



## Communities of Faith United for Housing

### SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS FOR THE DIALOGUES ON THE FY2010 BUDGET

*The questions below, in italics, will be asked in the facilitated small group discussions. When answering we suggest you talk from your personal experience with persons who are homeless or near homelessness – in hypothermia, with emergency services, with volunteering.*

*1. Considering what you value about Fairfax County, what services do you:*

*a. View as critical and oppose reductions that would change the quality and level of service*

- Preserve the Penny for Housing Fund which dedicates 1 penny of the real estate tax rate for affordable housing
- Maintain funding for programs serving homeless and near homeless persons in order to implement the Ten Year Plan to prevent and end homelessness

*b. View as important but in this fiscal environment would support certain reductions*

*c. View as non-essential and are willing to do without*

We suggest no specifics for questions 1b and 1c. The Ten Year Plan depends on a coordinated approach with commitment of County resources and services from many different departments.

*2. Based on your group's discussion surrounding question #1, what specific suggestions do you have to develop the FY 2010 budget?*

- Do not cut areas that support economic recovery and keep families working.
- Raise the real estate tax rate to compensate for declining property values so that the income for this revenue source is at least kept level. (This would mean that the average real estate tax bill would be the same as last year rather than going down because of lower real estate assessments.)
- Look for greater efficiencies, within the county and between the county and schools
- Cut administrative support before direct services

*3. What do you want County and School decision-makers to consider before making their final decision on the FY 2010 budget?*

- Stable neighbors make for stable communities; preserving the government, non-profit, and faith-based safety net for the most vulnerable members of our community is an investment in our community.
- Make strategic rather than across the board cuts.
- Consider implications of cuts in one department that could impact programs/services in other areas. Housing, prevention, and services are all interconnected. Homelessness and education are interconnected: more than 1/3 of homeless persons are children.
- Look at new taxes (meals tax), establish user fees or increase user fees, or apply sliding scale fees where possible for non-essential services.
- Now, more than ever housing and services are needed. If we do nothing now, we will pay later.

To become a member of Communities of Faith United for Housing, contact [cfuhfx@aol.com](mailto:cfuhfx@aol.com) or visit [www.cfuhfx.org](http://www.cfuhfx.org).