



A Review of City Partnerships with Family Justice Center Service Models

Safe Communities Committee Meeting
May 4, 2021

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CHARGE

In December 2020, the city received requests by Safe Alliance and other service partners to collaborate in funding the establishment of a Family Justice Center facility in Mecklenburg County, The Umbrella Center.

- Funding request was referred to the Safe Communities Committee for consideration
- Strategy and Budget Department tasked to provide additional information for the Committee's assessment

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FUNDING REQUEST OVERVIEW

The Family Justice Center service model has proven to be impactful in many cities and counties across the country. Violence prevention efforts and initiatives throughout the city and in partnership with the county and other community partners continue to grow.

The City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County have been requested to provide \$10 million dollars each for construction of a 100,000 square foot building to house the Survivor Resource Center's next phase of The Umbrella Center. This is in addition to \$15 million dollars to be raised by non-profit organizations.

CURRENT CHARLOTTE INITIATIVES

The City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, and other community partners have committed to addressing violence through a public health lens and have outlined short-term and long-term goals lead by the five pillars of the Violence Reduction Framework.

Five Building Blocks to Reduce Violent Crime

1. *Intergovernmental Collaboration*
2. *Community Collaboration in Priority Areas*
3. *Interrupt Violence*
4. *Invest in Community-Led Efforts*
5. *Use Data and Evidence*

CURRENT CITY INITIATIVES - *Violence Reduction Framework*

The Community Violence Data Dashboard helps the community better understand violent crime and other factors that impact violent crime, including poverty, education, and employment. It also helps partners plan, implement, and evaluate violence prevention strategies.

Violence Interruption approaches violence as a public health issue and employs community members as the first line of defense to de-escalate tensions before violence occurs. Trained violence interrupters and outreach workers target areas most affected by violence and use their credibility to mediate conflict and change norms

The city has designated \$1,000,000 for the ***SAFE Charlotte Grant Program*** to support grassroots work in the areas of crime fighting and prevention, conflict mediation, family stability, addressing racial segregation and creating opportunities for Charlotte youth and their parents.

A Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Program with Atrium Health's Carolinas Medical Center will engage with patients who are seen in the emergency room and/or admitted to the hospital for injuries caused by violence to reduce retaliation, re-injury and provide support to improve safer long-term outcomes.

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CURRENT CITY INITIATIVES

City of Charlotte currently partners with Safe Alliance by providing \$397,038 in funding for FY 2021 toward operation of Safe Alliance's Victim Assistance programming:

- Victim assistance with filing a Domestic Violence Protection Order,
- The Sexual Trauma Resource Center,
- The Domestic Violence Shelter,
- The Greater Charlotte Hope Line, and
- Case management type services.

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CURRENT SURVIVOR RESOURCE CENTER

The Survivor Resource Center currently services the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community and offers both on-site and off-site services for individuals needing assistance. This multi-agency center is an independent 501(c)(3) organization with government and community partners providing specialized services.

On-site Providers

- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department*
- Mecklenburg County Community Support Services
- Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services
- Pat's Place Child Advocacy Center
- Safe Alliance

Off-site Providers

- Atrium Health Domestic Violence Healthcare Project
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg District Attorney's Office
- Mecklenburg County District Court
- Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office

(Safe Alliance, 2021)

*The city currently pays \$71,555 per year for space for CMPD within the SRC.

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KEY FINDINGS AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Mecklenburg County has recently created the Office of Violence Prevention within the Public Health Department.
- The County's lead in this work is important as the City of Charlotte, the Sheriff's Office, Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, and other community partners, work together to reduce violence.
- For the Family Justice Centers reviewed:
 - There are widely varied levels of funding support provided by cities.
 - Local government involvement is more typically lead through local government entities that include the responsibility for Health and Human Services.
 - The model of the Family Justice Centers are robust systems with resources throughout the community leveraged and efficiently centralized.

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RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSED NEXT STEPS:

- Collaborate with Mecklenburg County and the other municipalities within the county to determine current issues, models in place, opportunities for streamlining services, and assess participation options.
- Continue collaboration on the Survivors' Resource Center and explore expansion options when capacity of the current service model and facility is no longer feasible to meet the community's needs.
 - Request additional supporting documentation for the rationale to support the intended use of the requested funds, and the analysis of alternative facility options considered.
 - Review available spaces with consideration of accessibility and confidentiality/client comfort in being able to discreetly access facility when needed.
- Assess City Council's prioritization of a Family Justice Center compared to other community initiatives.
- Work with Mecklenburg County on options for increasing collaboration, focus on capitalizing on lessons learned through the current COVID-19 pandemic.