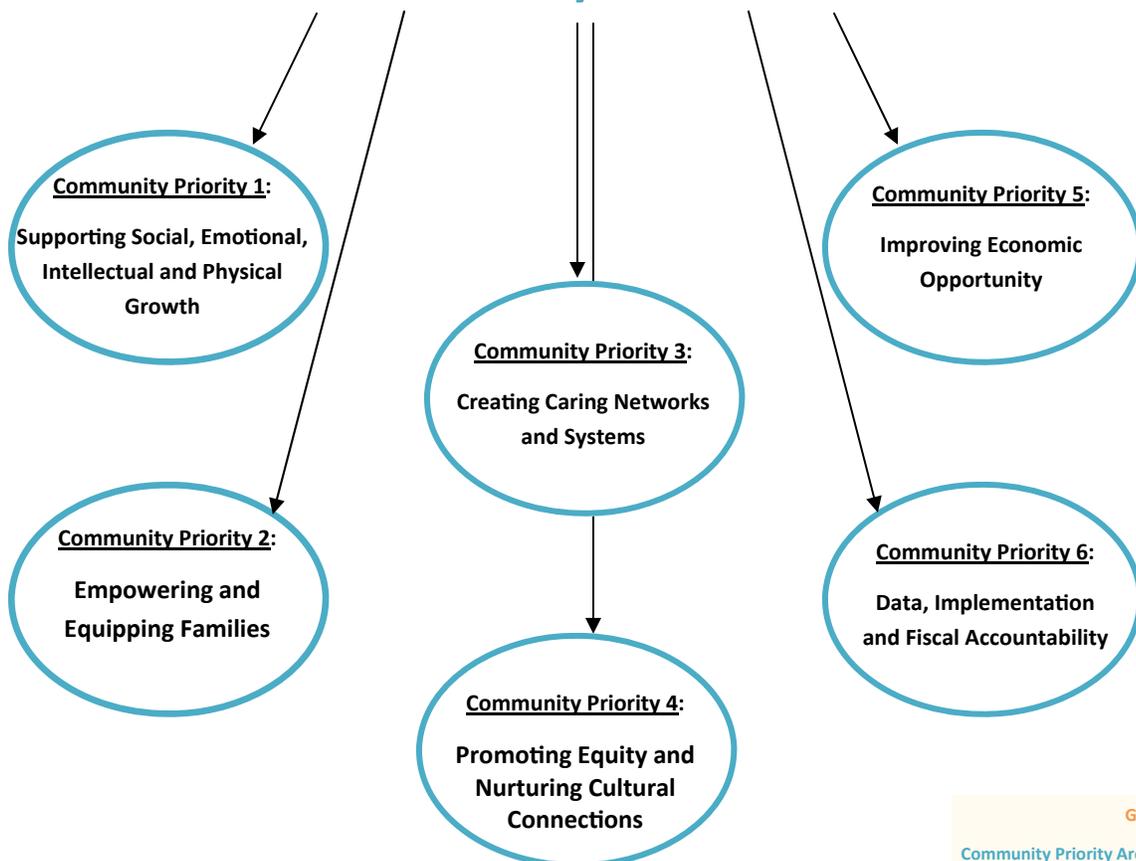
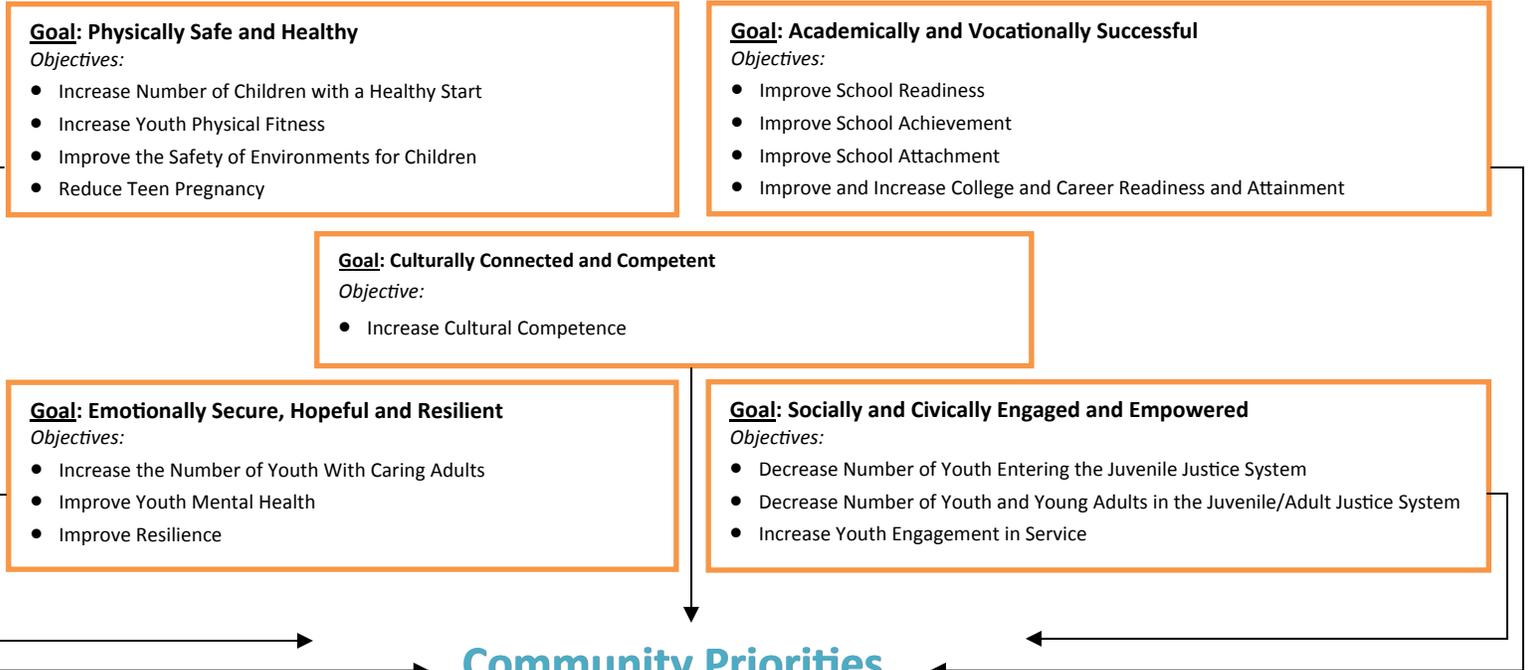


The City of Alexandria Children and Youth Master Plan



Goals for Alexandria's Children and Youth



Goal: a desired condition of well-being

Community Priority Area: issues that were selected to focus on, as identified by the Design Team and the community, and supported by research and practice

Community Priority 1: Supporting Social, Emotional, Intellectual and Physical Growth

Strategy 1: Provide an accessible continuum of quality academic learning environments for all children from birth to 21 to ensure readiness, academic success and vocational preparedness.

Action steps:

- Ensure that all programs meet the highest standards, specific to their discipline/agency.
- Ensure that City-funded and subsidized afterschool programs help promote positive academic, physical, emotional and social development.
- Coordinate with and support ACPS efforts to a) demonstrate that every student achieves at least one year of academic progress annually in reading, writing and math, and b) ensure that every secondary student has a comprehensive plan for success.
- Implement strategy 2, noted below, to address the needs of children 0 to 5.

Potential Measures of Success:

- Number of agencies/providers participating in quality initiatives (accreditation, Star Quality Ratings, etc.)
- Students with Individual Achievement Plans

Strategy 2: Develop an integrated early care and education system.

Action steps:

- Create an integrated early care and education strategy based on bright spot research and local data that incorporates the input of DCHS, Alexandria Health Department, CYFCC, ACPS, private and non-profit providers and residents.
- Create a public awareness campaign to promote access to resources as well as resource development.
- Support the healthy development of children prenatal to age 5, including improving access for prenatal to age 3 programs.
- Increase access to quality, affordable early childhood opportunities.
- Align the early childhood system with the K-12 system.

Potential Measures of Success

- Collaboration among providers involved in the provision of early care and education services
- Parent knowledge of how to access services in this integrated system
- Child participation rates

Strategy 3: Improve supports for the health and wellness of children, youth and families.

Action steps:

- Advocate for health promotion policies including the Medicaid expansion option under the Affordable Care Act and smoke-free policies for multi-unit housing.
- Launch a campaign such as “Let’s Move Cities, Towns and Counties” that features action plans for improving nutrition and promoting physical activity among children and youth.
- Promote the resources of the Substance Abuse Coalition of Alexandria (SAPCA), the Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy (ACAP), and the Gang Prevention Community Task Force and expand the offerings of the FACE Center to include education on healthy habits.

Potential Measures of Success:

- *Medicaid expansion option in place*
- Measurement of action plans within campaigns
- Increase in participation in all sectors within ACAP, SAPCA and Gang Task Force
- Smoke-free policies for multi-unit housing in place and enforced
- Increased wellness offerings at FACE Centers

Strategy 4: Provide and support child and youth asset-building programs that promote positive development and target multiple risk avoidance behaviors.

Action steps:

- Utilize sixth grade interest questionnaire to identify aptitudes and inform school counselors, coaches and community leaders who are trained in providing consistent, stable and supportive environments to foster positive child outcomes.
- Deliver quality, age-appropriate programs that promote positive developmental outcomes and foster a growth mindset.
- Introduce an afterschool conflict resolution and communication program that builds skills in healthy decision making, anger management, coping and problem solving through ACPS and RPCA partnership.
- Coordinate with and support City Council efforts to a) improve the coordination and alignment of youth mentoring programs and expand capacity citywide, b) coordinate and align public out-of-school time experiences for elementary school youth and middle school youth to improve access to quality programs.

Potential Measures of Success:

- Percent of students enrolled in ACPS with a completed sixth grade interest questionnaire
- Percent of students enrolled with aptitudes and goals identified at graduation
- The number of adult leaders trained in supporting resiliency; selection and implementation of a SAMHSA model program
- Scores for the Virginia Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

Strategy 5: Provide opportunities for youth to develop community involvement and workplace related skills.

Action steps:

- Actively involve youth, their families and other community members in community service and partnerships, neighborhood building, boards, program planning and assessments, and commissions.
- Create a mentoring program focused on cultivating workforce skills and implement coaching to find and maintain employment.
- Provide opportunities to develop civic responsibility through community service projects.
- Encourage participation in team sports, internships and afterschool activities.

Potential Measures of Success:

- Youth outreach needs assessment completed by youth regularly
- The number of boards/commissions/partnerships with participating youth
- Percentage of students at ACPS completing community service projects as part of the curriculum
- Increased scores in job preparedness survey
- The number of teens served by JobLink and enrolled in Northern Virginia Community College classes

Strategy: an overarching intent, focused on addressing the identified Community Priority Areas

Action Step: a defined step to fulfill the strategy

Potential Measure: a way to measure progress toward a result

Community Priority 2: Empowering and Equipping Families

Strategy 1: Create a shared citywide vision of family engagement and promote a common message that values parental involvement.

Action steps:

- Create a transparent and accessible *Parent's Bill of Rights and Responsibilities* and a simple tagline that shows the city's commitment to parental engagement and parents' value as partners in their children's education and healthy development.
- Identify a senior level officer responsible for family engagement who bridges City and school programs, establishes internal communication channels and convenes a parent and professional advisory board.

Potential Measures of Success:

- Adoption and utilization of communication items, including visible posting of Parent's Bill of Rights and Responsibilities in every City/ACPS site and non-profit program
- Record of appointment of officer by Alexandria City Manager and ACPS Superintendent

Strategy 2: Provide high-quality, family-focused programming that builds a purposeful connection between child development, parental best practices and learning outcomes.

Action steps:

- Encourage best-practices across all adult, youth and family programming and adopt the national model of Strengthening Families, where applicable.
- Adopt a formal recommendation by City Council for any new or expanded high-quality programming, in conjunction with the ACPS strategic plan.
- Develop a standard reporting process and implement cross-agency software to evaluate outcomes of existing family-focused programs.

Potential Measure of Success:

- CYFCC, City Council and ACPS Meeting Agenda and Minutes and Annual Report from Accountability Committee

Strategy 3: Offer ongoing professional development and technical assistance for all "family facing" staff across the City of Alexandria/ACPS.

Action steps:

- Provide ongoing training on cultural competence and the implementation of the Parent's Bill of Rights and Responsibilities for all "family facing" staff.
- Provide training in the Strengthening Families Model.

Potential Measure of Success:

- Review of annual budgets and documented training records

Strategy 4: Create a robust multilingual communications system regarding parent engagement that reaches all stakeholders and families.

Action steps:

- Distribute welcome packets to all new students (public and private) to promote positive out of school time activities and city services.
- Create two coordinated communications campaigns: one jointly led by the City and ACPS on a specific theme monthly (e.g. Family Literacy Month, Attendance Awareness Month) and another on early childhood education programming and impact.
- Promote the use of Language Line services across the City/ACPS, ensure all printed materials and websites are available in Spanish, Arabic and Amharic, and provide translation services upon request in any language.

Potential Measures of Success:

- Return of forms in welcome packet and record of distribution
- Annual campaign calendar
- Communication plan of execution
- Data regarding use of language line
- Report to CYFCC Implementation Committee with sample materials

Strategy 5: Ensure accountability for results by engaging young people and families in identifying solutions to be used on an ongoing basis to improve programs and approaches.

Action steps:

- Identify meaningful metrics tracking major family engagement projects, with a focus on successes and improvements.
- Create and implement a walk-through evaluation assessing accessibility, appearance and culture of City/ACPS facilities.

Potential Measure of Success:

- Annual Accountability Committee Report and Evaluation results of Accessibility, Appearance and Culture walk-through

Strategy 6: Ensure adequate and effective funding for parent engagement programs.

Action steps:

- Develop a cost analysis of City/ACPS existing family engagement programs and advocate for increased investment in high-quality family programming.
- Seek new funding streams and identify synergistic funding opportunities in the city and school budgets to expand existing effective programming and new opportunities for family engagement.

Potential Measure of Success:

- Annual Budget and Advocacy Committee Reports

Community Priority 3 Creating Caring Networks and Systems

Strategy 1: Promote and incentivize alignment and collaboration among various entities and systems serving/seeking to serve families and youth.

Action steps:

- Raise awareness among entities and agencies serving families and children about the Children and Youth Master Plan goals, outcomes and indicators.
- Encourage all funding entities (public and private) to prioritize funding for organizational collaboration and alignment and the goals and outcomes of the Children and Youth Master Plan.

Potential Measure of Success:

- Evidence in funding guidelines or in City Manager's budget

Strategy 2: Ensure systems (i.e., social services, health, juvenile justice) become client-centered, culturally competent and welcoming to families. (See also Empowering and Equipping Families Strategies #1 and #3.)

Action step:

- Establish a rating system for agencies to look at how well they are serving consumers, along with a 'mystery shopper' component designed to promote service improvement.

Potential Measure of Success:

- Rating system and mystery shopper data

Strategy 3: Ensure all families are aware of and have access to appropriate services, including access to trained individuals who can assess family needs in order to properly refer them.

Action steps:

- In conjunction with the 211 managing entity, determine the best platform for updating and sharing information about child, youth and family services in Alexandria.
- In alignment with Empowering and Equipping Families Strategy #4, develop a Resource Reference Guide, marketing campaign in multiple languages, and Resource Awareness Open Houses at schools and community centers.
- Implement “Satellite Services Alexandria” in which services rotate once per month in order to collect and share information.
- In alignment with Empowering and Equipping Families Strategy #3, provide training to all employees on “no wrong door” so they are prepared to offer excellent customer service beyond their specific department.

Potential Measure of Success:

- Participation in Resource Guide, Open Houses, Satellite Services and trainings

Strategy 4: Ensure that all young people have the opportunity to establish a relationship with a responsible adult advocate, mentor or advisor.

Action steps:

- Educate adults (those with and without children), businesses and organizations about the importance of positive relationships with youth, mentoring and intergenerational activities. Incorporate learning from best practices on effective relationships and local data such as Search Institute’s Developmental Assets Survey.
- Coordinate with and support ACPS efforts to ensure that every student has a responsible adult mentor or advisor.

Potential Measures of Success:

- Development of materials and completion of campaign
- The number of youth with sustained mentorship
- The number of businesses and organizations supporting positive relationships with young people

Strategy 5: Promote civic engagement among youth by giving them meaningful opportunities to engage and lead. Raise awareness about those opportunities and encourage public and private stakeholders to involve young people in new ways.

Action steps:

- Identify a shared staff person to work with ACPS, the City and Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities to build the expectation that youth must be engaged in meaningful leadership building opportunities.
- Meet with business leaders to encourage them to look at creative ways to include youth.
- Educate boards, commissions and neighborhood associations about the importance of involving youth and require them to reserve spots for young people and to educate, recruit and incentivize youth to participate.

Potential Measures of Success:

- Engagement opportunities catalogued
- Materials and presentations created
- Changed bylaws
- The number of youth sitting on boards and commissions

Strategy 6: Schools and other child-serving agencies coordinate an early warning system to identify problems early and address them.

Action steps:

- Identify criteria for an early warning system by engaging stakeholders, parents and young people.
- Expand the early warning system beyond the school system to ensure it is supported by data and context from community providers and social services.

Potential Measure of Success:

- Early warning system in place and communication channels are established between partner agencies

Community Priority 4: Promoting Equity and Nurturing Cultural Connections

Strategy 1: Increase opportunities for individuals and groups to connect across cultures.

Action steps:

- Increase the number of cross-cultural event opportunities for the community and for service providers. Incorporate social media platforms where appropriate.
- Infuse cultural diversity in the school system via a range of channels, including literature, school lunches, song and music. Incorporate social media platforms as appropriate.

Potential Measure of Success:

- Completion of events, related materials and curriculums

Strategy 2: Introduce an ongoing Community Dialogue Model to involve entire neighborhoods.

Action steps:

- Research, select and pilot the Community Dialogue Model, focused on honest communication and social change.
- Evaluate and seek grant funds for sustainability and include youth leaders in implementation.

Potential Measures of Success:

- Completion of pilot in one community or organization
- Completed trainings
- Number of dialogues held
- Number of youth involved
- Participant feedback

Strategy 3: Expand the definition of culture beyond color (e.g. socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, disabilities, national origin, etc.)

Action steps:

- Advocate including an expanded definition of culture in the City Strategic Plan.
- Upon the implementation of a sub-committee (See Community Priority 6: Infrastructure Strategy #1), develop a report about what cultures exist in Alexandria.

Potential Measure of Success:

- City Strategic Plan includes expanded definition
- Annual Report of the CYFCC

Strategy 4: Identify and evaluate additional measures of cultural competence and connection.

Action steps:

- Develop a Cultural Competence Measures Team to explore evaluation measures.
- Upon selection, implement measures in appropriate venue.

Potential Measures of Success:

- Team identified and assembled
- Options reviewed and measures in place

Strategy 5: Promote high expectations and achievement for all students.

Action steps:

- Support the ACPS plan to eliminate achievement differences among race, sexual orientation income, and disability and language subgroups.
- In alignment with Caring Networks and Systems strategy #2, achieve cultural competence for all staff with diversity training that incorporates awareness, understanding, high expectations and appropriate instruction for all students.

Potential Measures of Success:

- Materials developed and completion of training
- Participant feedback
- Improved cultural competence measures in Alexandria

Community Priority 5: Improving Economic Opportunity

Strategy 1: Ensure youth and family voice in citywide planning on economic development, housing and transportation.

Action steps:

- Establish seats on relevant city commissions for youth and parents, improve recruitment strategies, promote participation via transportation stipend and provide appropriate orientation to new members and returning commission members.
- Designate a liaison from the CYFCC to serve on the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee and the Alexandria Transportation Committee in order to ensure CYFCC coordination and communication in their planning processes.

Potential Measures of Success:

- Increased number of seats for parents and youth
- Increased retention of parent and youth members
- Designation of liaisons
- Number of plans reviewed by CYFCC members

Strategy 2: Connect youth and parents to career paths.

Action steps:

- Devise and promote career paths by exploring school credit for work experience, the establishment of a NOVA middle college program, and the implementation of a YouthBuild program.
- Partner with the private sector to offer vocational training and internships in business, health/elder care, and green housing audits.
- Increase the number of computers in libraries (and consider adding written guides or staff support for career exploration and job search).
- Foster leadership development and career exploration within out-of-school time programs for middle grade and older youth.

Potential Measures of Success:

- Institution of career paths
- Increase in opportunities for trainings and internships
- Number of computers
- Number of out-of-school time programs with leadership development/career exploration components

Strategy 3: Expand financial education and asset development.

Action steps:

- Connect families to federal supports such as Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), child care subsidies, and nutritional supports such as SNAP/WIC.
- Provide connections to safe, affordable banking, such as a Bank On Alexandria partnership with financial institutions to provide free/low-cost checking accounts, along with financial planning information and coaching.
- Establish matched savings, such as IDAs for housing, starting a new business or higher education/training, or child development accounts (“Cribs to College” model).
- Promote a stronger public safety net by advocating for increased minimum wage, refundable Child Tax Credit, stronger EITC.

Potential Measures of Success:

- Increase the number of families connected to federal supports
- Number of youth accessing information, coaching and banking
- Increase in matched savings accounts
- Changes in policies

Strategy 4: Work with the business community to create jobs for youth, job readiness opportunities, and encourage entrepreneurship among youth.

Community Priority 6: Data, Implementation and Fiscal Accountability

Data and Information

Strategy 1: Ensure data on children are robust, balanced and used for decision making.

Action steps:

- Continue the work of the Data subcommittee and the Children and Youth Well-Being Profile of the Commission (CYFCC) by pursuing a data development agenda with an emphasis on new data about cultural connections, parent engagement and social/emotional well-being.
- Plan for more robust and coordinated regular assessment of the resiliency of – and connection between – children, youth and families.

Strategy 2: Ensure that information on the quality, access and reach of programs, services and supports is thorough.

Action steps:

- Develop an “All-in” web portal for youth, parents, providers and other leaders that provides youth and family resources; volunteer, internship and job opportunities; and information about promising practices, all organized by child development milestones.
- Plan for more robust assessment of staff on their professional development needs and cultural competency.
- Survey parents and youth about the customer service and cultural sensitivity of staff.

Implementation

Strategy 1: Ensure that this Children and Youth Master Plan is a priority and focus for the Commission, City Council, ACPS Board and Senior City staff.

Action Steps:

- The City Council should direct the City Manager to work with all Alexandria departments and agencies to specifically develop and to report on a schedule for implementing this Children and Youth Master Plan.
- The School Board should direct the Superintendent to fully cooperate with the implementation of this Children and Youth Master Plan and to develop a schedule for its implementation.
- The City Council/School Board Sub-Committee, which includes the Alexandria Mayor and Chair of the Alexandria City Public Schools, and the City & Schools Staff Group should prioritize the implementation of this Children and Youth Master Plan and monitor the progress of all City and ACPS activities.
- The City Manager and the Superintendent of Schools should each prioritize the implementation of this Children and Youth Master Plan. They should work together to ensure effective cross-department coordination and collaboration.

Strategy 2: Engage the public to ensure long-term successful implementation of this Children and Youth Master Plan.

Action Steps:

- The City & Schools Staff Group should report periodically to the Commission the progress made on the implementation of the Children and Youth Master Plan.
- The Commission should hold regular hearings regarding the status of implementation by the City, ACPS and private agencies.
- The Commission shall report regularly to the public the status of implementation and the impact it is having on key indicators.
- The Commission shall actively engage with other Boards and Commissions, community groups as well as with Alexandria youth and families to ensure the implementation of this Children and Youth Master Plan.

Strategy 3: Implement a coordinated communications campaign that reaches diverse audiences and brings more community stakeholders on board to implement the plan.

Action steps:

- Update the Commission’s website with ongoing information about the plan and utilize social media to drive traffic to the plan.
- Highlight and tell stories about progress in implementing the plan, making sure there are early wins.
- Use public service announcements, press releases, events and other opportunities to promote the plan.

Infrastructure

Strategy 1: Strengthen the work of the Children, Youth and Families Collaborative Commission.

Action steps:

- Build and expand on the CYFCC: create implementation teams to tackle the priorities in this plan utilizing the many coalitions and networks operating already; include more business leadership on the CYFCC; and create a subcommittee of the CYFCC to focus on cultural competence.
- Conduct a regular self-assessment of the CYFCC and its leadership capacity.
- Strengthen the staffing supports provided to the CYFCC and build the skills of the staff on topics like: policy alignment, fiscal mapping, building integrated data systems, and communications.

Strategy 2: Ensure cross-fertilization among the Children, Youth and Families Collaborative Commission and the other commissions and boards in the city.

Action steps:

- Provide opportunities for diverse representation of teens and young adults on city commissions that go beyond issues affecting just youth.
- Have members of the CYFCC participate and report back on other city commissions to ensure a flow of communication about other work occurring in the city.

Fiscal Accountability and Alignment

Strategy 1: Require that private organizations that receive funds or support from the City or ACPS to serve children, youth and/or families assist with and support the implementation of this Children and Youth Master Plan.

Action Step:

- The Commission will work on guidelines for implementing this strategy by the City and with ACPS.

Strategy 2: By Fiscal Year 2016, the City Finance Department shall create a section of the City and ACPS budgets that clearly enumerates all funding streams and expenses that support services for children, youth and families.

Action Steps:

- The Commission will work to identify best practices from other communities regarding Children and Youth Budgets.
- The Commission shall work with the City Manager, City Budget officials and the Budget and Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee to develop a recommended structure for the Children and Youth Budget and a clear set of priorities for the use of funds allocated to public and private agencies that aligns with the Children and Youth Master Plan.