

**Testimony submitted by the
Annandale Christian Community for Action (ACCA)
before the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
on the County FY2015 Advertised Budget
April 8, 2014**

Good evening. My name is Gail Coleman. I am President of ACCA, the Annandale Christian Community for Action. ACCA is a voluntary organization of 26 member churches that provides critical basic needs to low-income families in the Annandale, Lincolnia, Bailey's Crossroads, and Culmore area. As you know, this area – located in Region 2 – contains some of the largest pockets of low-income individuals and families in the County.

You have just heard from Isabel Ballivian, the Executive Director of ACCA's Child Development Center, concerning issues related to childcare and child development. I will address other human services issues of concern to ACCA.

ACCA works closely with Coordinated Services Planning, which provides most of the referrals for the individuals and families whom we serve. This working relationship is invaluable to us. In addition, the grants we receive from the Consolidated Community Funding Pool (CCFP) help to support our emergency financial assistance in payment of rent, utilities, and medicine; permit us to purchase fresh foods and other essential items that are not donated to our food pantry; and pay storage fees for the furniture donated to our furniture program. We would not be able to provide services at the same level without this assistance.

We appreciate the difficult task the Board of Supervisors faces as it addresses the competing priorities within the County with limited funds. We applaud the efforts of the County Executive

and strongly support his recommendations to provide a modest increase in funding for human services; we vehemently oppose any reductions to the recommended increase. These services have already been cut to the bone and we believe that it is necessary to make up some of the losses suffered because of severely strained resources in the last few years. For example, several years ago, ACCA found it necessary to ration the emergency food it delivers to individuals and families, reducing the food it provided to the neediest families from a two-week to a one-week supply. We have not had the resources to change this policy.

Furthermore, the need for services continues to be high. From this past December through February of this year, for example, emergency food referrals to ACCA increased roughly 30 percent compared to the same period last year. Similarly, requests to County workers for food increased 50 percent in the second quarter of this year compared to the first quarter.

ACCA has the following specific comments on the budget recommendations:

1. ACCA strongly supports the recommended 7.5 percent increase in funding for the CCFP. As I stated, these funds are critical to ACCA's operation.

2. ACCA strongly urges full funding of the Housing Blueprint with its goal to reduce homelessness in the County. ACCA specifically supports:
 - a. funding for Mondloch Place and the Katherine K. Hanley townhomes, which provide housing for homeless individuals and families; and

- b. funding the pilot project to integrate employment services into the Bridging Affordability Program of the Housing Blueprint.
3. ACCA also is concerned about the need to provide health care to the County's low-income residents.
- a. Clients of the Community Health Care Network are currently required to go to Charlottesville to see specialists. ACCA urges the County to support efforts to build and sustain a local specialty network system.
- b. ACCA also supports expanded behavioral health services for youths and families.

We look forward to continuing our longstanding, productive partnership with the County, which enables us to accomplish more than we could separately to help the vulnerable people in our community.

Thank you.