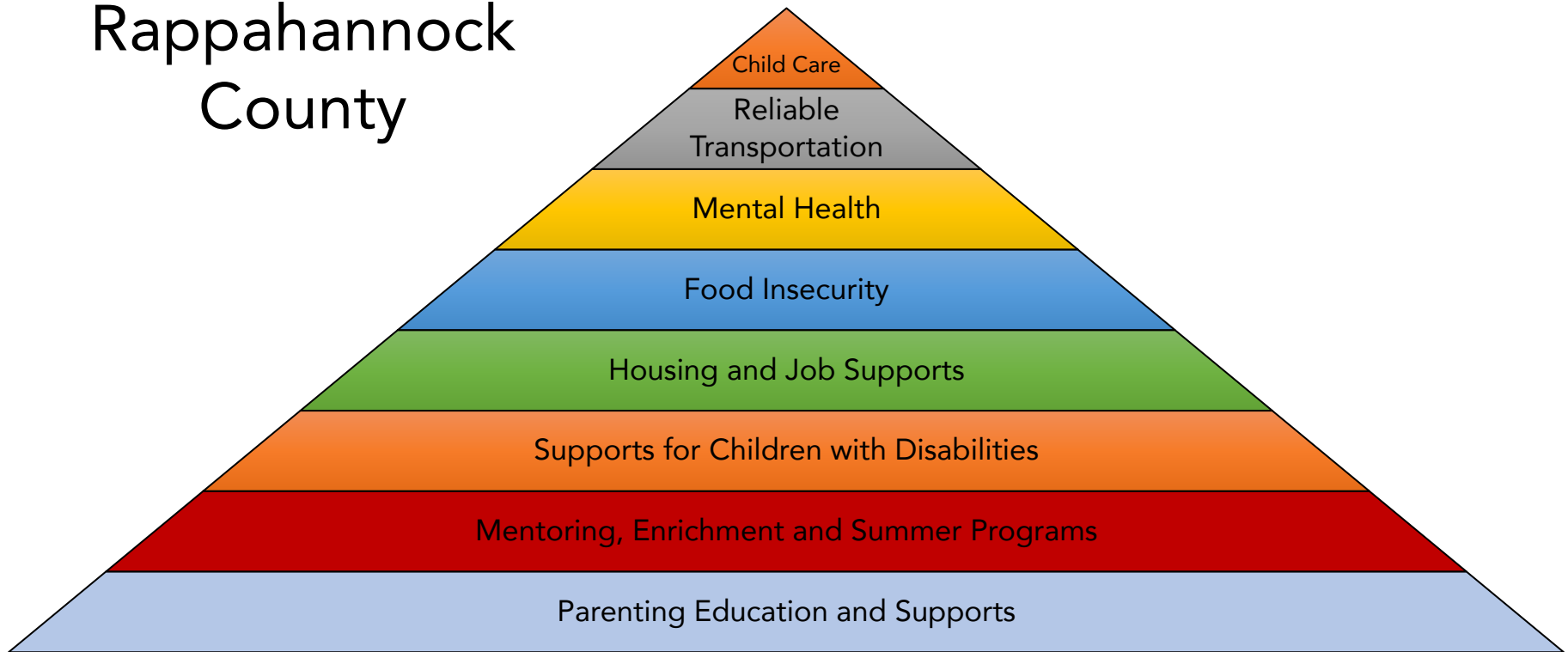
- ▶ Community residents appreciate CCLC's **creative curriculum**, which stays current and reflects the community values.
 - *"They have educated themselves way beyond the basics and really looked at state of the art kinds of programs and use the values and the resources of this area and incorporate those into their program."*
- ▶ CCLC has an **excellent community reputation**, strong volunteer support and a vocal and active board.
 - *"They've got some strong connections and support from the community. They're well networked and respected. And they want to partner with other groups which is a huge asset."*
- ▶ CCLC employs caring and attentive staff and ensures they are well-trained.
 - *"My God, the staff. They're fabulous. They're remarkably trained- the NAEYC has helped with that. They all work together well, all on the same mission."*
- ▶ The grounds provide **flexibility to expand**, and the center's proximity to the elementary school lends itself to potential partnership opportunities.

WHAT ARE CCLC'S MOST SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES?

- ▶ CCLC could **create pathways for additional families to access their services** by providing more scholarships, transportation services, more flexible hours (evenings and weekends), and expanded special needs services.
 - *"CCLC has done some wonderful things; on the flip side there is a connotation of privilege. How do we create a life-long learning culture and make it accessible to everyone?"*
- ▶ The **facility is in disrepair and the grounds need attention**. Some community residents believe the proximity to the gun store is troubling.
 - *"CCLC has outgrown the present building and the modular is in disrepair. Parking can be a problem."*
- ▶ While most believe the staff are very capable, there was mention of **more training and accountability for some staff, a need for more teachers, higher wages, and more administrative help** to address issues with paperwork and organization.

WHAT ARE THE MOST PRESSING LOCAL NEEDS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES?

Service Gaps in Rappahannock County



The thing about living in Rappahannock is that the qualities that make people want to stay here and leave the city to come here are also what makes living here really hard for some low-income families.

Community Resident

WHAT ARE THE MOST PRESSING LOCAL NEEDS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES?

Overall Findings

- Across those stakeholders interviewed, there was **surprising consistency in identifying the most pressing service gaps**
- There were **very few stakeholders who had a comprehensive knowledge of service offerings across the entire constellation of providers**
- Most agreed that an **“active and engaged” coalition of community service providers, faith-based organizations and government entities is critical** in prioritizing, coordinating and meeting child and family needs
- The most **effective coalition would be a joint effort co-led by 4-5 key organizations** to avoid the perception that CCLC is spearheading the effort (“setting a table for discussion among equals”)

WHAT ARE THE MOST PRESSING LOCAL NEEDS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES?

Overall Findings

- In meeting community needs, there was a **significant lack of consensus** about whether to **build new in-county services** for a **relatively small population** or **increase access and transportation to out-of-county services**.
- Several stakeholders suggested that **discussions to expand services to meet community needs were secondary to broader policy discussions to address income inequality**.
- Efforts to build public will to increase the availability of services for children and families should be accompanied by **public awareness efforts that educate the community about needs** without exacerbating gaps between rich and poor.

"Some families have been living here and raising their kids for generations without help other than from their families, neighbors or churches. Services can't look like services."

"Not everyone thinks that they are missing anything. Just because you build it doesn't mean people are going to come."



SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

While some services exist in the county, many do not cover all ages, some services are not affordable, or services are limited. Several organizations expressed a need to expand their services but insufficient resources to do so.

Social Services

Headwaters

4-H Programs

National Counseling Group

Intercept

Rappahannock Food Pantry

Benevolent Fund

People, Inc

RappFlow

Rappahannock Rapidan
Community Services Board

Rapidan-Rappahannock
Regional Commission

Private mental health
practitioners

Government Services

Department of Social Services

Children's Services Act

Juvenile Court Services

Health Department

Child Care Services

Child Care and Learning
Center

Hearthstone School

Wakefield Country Day
School

Family-based care (2)

School-Based Services

RCPS Special Needs Program

National Counseling Group

Funders

Northern Piedmont Community
Foundation

Path Foundation

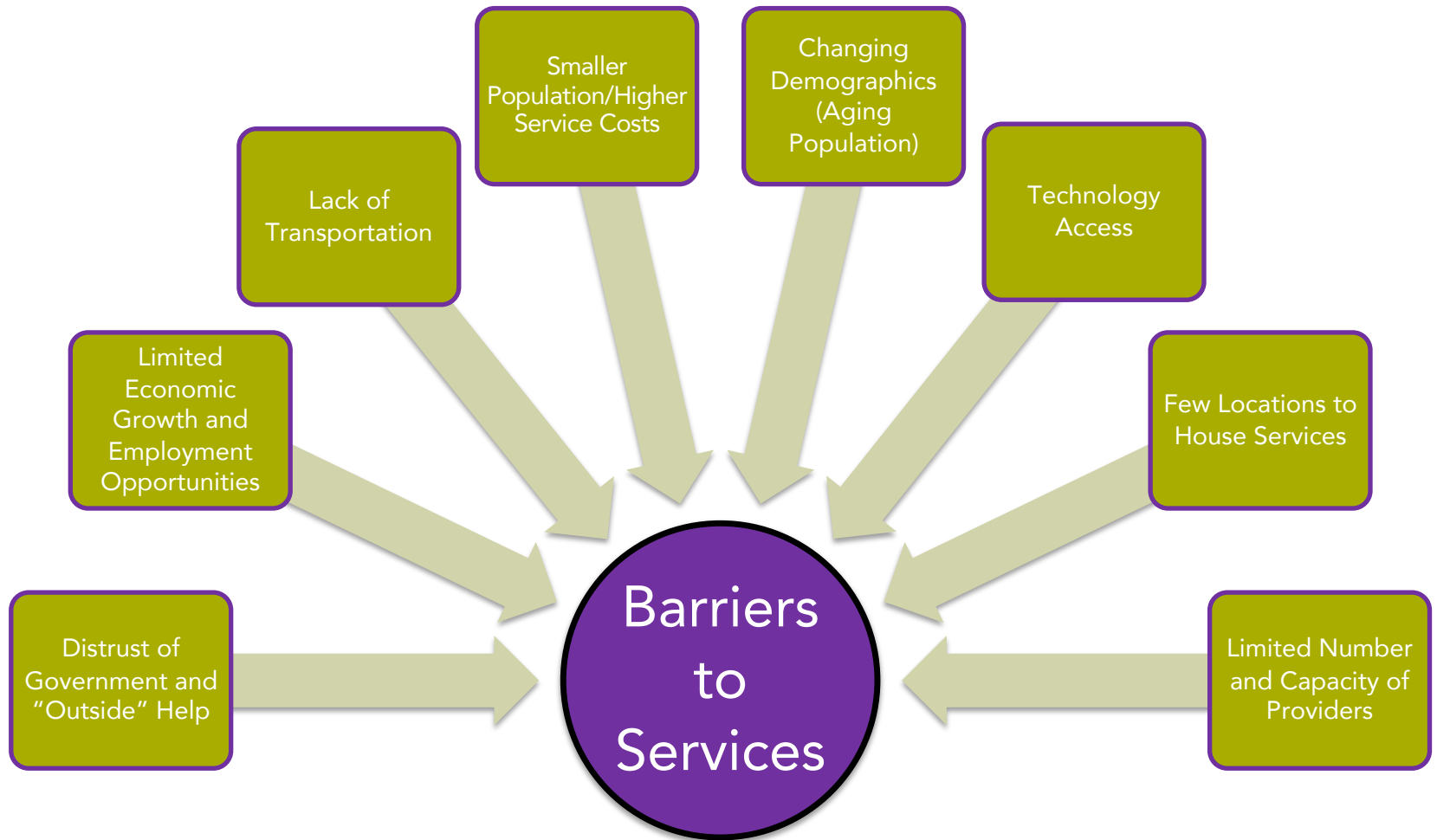
Rappahannock County Lion's
Club Foundation

Private funders

Health Services

Rappahannock Medical Clinic

POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO SERVICES



CURRENT STATUS

POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

Child care services



While child care services exist, many families cannot afford quality child care comparable to CCLC. Available child care services do not always accommodate work hours or transportation needs.

Special needs services



The school system and some private organizations provide special needs services, but there still is a lack of early identification and intervention services for all who need it.

Mental health services



Trauma-informed mental health providers are needed within the county. Several providers are willing to serve the county but do not have a physical location to meet with clients.

After school programs



Additional after school programming is needed. Young adults do not have a gathering place after school and children of working parents ages 12 to 14 in particular need expanded program activities.

Several nonprofits providing an array of social services in the county



Better coordination and expanded capacity among nonprofits is needed to ensure a stronger safety net and better manage limited resources available for social services. More opportunities have been created with the mixed delivery grant.

Early childhood data



Data on school-aged children are abundant, however, the county has limited information on the number of families needing early childhood services, which became clear with the First Step program.

WHAT FUNDING STREAMS MIGHT BE TAPPED TO HELP DEVELOP AND SUSTAIN PROGRAMS?

Current Sources of Government Funding

Child Care Assistance

Federal CCDBG funds administered by Virginia Department of Social Services

USDA Child Care and Adult Food Program

Federally funded nutrition supplements for eligible low-income children

First Step

Time-limited grant from County Board of Supervisors; ends 2019 unless renewed

Preschool Development Grant

Grants to boost local early childhood education systems

Mixed Delivery Preschool Fund and Grant Program

Funds local pilots to field-test potential solutions to barriers that have prevented all eligible children from participating in Virginia's Preschool Initiative

WHAT FUNDING STREAMS MIGHT BE TAPPED TO HELP DEVELOP AND SUSTAIN PROGRAMS?

Current Sources of Government Funding

Child Care Assistance

USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program

First Step

Mixed Delivery Grant

Preschool Development Grant

Potential Sources of Government Funding

Early Head Start (pending)

Head Start (possible)

Virginia Pre-School Initiative (VPI)

Additional State & County Appropriations

Federal and State Grants & Demonstration Projects

“Reach” Sources of Government Funding

Even Start Family Literacy Program

Family and Children’s Trust Fund of Virginia

21st Century Community Learning Center

Early Reading First Grants

RELEVANT EARLY CHILDHOOD FUNDING DEVELOPMENTS IN VIRGINIA

Head Start and Early Head Start

- Federally -funded and Administered Programs
- More generous reimbursement rate than other assistance programs
- Federal RFP process awards 5 year contracts

Child Care Assistance Funds Likely to Increase

- \$44M in new federal funds for Virginia → big boost in reimbursement in FY20
- Many First Step children would be eligible if local funds were cut or re-directed
- Reimbursement rate not likely ever to match Head Start or First Step
- Potential tiered reimbursement rates could benefit high-quality program CCLC
- Could help support expansion of after-school care for children up to age 12 (currently CCLC is at capacity – explore off-site programming at RCPS?)

Virginia Pre-School Initiative

- State-Funded pre-School primarily for low-income children
- RCPS lost eligibility some years ago
- May be worth RCPS re-applying if Head Start remains absent in county
- Likely only feasible on-site at RCPS, and reimbursement rates low

WHAT OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING MIGHT CCLC EXPLORE WITH ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY?



WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO BUILD PARTNERSHIPS AND DEVELOP A COMMON PLAN?

- ▶ **Continue current efforts to expand genuine partnerships that engage diverse stakeholders.**
 - Engage long-time residents and trusted community organizations (e.g., Churches, Benevolent Fund)
 - Assess when it is appropriate for CCLC to lead or play a *supporting* role
- ▶ **Make regular communication and coordination with multiple child and family serving organizations a priority.**
 - Regularly meeting with child and family-serving organizations to discuss and strategize around pressing community issues
 - Co-sponsor learning exchanges with other community-based organizations to ensure staff build a common understanding of and expertise in child development issues, such as trauma and attachment
- ▶ **Continue to lead efforts to build community awareness and trust in CCLC and its partners.**
 - Engage in active outreach to local media and community centers to educate the broader public about issues impacting children and their families
 - Build space into site expansion plans to provide space for community groups and community members to gather (e.g., stay at home moms)

ARE THERE POTENTIAL PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS TO HELP DEVELOP A COMMON VISION?

Headwaters

Strengths: Quality programming that interfaces with a population that can follow children leaving CCLC

People, Inc.

Strengths: Strong background in social services and obtaining government funding, experience in Head Start and Early Head Start

Foothills Forum

Strengths: Important media and research partner that can help elevate children and family issues to the general community

Rappahannock County Public Schools

Strengths: universal system that almost every family interacts with; offers special needs services

Smart Beginnings

Strengths: Connection to the VA Early Childhood Foundation that helps coordinate services across the region. Rappahannock County is not currently represented.

ARE THERE OTHER PROMISING MODELS IN SIMILARLY SITUATED COUNTIES?

Family Resource Center

Aspen Family Connections

www.aspenfamilyconnections.org

Partnership between Pitkin County School District and local service organizations to provide one-stop shop for academic workshops, emotional and mental health supports and parenting supports.

Mobile Early Childhood Development Outreach Van

Fremont Schools Purple Bus

www.fre6.k12.wy.gov

in Wyoming's largest and least populated school district provides mobile early learning classroom, nurse, home visiting and other parenting supports and early intervention services .

Comprehensive Early Learning Center

Jackson Hole Children's Learning Center

www.childrenlearn.org

Community-based early learning center that provides child care and early learning, special education and developmental screening and family support services for low-income families.

OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES

National Resources for Rural Communities:

Rural Public Policy Expertise

- Carsey School of Public Policy, University of New Hampshire (www.carsey.unh.edu)
- Rural Policy Research Institute, University of Iowa (www.rupri.com)

Rural Child Health, Mental Health & Disabilities

- University of Minnesota Rural Health Resource Center (rhrc.umn.edu)
- Walsh Center for Rural Health, University of Chicago (www.norc.org)
- Rural Health Information (www.ruralhealthinfo.org)

Parenting and Parenting Supports in Rural Communities

- Parents as Teachers (www.parentsasteachers.org)
- National Home Visiting Resource Center (www.nhvrc.org)





OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES

National Resources for Rural Communities:

Rural Child Care and Early Childhood

- First Children's Alliance (www.ruralchildcare.org)
- Rural School and Community Trust (www.ruraledu.org)

After School and Enrichment Programs

- After School Alliance (www.afterschoolalliance.org)
- ChildTrends (www.afterschoolalliance.org)

Transportation Resources

- American Public Transportation Association (www.apta.com)
- Community Transportation Association of America (www.ctta.org)

Rural Hunger

- Food Research and Action Center (www.frac.org)
- Feeding America (www.feedingamerica.org)

Income Inequality

- Economic Policy Institute (www.epi.org)
- US Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service (<https://www.ers.usda.gov/>)

Rural Housing and Community Development

- Housing Assistance Council (www.ruralhome.org)

RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

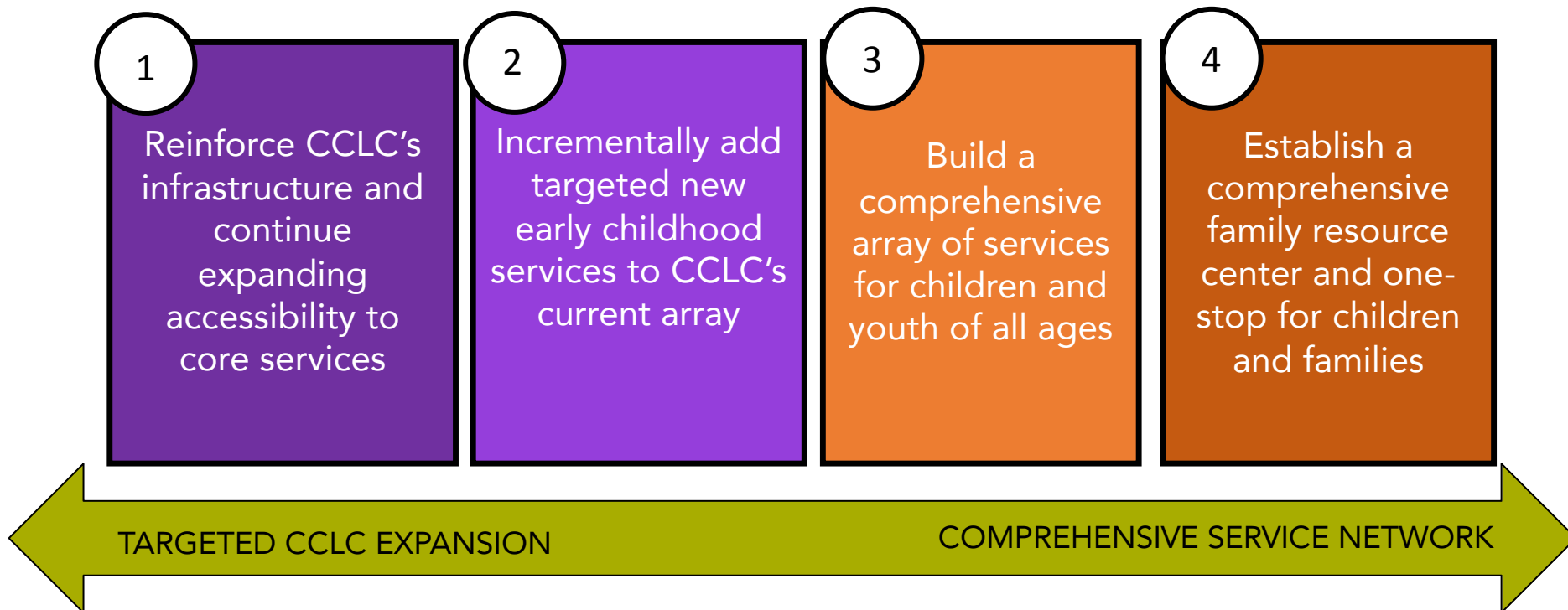


One thing about CCLC is
that they refuse to let
themselves be limited. They
figure out a way to get it
done. If it's hard, they do it
anyway.

Community Service Provider

CONTINUUM OF POTENTIAL ROLES FOR CCLC IN COMMUNITY-WIDE VISION

To work in partnership with the community to ensure high-quality, comprehensive and accessible supports for all children and families in Rappahannock County



OPTION 1

Reinforce
CCLC's
infrastructure
and continue
expanding
accessibility to
core services

- Re-accreditation by NAEYC
- 5-10 year strategic planning to improve and increase accessibility to current services, including expanding and sustaining First Step and Head Start
- Capital Campaign for improvements to staff support and learning opportunities, organizational and technology infrastructure and physical plant
- Diversify funding base and development capacity (e.g., individual donors, foundations, Board of Supervisors, State Legislature, etc.)
- Continue expanding key partnerships to help build county's child and family service array
- Improve and diversify data collection to make the case for need

OPTION 2

Incrementally
add targeted
new early
childhood
services to
CCLC's current
array

- In addition to reinforcing and expanding traditional services, consider phasing in an array of new early childhood services both on-site and through off-site partnerships.
- Based on funding availability and strategic priority, services could include:
 - child mental health
 - early intervention and special education
 - child abuse and neglect prevention
- Programming could include:
 - early childhood professional development available to all community professionals
 - Common space for community groups (e.g., Rapp Ride and Romp)
 - Parenting classes

OPTION 3

Build a
comprehensive
array of services
for children and
youth of all
ages

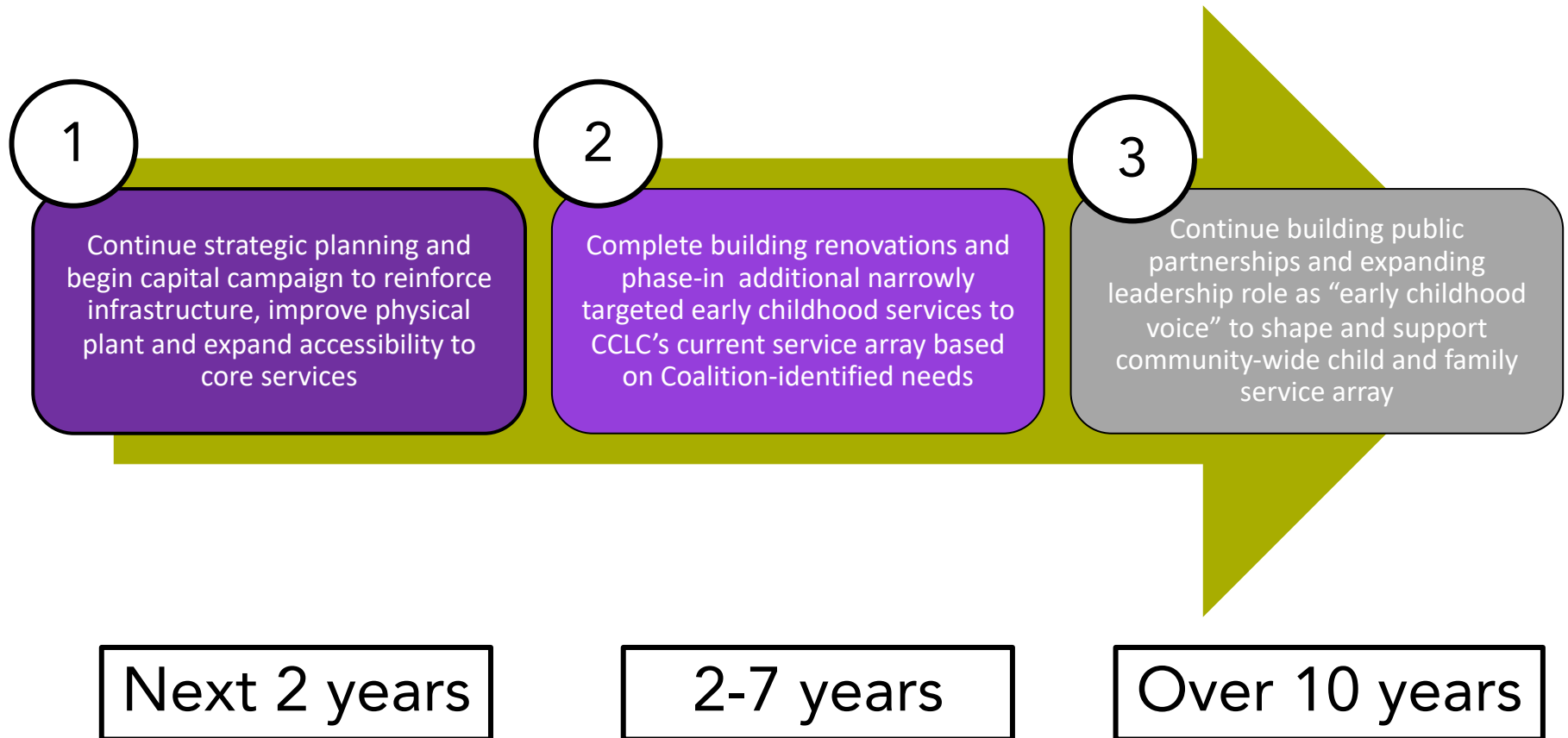
- Expand service array to children and youth of all ages by considering on-site and off-site supports and programming to meet identified community needs, including:
 - Intensive mental health services for children and youth
 - Substance use prevention and treatment for youth
 - Comprehensive academic supports and after-school activities
 - Expanded summer camp
 - Foster care recruitment and support
 - Supports for at-risk and juvenile justice-involved youth, etc.

OPTION 4

Establish a
comprehensive
family resource
center and one-
stop for children
and families

- In addition to comprehensive array of services for children and youth, expand over time to build a comprehensive on-site and off-site services to meet all family needs including:
 - Health and mental health screening
 - Child and family counseling
 - Respite care and crisis nursery
 - Substance use counseling
 - Kinship care support groups
 - Legal services
 - Public event space
 - Community organizing center

RECOMMENDATIONS



CONTACT INFORMATION



Mary Bissell

mary@childfocuspartners.com

Tiffany Allen

tiffany@childfocuspartners.com

Anne Holton

anne.holton43@gmail.com



APPENDIX



COMMUNITY SURVEY QUESTIONS

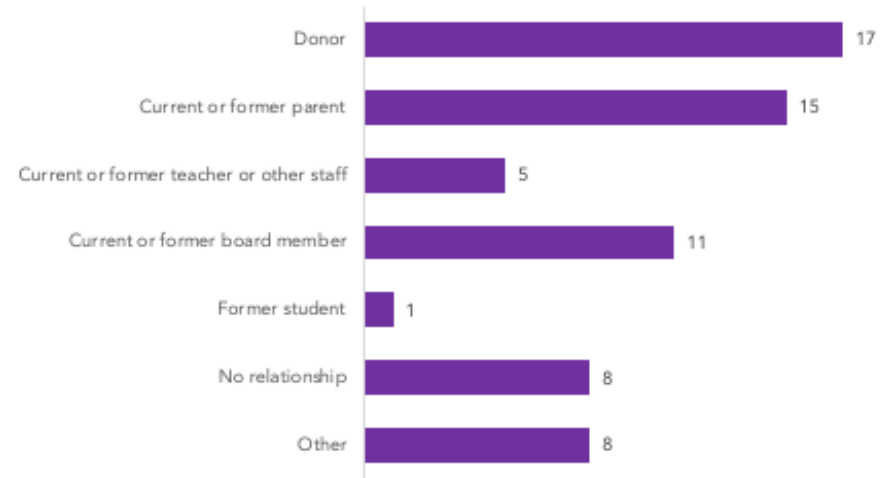
- ▶ What is your role in the community?
- ▶ What is your relationship to CCLC?
- ▶ What do you believe are the greatest unmet needs of children and families in Rappahannock County?
- ▶ What important services are missing in Rappahannock County to address the unmet needs of children and families? (open-ended)
- ▶ What barriers do children and families face in accessing and receiving needed services? (open-ended)
- ▶ What do you think are CCLC's three greatest strengths? (open-ended)
- ▶ In what ways do you think CCLC could improve its services? (open-ended)
- ▶ If CCLC were to expand services, what service needs for children and family should CCLC explore? (open-ended)
- ▶ What opportunities exist for CCLC to expand its footprint in the community? (open-ended)

COMMUNITY SURVEY

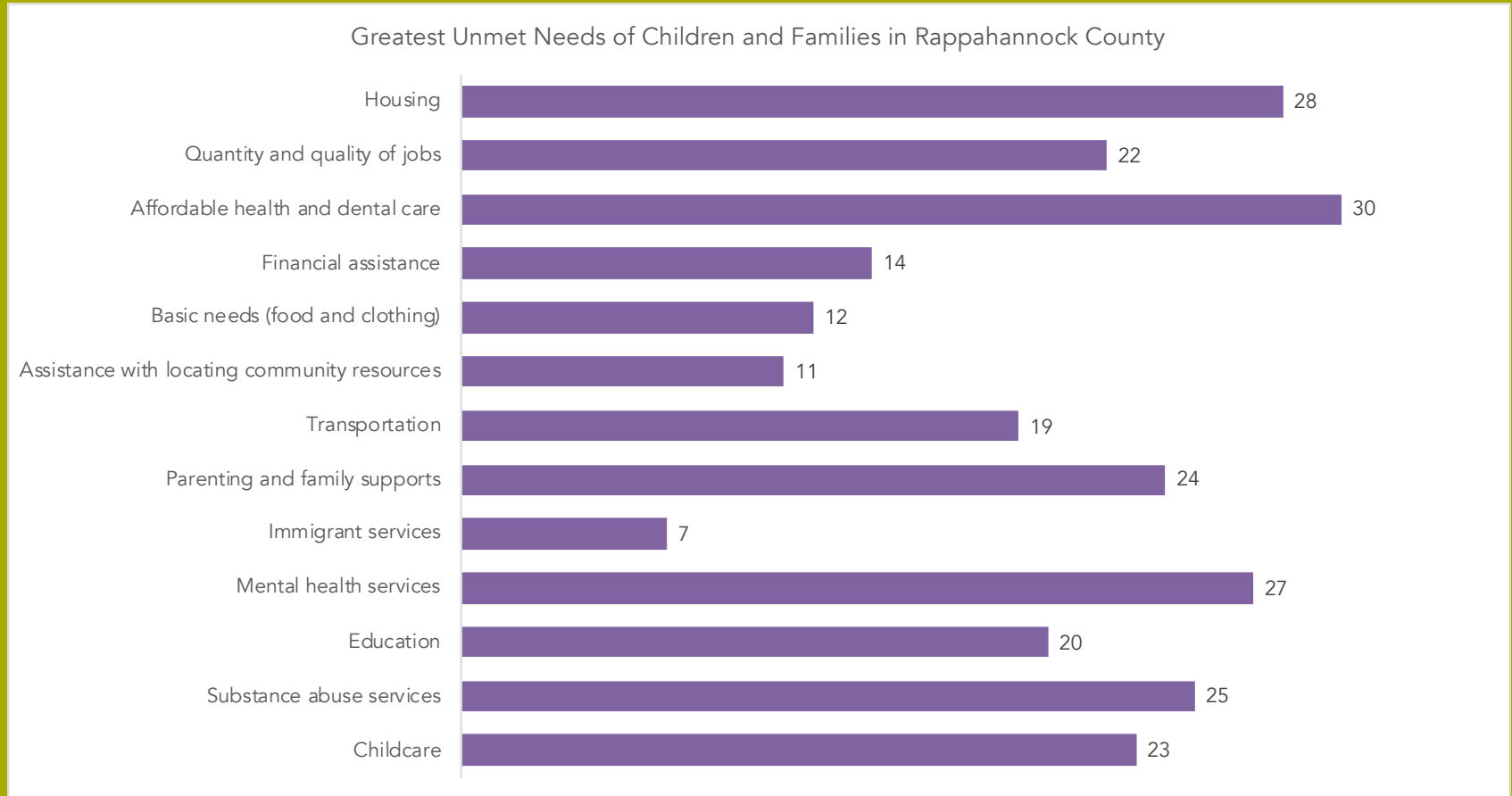


46
TOTAL
RESPONDENTS

RELATIONSHIP TO CCLC



SURVEY RESULTS: GREATEST UNMET NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



COMMUNITY SERVICES

Social services

Headwaters - provides community based mentoring, after school enrichment, reading programs, college preparation mentoring programs

4-H - youth component of Virginia Cooperative Extension, hosted by Virginia Tech and Virginia State, which determines the interests and needs of youth in the community and works to fill those interest and needs.

National Counseling Group - provides mental health, in home services-home-based counseling for children at risk of going into foster care, outpatient counseling, mental health and substance abuse services

Intercept - provides mental and behavioral health services

Rappahannock Food pantry – provides food for low-income residents

Benevolent Fund – financial help and other services for residents in crisis

RappFlow - environmental nonprofit that helps preserve, protect and conserve and restore water resources and watersheds in the county

Private practice psychologists

People, Inc - community action agency that provides early childhood development, workforce development, and community development services

Rappahannock Rapidan Community Services Board - provides early childhood services for children with developmental delays, provides comprehensive behavioral health, developmental disability, substance use disorder, and aging services.

Rapidan-Rappahannock Regional Commission - economic and workforce development agency, that focuses on housing development, neighborhood revitalization, tourism promotion, and business development.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Health services

Medical clinic - provides free medical services for low-income residents

School-based services

Special needs program in RCPS - ChildFind assessment and services

National Counseling Group - mental and behavioral health counselors in schools

Lion's Club - provides vision and hearing screenings for students

Funders

Northern Piedmont Community Foundation

Path Foundation

Rappahannock County Lions Club Foundation

Child Care Services

Child Care Learning Center

Two family-based day cares – located in Sperryville and Amissville

Hearthstone School

Wakefield Country Day School

Government Services

Department of Social Services - provides government services and benefits for children and families, including child protective services, cash assistance, and other community health programs

Children's Services Act (CSA) - a pool of state and local funds, managed by local interagency teams who plan and oversee services to child and families, such as mental health assessment, parenting programs, etc.

Juvenile Court Services - provides services to court-ordered youth such as crisis intervention, substance abuse, and counseling

Health Department - provides public health community services

⁵⁷
Note: This list does not include services that Rappahannock county residents use but exist outside of the county.