Community Needs Assessment Executive Summary

Montgomery County
Collaboration Council
FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES
A LOCAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

The National Center for Children and Families (NCCF)
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Welcome to our 2020 Community Needs Assessment! This report is our first community needs assessment (CNA hereafter) since 2017. It paints a picture of the level of child well-being in Montgomery County through the six (6) priority results and related indicators of child health and well-being, selected by the Collaboration Council's Board of Directors. The priority areas are:

· Babies Born Healthy;

· Children Enter School Ready to Learn;

· Children are Successful in School;

· Youth will Complete School;

· Youth have Opportunities for Employment or Career Readiness and

· Families are Safe and Economically Stable.

Before the pandemic of 2020, the racial, social, and economic disparities across our community were grim. As a result of the pandemic, those daunting gaps are now growing at a rapid pace. Closing these chasms between the inequities we unearth today and the equity we aspire to achieve tomorrow is the work we have chosen to undertake.

The CNA process is designed (1) to develop a deeper understanding of our community's needs as well as its strengths; (2) to inform our County's plans for steps and investments that need to be developed to redress the barriers and gaps identified; and (3) to address child well-being and youth development in order to improve outcomes for children, youth and their families, as well as the broader community. This process is carried out by examining various data, inventorying policies, programs, and services available, and most importantly, capturing and documenting the voices of community leaders, service providers, and youth themselves.

Our ultimate intention is that the CNA will be used by the larger community to focus on important issues related to child well-being and to respond with intentionality to recommendations put forth in the assessment. For the Collaboration Council, the findings affirm our sense of urgency and join our current initiatives to inform our next strategic steps and priorities. It will drive our work as we recover from the pandemic towards a more equitable, inclusive, and just community.

The findings are not the final deliverable, but rather a waypoint in a community planning process for identifying strategies and targeting funding. We invite Montgomery County community members, providers, and stakeholders to utilize these findings in their work and be active participants in ensuring these ideas become solutions.

We look forward to our next steps, taken in partnership with many of you, our community partners, on behalf of children, youth, and families here in Montgomery County.

Hannah Davis	Nicholette Smith-Bligen	Elijah Wheeler
Child Well-Being Committee Co-Chair	Child Well-Being Committee Co-Chair	Executive Director

Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth, and Families
Community Needs Assessment (CNA)

The National Center for Children and Families (NCCF), Clear Impact ©, and the Collaboration Council Community Needs Assessment (CNA) Leadership Team is pleased to present the Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth, and Families - Community Needs Assessment (CNA) Report. The CNA report provides a snapshot of the six (6) priority results and related indicators of child health and wellbeing selected by the Collaboration Council as priority needs in Montgomery County. NCCF collaborated with Karen M. Finn, M.Ed., Vice President of Professional Services, Clear Impact LLC, and the Collaboration Council Community Needs Assessment (CNA) Leadership Team to conduct a robust review of child wellbeing literature and publications, virtual community convenings and town halls, case study spotlight of community programs, surveys, landscape analysis and asset map of community resources, and collect, analyze and report, key data indicator using the embedded Clear Impact Scorecard ™ on the following priority results and indicators:

Result: Babies Born Healthy
Indicator: Infant Mortality
Measure: Number of Deaths Occurring to Infants (<1 year) per 1,000 Live Births

Result: Children Enter School Ready to Learn
Indicator: Kindergarten Readiness
Measure: % of Children Demonstrating Readiness on Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)

Result: Children are Successful in School
Indicator: Truancy
Measure: % of Students Absent More Than 20 Days in an Academic Year

Result: Youth Have Opportunities for Employment or Career Readiness Indicator: Youth Ages 16-24 Not in School and Not Working
Measure: % of Youth Ages 16-24 Not in School and Not Working

Result: Youth Will Complete School
Indicator: High School Graduation / GED
Measure: % High School Graduate (Includes Equivalence)

Result: Families are Safe and Economically Stable
Indicator: Child Poverty
Measure: % of Children Under 18 Living in Poverty

The report is organized into six (6) chapters that include the embedded Clear Impact Scorecard, data chart, trend analysis, community input, recommendations, and strategies which target the maternal and infant health, kindergarten/pre-k, youth education, career development, employment, economic and housing resources. All recommendations and strategies presented in this report reflect best practices retrieved from the comprehensive literature review, key data trends, and community input gathered from community convenings, town halls, and community survey results.

The enclosed report may be used to inform the prioritization of service and program needs, as well as guide the Collaboration Councils efforts to invest resources, align tools, and leverage strategic partnerships to address unmet and pressing needs of families in Montgomery County. The synthesis of core data, literature, community input and recommendations that emerged from the community needs assessment may be utilized as a spring board for collaborative partnerships that improve the health and wellbeing of Montgomery County's children, youth, and families.

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- Hannah Davis, Executive Director, Vikara Village
- Kimberly Rusnak, Project Director, Children's Opportunity Fund
- Carolyn Lowery, Founder, Roots to the Future

METHODOLOGY

Literature Review
- Conducted a robust review of key literature, publication summaries, and information vital to assessing child health and wellbeing including an analysis of the community's strengths, challenges, gaps, and services opportunities for children, youth, and families.

Literature Review

Data Book/Embedded Data Website:
- Identified key data trends, collected disaggregated data, synthesized core data indicators, analyzed core measures of child wellbeing, various correlates, and social determinants that impact the county's children and youth, and embedded the Clear Impact Scorecard on the Collaboration Council Website.

Data and Clear Impact Scorecard

Landscape Analyses
- Performed a landscape analysis, developed an asset map, and landscape resource guide of programs, agencies, services, and supports summarized by indicator domain, location, and populations served.

Landscape Analysis

Case Study Spotlight of Programs and Surveying
- Collected qualitative and quantitative data through case study spotlights on programs and surveying of diverse stakeholders, community members, stakeholders, and literature pertinent to the prioritization and assessment of the community needs.

Case Study

Community Convenings and Town Halls
- Conducted Results-Based Accountability (RBA) - Turn the Curve process to obtain Community Input through two (2) virtual Community Convenings. The Turn the Curve process examined prioritized data, analyzed the factors driving data trends and solicited ideas from the community on "what works" to address the identified factors.
- Conducted two (2) virtual town hall meetings with diverse stakeholders including a youth specific town hall to ascertain community perspectives, effective practices, identify gaps, and elicit recommendations to improve services for children, youth, and families.

Community Convening and Town Halls

Areas of Need & Gaps in Services

BABIES BORN HEALTHY	CHILDREN ENTER SCHOOL READY TO LEARN
1. County-wide education and outreach within the community and with health care providers regarding the disparity in health outcomes by race and need for emphasis on pre-conception health for all females of childbearing age. 2. Systemic approach to linking underserved and uninsured populations to health services, care coordination, and targeted culturally specific education, outreach, and enhanced service quality. 3. An approach to understanding the specific needs of parents (mothers and fathers) under the age of 24 and innovative approaches to mitigate against the high risk of infant mortality.	1. Access to high quality early care. 2. Childcare subsidies which cover the full cost of quality early care. 3. Access to full day PreK programs, regardless of income, in each elementary school in the County with adequate capacity for serving the number of 4-year-old children in the school jurisdiction. 4. Countywide approach to educating Latino families on the importance of formal early childcare in preparation for Kindergarten and access to culturally specific resources. 5. Education and outreach to families on preparing for kindergarten and available resources to support families.
CHILDREN ARE SUCCESSFUL IN SCHOOL	**YOUTH HAVE OPPORUTNITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT OR CAREER READINESS**
1. Partnership between local schools and community agencies (e.g. health agencies, homeless services providers, nonprofit youth serving agencies) to address underlying causes of chronically absent youth, with emphasis on (a) ensuring discipline policies encourage youth re-engagement in school versus discipline for absenteeism, (b) tracking, monitoring, and case-by-case problem solving, and (c) providing supports and services necessary for effective reengagement. 2. Community and school-based programs that provide support specifically to youth who are or are at risk of becoming chronically absent. 3. Comprehensive mental health and wellness supports within the school environment.	1. Significant achievement gap for African American, Latinx, English learning, and low-income youth compared to White and Asian youth. Young people who are behind academically with limited academic support have less motivation to remain in school. 2. Safe, supportive culturally sensitive school environments that incorporate a coordinated array of services and supports designed to reconnect disconnected youth to education and the workforce. Youth are at risk of disconnection when they do not feel connected to school or receive support from teachers. According to Greater Washington Community Foundation (2015), more than half of the youth who dropped out wanted more academic support. 3. Housing stability for homeless youth. 4. Countywide career development and training programs that provide hands on skill development and school-business partnerships which expose youth to variety of careers through internships and paid employment.
YOUTH WILL COMPLETE SCHOOL	**FAMILIES ARE SAFE AND ECONOMICALLY STABLE**
1. Significant achievement gap for African American, Latinx, English learning, and low-income youth compared to White and Asian youth. 2. Equity in resources across all schools. 3. Access to afterschool programming in schools with high mobility rates and higher rates of FARMS and ESOL students.	1. There is average gap of $63,000 between the minimum hourly wage rate of $14/hr and the self-sufficiency standard in the County. The Self Sufficiency Standard (2020) shows that for a family size of 3, the gap is $79,498; family of 4, the gap is $43,178; and family of 5, the gap is $67,225. 2. Lack of affordable and sufficient housing and limited employment services. 3. Lack of access to affordable, quality, early childcare. 4. Systemic approach to addressing racial equity's impact on poverty, housing, income, unemployment, childcare, insurance and other indicators of child and family wellbeing.