CECIL COUNTY LOCAL MANAGEMENT BOARD - 2016 NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

Prepared by Teresa D. Shattuck, PhD, Shattuck & Associates - May 17, 2016

The Cecil County needs assessment took place between March 14 and May 14, 2016. The study was an inclusive process that obtained input from a wide range of stakeholders. Evaluation team members included Barbara Smith, Chief, from the Cecil County Division of Community Partnerships; Dave Trolio, Director, Department of Community Services; and Stephanie Garrity, Health Officer at the Cecil County Department of Health. The evaluation consultants contracted to conduct the study were Teresa Shattuck, PhD, and Michele Sadler, PhD, from Shattuck & Associates (S&A), a small evaluation firm in Mt. Airy, MD.

The purpose of the needs assessment was to build upon learnings from studies conducted in recent years by the LMB as well as Union Hospital and to hear from targeted stakeholders (LMB Members, Providers, Youth/Young Adults) about what's working, opportunities, challenges, gaps in services, and recommendations for future programming.

The study involved eight activities: 1) An initial meeting with the evaluation team to refine evaluation questions and data collection strategies; 2) Review of relevant materials to build a context for understanding the issues; 3) Literature review around the Children's Cabinets 4 Strategic Goals to aid the LMB in decision making, 4) Primary data collection using participatory research, focus groups, and surveys; 5) Cleaning, coding and analysis of data, 6) Detailed summaries of each data collection activity, and 7) Summary report of the aggregate findings. The data collection activities and goals are described in the table below. Full summaries of all data collection efforts can be found in the appendices.

Community Input

Date/ Timeframe	Data Collection Activity, Sample Size, and Purpose
March 14	**Cecil County Program Committee Meeting #1 (N=10)** • Participatory research to assess committee members' views of Cecil County's strengths, challenges, and lessons learned around programs
March 14	**Cecil County Local Management Board Meeting #1 (N=14)** • Participatory research to investigate board members' perceptions of priority results, indicators, and strategic goals • Utilized a paper/pencil survey - *The Results, Indicators and Goals Survey* - followed by an On-the-Wall version of the survey to illustrate findings • To aid in the priority selection process, S&A created and shared with LMB members a PowerPoint presentation overviewing current Cecil County data across the Children's Cabinets 4 Strategic Goals • The agenda, *Results, Indicators and Goals Survey,* Strategic Goals PowerPoint, and meeting summary are available in the appendices
March 24	**Front Line Workers Forum (n=32)** • Participatory research to assess front line staff's views of priority results, indicators, and strategic goals • Frontline staff represented children, youth and family provider organizations from around the county • S&A updated 2015 Results and Indicator data to share with participants as they prioritized top needs, Strategic Goals data was also shared • Four priorities were identified and small group planning took place using Performance Accountability Questions • The agenda, *Results, Indicators and Goals Survey,* Results and Indicator PowerPoint, and detailed findings are available in the appendices

April 27	**Two Focus with Youth, Young Adults, Parents and Providers (N=19)**
	• Focus groups explored perceptions of resources, gaps and challenges for disconnected youth
	  ○ Youth (n=14)
	  ○ Adults (n=5)

Date/ Timeframe	Data Collection Activity, Sample Size, and Purpose
April / May	**FY16 Youth Needs Assessment Survey – Youth and Adult Versions** • During April and May 2016, The Cecil County Youth Needs Assessment Survey – Youth and Adult versions were implemented to youth and adults involved in various Cecil County programs. • A total of 45 surveys were collected from youth and 36 from adults. • These surveys provided data about the demographics of respondents as well as their perceptions of problems youth may face as well as the strengths or positive things they like about Cecil County. Specifically respondents were asked about problems youth may face in their family and the community, health related problems and education and employment problems.
April 14-30	**Incarcerated Persons Survey** • The Incarcerated Persons Survey was implemented with all new intakes at the Cecil County Detention Center during April of 2016. • Of the surveys collected, a total of 144 survey respondents reported being parents of children under the age of 18. • This survey provided data about the demographics of the incarcerated parents as well as the perceptions of the problems their incarceration has created for their family.
April 11	**Cecil County Local Management Board Meeting #2 (N=14)** • LMB members had the opportunity to hear from currently funded vendors about their programs • S&A provided a brief overview of the needs assessment findings to data • Following the meeting, LMB members received and responded to an online survey to submit their selections for funded programs for 2017 under both the base award and competitive funds for 2017

In addition to primary data collection, S&A also conducted a detailed best practices literature review around the four strategic goals: Disconnected Youth, Incarcerated Parents, Childhood Hunger, and Youth Homelessness. The summary was intended to assist LMB leadership in making funding recommendations and to further consider integration of select strategic goals into programmatic efforts. The literature review along with all relevant meeting and focus

group documents can be found in the appendices. The following section overviews the participatory data collection process used in the LMB and FLF meetings. Results are presented for both meetings individually and then in aggregate. This presentation is followed by the focus group findings and conclusions.

Cecil County Program Committee Meeting (N=10)

As a first step in the data collection process, the Cecil County LMB Program Committee met with Shattuck & Associates during a regularly scheduled one-hour meeting. The purpose of the gathering was to overview the needs assessment process and to discuss Cecil County's strengths, struggles, and program recommendations. Please see the appendix for full meeting summary, highlights are shown below.

Where is Cecil thriving?

Collaboration - 27
- There is a sense of community here
- We team on big grants; strengthening each other, not competing

Tech School - 19
- Brand new, doubled size of previous tech school, open to all
- Variety of programs: masonry, construction, homeland security, computer programing, agriculture, cosmetology and medical
- Challenge: Not enough businesses around county for students to do internships

Advocacy for Mental Health - 16
- Very active at state level for mental health rights -11
- Peer advocacy groups - 5

Meal Programs - 9
- Meal services shifted to Paris Foundation who is already serving the county
- If someone else doing good work, we ask ourselves, how can we support and not duplicate?

Beautiful Geographic Resources - Tourism - 6
- Park - e.g., Northeast and Calvert Regional Parks
- Fair Hill Nature Center
- Great state parks
- Turf fields, basketball courts

Where is Cecil Struggling?

Substance Abuse/Mental Health - 76

- Drug Use Co-occurs with Mental Health Issues…41
  - Culture of Minimal Standards
    - Content with bare minimum
    - Generational mentality
    - Living couch to couch or tent to couch
    - Impact on children and youth:
      - Lose capacity to dream
      - Consumed with surviving daily
- Prevalent Drug Use - 35
  - Prevention/Treatment - 10
    - Shortage of treatment services, providers - 7
    - LMB driving force behind Drug Free Communities - 3
  - It's a cycle - poverty, drugs, lack of understanding and appreciation of resources
  - Drugs span all ages from youth to seniors, it's becoming generational
  - It's the first thing I hear, everywhere I go
  - Heroin
    - Second highest rate of overdose in MD after Baltimore City
    - Most officers are trained in overdoes treatment
    - We are training homeless people to treat, they are saving each other
  - High Crime - 5
    - In recent years you were more likely to be a victim of crime in Elkton than in Baltimore City
  - Homelessness - 5
  - Academic Issues (e.g., truancy) - 2

Economic Issues - 16

- Lot of potential for opportunity (three US 95 exchanges, potential for industry)
- Will be years before it will be realized
- If kids want opportunity – have to leave county, exception is to go away to college and come back to teach
- Childcare

Solutions?

Start Young - 8

- Focus where there is potential for greatest impact
- Need to plant seeds early
- I'm not going to change the adults, but we can help the kids
- Make it right for kids so they know there are different ways to do things

Attract Providers to Cecil County - 7

- Let's talk about attracting providers here
- Most providers that come from outside, could not afford to run things as we do – on a shoe string. Shoe string and good will. We are not big enough to do enough.

Outreach - 6

- Look at funding, review vendor list
- Develop list of programs/directory of services
- Where should it be housed? Volunteer Cecil – comes closest to listing resources
- Provide list, central place for nonprofits who needs volunteers
- Put request in NOFA for additional administrative resources to work on list or to develop a one stop shop.

Collaboration is success story in Cecil County. Excellent collaboration has served to strengthen advocacy for mental health as well as housing/shelter and feeding programs. Other noted strengths included the Tech School along with beautiful natural resources, parks, and ball fields.

The struggles mentioned by the Program Committee were identical to those that surfaced in all subsequent data collection activities including the LMB meeting and Front Line Forum, as well as focus groups; namely, substance abuse, mental health, and economic challenges.

Recommendations focused on directing services to children and youth, doing a better job of attracting providers to Cecil County, and maintaining in central location (e.g., Volunteer Cecil) a current list of funders, vendors, and programs. Finally, Program Committee members were asked to vote on their top two Strategic Goals. *Disconnected Youth* and *Parental Incarceration* led the vote count followed by *Childhood Hunger* and *Youth Homelessness.*

Program Committee Votes on Four Strategic Goals	*Total Points*
1. Improve Outcomes for Disconnected Youth	*21*
2. Reduce impact of Parental Incarceration on Children, Families, and Communities	*20*
3. Reduce Childhood Hunger	*6*
4. Reduce Youth Homelessness	*3*

Cecil County Local Management Board Meeting #1 (N=14)

The initial 90 minute LMB meeting utilized a participatory research approach to prioritize needs. First, participants completed an 8-item assessment, the *Results, Indicators, and Strategic Goals Survey* to select and rank order the priorities LMB members felt were most important for the county to focus on in the next three years. Next, since data relative to the four strategic goals was new to LMB members, a brief a presentation was shared highlighting findings around disconnected youth, youth hunger, youth homelessness, and parental incarceration in Cecil County. Based on the Strategic Goals data, participants were then given a chance to modify their survey responses. Finally, they recorded their answers on an On-the-Wall version of the survey in order to provide an immediate visual representation of data and a tallying of emergent priorities.

The Results

The first survey question, Q1, assessed views about the priority theme. Maryland's Results and Indicators are themed under the broad categories of Health, Education, and Community. Respondents ranked *Community* as most critical with 10 points, followed by *Education* and *Health* with 3 points and 1 point, respectively.

Items 2-6 assessed the Results and Indicators, with Q2 and Q3 providing a quick list of priorities via the On the Wall survey. The priority areas are presented in descending order (by Result Area) in the table below.

LMB Survey Q2 & Q3: Prioritized Result Areas (RA) & Related Indicators*

RA: HEALTHY CHILDREN - 26 POINTS

- *Substance Use - 34*
- *Health Insurance - 14*

RA: STABILITY - FAMILIES ARE SAFE AND ECONOMICALLY STABLE - 25 POINTS

- *Child Poverty - 17*
- *Parental Incarceration** - 7*
- *Disconnected Youth** - 7*
- *Hunger** - 6*
- *Homelessness** - 3*

RA: SAFETY - COMMUNITIES ARE SAFE FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES - 14 POINTS

- *Child maltreatment - 9*

RAS: HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION/SCHOOL TRANSITION COMBINED - 12 POINTS

- *High School Dropout/Graduation - 10*
- *Youth Employment - 6*

**Please note that result and indicator responses were elicited in two separate questions, therefore the summed Result Areas do not, nor would they be expected to, equal the sum of the indicator scores.*
*** Asked as an indicator as well as a strategic goal*

The leading Result Areas were Healthy Children (26) and Stability (25) followed by Safety (17) and the combination of High School Completion/Transition (12). The latter Result Areas were combined due to their joint impact on Disconnected Youth and the fact that Disconnected Youth surfaced as the number one Strategic Goal in both the Program Committee and LMB Meetings. In terms of Indicators, Substance Abuse led with 34 points followed by Child Poverty (17), Health Insurance (14), and High School Dropout/Graduation (10). Mental Health was not

included as an Indicator on the survey for the LMB members, but based on feedback in both the Program Committee and the LMB Meetings, mental health was added to the survey for the Front Line Forum (discussed in the next section).

Q4 prioritized and rank ordered respondents top two Strategic Goals. *Disconnected Youth* surfaced as the clear favorite with 31 points followed by and *Parental Incarceration* (24), *Childhood Hunger* (10), and *Youth Homelessness* (5).

LMB Q4. Strategic Goal	***Total Points***
1. Improve Outcomes for Disconnected Youth	*31*
2. Reduce impact of Parental Incarceration on Children, Families, and Communities	*24*
3. Reduce Childhood Hunger	*10*
4. Reduce Youth Homelessness	*5*

For Q5 and Q6, respondents focused on their greatest hope for Cecil County. An open-ended question, Q5 provided an opportunity for respondents to consider the population they felt most needed support. In other words, what groups were most in need of improved outcomes?

> *Q5. All _____ (Target Audience) in _____ (Geographic Area - county, city/town, neighborhood) are _____ (Result Area or Condition of Well-Being).*

In Q6, LMB members were asked to list the two indicators they felt were most critical to achieving their selected condition of well-being. Respondents overwhelmingly emphasized the importance of focusing on youth and young adults throughout the county. Twelve of 14 LMB members focused on education with six respondents identifying High School Completion and six identifying High School Transitions as key Result Areas. The other Result Area of interest was Stability. For High School Completion, the key Indicator focused on High School Graduation

with several mentions of graduating career and college. High School Transition included mention of Youth Employment and Educational Attainment. Finally, the third Result Area, Stability, touched on three Indicators - Child Poverty, Housing, and Substance Abuse.

To get a sense of the overall priorities, items Q2-Q6 were combined. See table below.

LMB: Q2-Q6 Combined Priorities
STABILITY - 27 ○ *Disconnected Youth - 41* ○ *Parental Incarceration - 31* ○ *Child Poverty - 20* ○ *Hunger - 16* ○ *Homelessness - 11* *HEALTHY CHILDREN - 26* ○ *Substance Abuse - 34* ○ *Health Insurance - 14* *HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION/HIGH SCHOOL TRANSITION - 24* ○ *High School Dropout/Graduation - 16* ○ *Youth Employment - 10* ○ *Educational Attainment - 6* *RA: SAFETY - COMMUNITIES ARE SAFE FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES - 14 POINTS* • *Child maltreatment - 9*

The last two items, Q7-8, examined the county's greatest strengths and struggles. The greatest strength was identified as collaboration/partnership and the greatest struggle was articulated as lack of jobs and poverty.

Q7. LMB - Greatest Strength	**Q8. LMB - Greatest Struggle**
1. Collaboration- Partnerships - 8 2. Effective Programs- 3 3. CCPS - 2	1. Lack of jobs/poverty - 6 2. Lack of hope/apathy/status quo - 5 3. Substance Abuse- 4

Cecil County Front Line Forum (N=33)

The two hour Front Line Forum (FLF) was attended by a wide range of providers serving Cecil County youth and families. The forum used a similar participatory research approach to prioritize needs and begin initial planning. First, participants completed the 10-item *Results, Indicators, and Strategic Goals Survey* to select and rank order priorities. Next, since Cecil County data was not necessarily familiar to participants, a brief a presentation highlighting Result/Indicator and Strategic Goal data was shared. Based on that data, participants were invited to revise their surveys. Answers were then recorded on the On-the-Wall survey allowing the group to quickly see the prioritized Results, Indicators, and Strategic Goals.

Results

Q1 explored views about the priority theme with respondents ranking *Community* highest with 23 points, followed by *Health* and *Education* with 6 and 3 points, respectively. This was similar to the LMB who also ranked *Community* significantly higher than *Health* or *Education.* Q2 and Q3 priority areas that emerged from the Front Line Forum are presented in descending order by Result Area in the table below. Please note that for Q3, the FLF version of the survey included indicators related to Mental Health and Substance abuse under two Results Areas - Healthy Children (MH/SA - youth/young adults) and Stability (MH/SA - parents/families). This revision was made based on feedback in both the Program Committee and the LMB meetings.

FLF Survey Q2 & Q3: Prioritized Result Areas (RA) & Related Indicators*

RA: STABILITY - FAMILIES ARE SAFE AND ECONOMICALLY STABLE - 71 POINTS

- *MH/SA (issues related to parents, families, home) - 94*
- *Homelessness** - 27*
- *Child Poverty - 18*
- *Parental Incarceration** - 17*
- *Disconnected Youth** - 10*
- *Hunger** - 6*

RA: HEALTHY CHILDREN - 36 POINTS

- *MH/SA (issues related to children and youth) - 95*
- *Hospitalizations - 9*
- *Obesity - 8*
- *Health Insurance Coverage - 6*

RA: SAFETY - 33 POINTS

- *Child maltreatment - 30*

RAS: HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION/SCHOOL TRANSITION COMBINED - 19 POINTS

- *High School Dropout/Graduation - 57*
- *Youth Employment - 3*
- *Educational Attainment - 2*

**Please note that result and indicator responses were elicited in two separate questions, therefore the summed Result Areas do not, nor would they be expected to, equal the sum of the indicator scores.*
*** Asked as an indicator as well as a strategic goal*

For Q4, frontline staff were asked to prioritize and rank order their top two Strategic Goals that the county should focus on in the coming year. Responses are listed in the table below.

Disconnected Youth and *Parental Incarceration* rose to the surface with 52 points each followed by *Youth Homelessness* (33) and *Reduce Childhood Hunger* (22).

FLF - Q4. Strategic Goal	*Total*
1. Improve Outcomes for Disconnected Youth	*n=52*
2. Reduce the impact of Parental Incarceration on Children, Families, and Communities	*n=53*
3. Reduce Youth Homelessness	*n=33*
4. Reduce Childhood Hunger	*n=22*

When asked to reflect on their greatest hope in Q5 and Q6, the majority of respondents emphasized the importance of targeting youth and young adults throughout the county. Responses to Q5 and Q6 reinforced many of the Prioritized Result Areas and Indicators identified in Q2 and Q3. For example, as with Q2, Q5 highlighted the importance of Stability which doubled or nearly doubled the scores of all the other Result Areas. High School Completion (8 points) ranked second as it did in Q2, with the High School Transition (8 points) equally emphasized in Q5. With regard to the indicators, while there was an emphasis on Youth SA/MH in Q3, they were scarcely mentioned in Q5 under Healthy Children. However, Parent/Family MH/SA received the highest score at 18 points, followed by High School Dropout/Graduation (8) and Youth Employment (7). When findings from Q2-Q6 were combined, the FLF picture starts to look very familiar, where once again the priorities coalesce around Mental Health/Substance Abuse, Parental Incarceration and Disconnected Youth.

FLF Survey Q2 - Q6 Combined Priorities
RA: STABILITY - FAMILIES ARE SAFE AND ECONOMICALLY STABLE - 86 POINTS • *MH/SA - 112* • *Parental Incarceration - 73* • *Homelessness - 65* • *Disconnected Youth - 65* ***RA: HEALTHY CHILDREN - 40 POINTS*** • *MH/SA - 95* ***RA: SAFETY - 38 POINTS*** • *Child maltreatment - 36* ***RAS: HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION/SCHOOL TRANSITION COMBINED - 35 POINTS*** • *High School Dropout/Graduation - 65* • *Youth Employment - 10* • *Educational Attainment - 4*

The last four survey items, Q7-Q10, examined the county's greatest strengths, struggles, gaps and needs. The greatest strength was identified as Effective Organizations/Programs followed by Collaboration/Partnership. Not surprisingly, struggles, gaps, and needs overlapped with emphasis placed on Mental Health/Substance Abuse services.

Q7. FLF Greatest Strength	**Q8. FLF Greatest Struggle**
• Effective Organizations/Programs – 16 • Collaboration / Partnerships – 8 • Refocus on Education / Training - 3 • Quantity/Range of Services – 2	• Substance Abuse/Mental Health – 17 • Navigating Resources - 6 • Engaging, Motivating Community - 4 • Lack of Resources - 2
Q9. FLF Greatest Gaps	**Q10. FLF Greatest Needs**

• Lack of Services or Resources– 18
  ○ Mental health/substance abuse - 10
  ○ Transportation to access services - 6
  ○ Mentors - 2
• Poverty - 14
	• Expand mental health and/or substance abuse services/resources- 7
	• Develop or expand other programs - 6
	• Provide more affordable housing - 4
	• Need more job training - 3

Small Group Planning

For planning purposes, High School Dropout/Completion, Youth Employment and Educational Attainment were subsumed under Disconnected Youth. Child maltreatment was addressed under MH/SA - Parents / Families. Based on identified priorities, FLF participants self-selected into one of four planning teams for the second half of the meeting to discuss:

1) Parental Incarceration
2) MH/SA - Parents / Families
3) Disconnected Youth
4) MH/SA - Children/Youth.

Together, small group participants reflected on the following performance accountability questions related to their priority area. A complete summary can be found in the appendices.

SMALL GROUP PLANNING QUESTIONS	
Q1. What is being done?	**Q2. What needs to be done?**
1a. What organizations are doing the mot work in this priority area? 1b. What are organizations doing? 1c. How much is being done? Sufficient? 1d. How well is it being done? Effective 1e. As a result of current efforts, is anyone better off?	2a. Specifically, what target groups are most in need of services? 2b. Geographic areas most in need of services related to this priority area? 2c. What organizations are best positioned to continue, expand or develop services in this priority area? 2d. Specifically, what activities should organizations focus on? 2e. What other partners could be brought in to help? 2f. What untapped resources in Cecil County should be considered to address this priority area?

Below are highlights to Q2d, *"Specifically, what activities should organizations focus on?"*

Across the planning teams, several themes emerged including MH/SA, Education/Training (life and job skills), employment opportunities, case management, advocacy and mediation.

Priority Area 1 Parental Incarceration	Priority Area 2 MH/SA Parents/Families	Priority Area 3 Disconnected Youth	Priority Area 4 MH/SA Children/Youth
• Education/ life skills - case mgmt. • Job search • Employment opportunity • Substance support for families / children • Advocacy • Need detox • Need affordable housing • Transitioning out of support for caregivers of children with incarcerated parents	• Recording parent reading books • Mediation for reentry • Warm hand-off to continue GED • Substance Abuse (and other services) • Assist youth who are impacted • Assure youth graduate from H.S. and become productive citizens	• GED • Job skills - certificate programs • Case management • Job placement	• Inpatient co-occurring treatment • Accurate provider list (insurance issues) • Providers that can treat adolescents under 18 with medically assisted recovery (methadone, vivitrol, suboxone)

LMB and FLF - Combined Priorities

When looking across Q2 and Q3 findings from the LMB and FLF meetings, Stability emerged as the key Result Area with 96 points followed by Healthy Children (62), School Completion/School Transition (31), and Safety (47). While those findings are both interesting and important, planning takes place around prioritized Indicators and Strategic Goals, shown in bold in the following tables.

Q2 & Q3 Prioritized Results and Indicators	***LMB MTG #1 (n=15)***	***Front Line Forum (n=32)***	***Total***
Result Area: Stability - Home	*25*	*71*	*96*
• ***Behavioral Health - Mental Health/SA***	***n/a***	***95***	***94***
Result Area: Healthy Children	*26*	*36*	*62*
• ***Behavioral Health - Mental Health/SA***	***34 (SA)***	***95***	***129***
Result Areas: School Completion & School Transition	*12*	*19*	*31*
• *High School Dropout / Graduation*	*10*	*57*	*67*
• *Youth Employment*	*6*	*3*	*9*
• *Educational Attainment*	*3*	*2*	*5*
Result Areas: Safety	*14*	*33*	*47*
• *Child Maltreatment*	*9*	*30*	*39*
Children's Cabinets Four Strategic Goals	*--*	*--*	*--*
• ***Improve Outcomes for Disconnected Youth***	***31***	***52***	***83***
• ***Reduce impact of Parental Incarceration***	***24***	***52***	***76***
• *Reduce Childhood Hunger*	*10*	*33*	*43*
• *Reduce Youth Homelessness*	*5*	*22*	*27*

Because Disconnected Youth surfaced as the number one Strategic Goal and encompasses several other indicators (e.g., related to schooling, employment, homelessness), the focus group discussions zeroed in on the unique experiences of Disconnected Youth.

Cecil County Focus Groups (N=19; 14 youth, 5 adults)

Two focus groups were conducted: both were mixed with youth and adults. The table below presents the highlights along with comment counts (the number of times a particular topic was uniquely mentioned by one or more individuals). Comments in italics represent direct quotes.

Themes	Total Comments
CHARACTERISTICS OF DISCONNECTED YOUTH	
WHEN AND WHY YOUTH DISCONNECTION BEGINS - BROADLY ○ **MIDDLE SCHOOL- 4** ○ **LATE TEENS - 9** ○ **ALL AGES - 9**	**22**
• **UNSTABLE HOME LIFE** ○ **PARENTING SKILLS LACKING - 21** ▪ Monkey see, monkey do (substance use issues). ▪ Parents get mad, kids get mad at the world, a never ending cycle ○ **SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN THE HOME/MENTAL HEALTH - 18** ▪ Drug addicted parents only focused on getting high ▪ Huge impact of MH/SA on youth becoming disconnected ▪ Youth home taking care of themselves. Afraid to call DSS. ○ **UNSTABLE HOUSING / TRANSIENT YOUTH - 35** ▪ Kids need a stable place to live ▪ A lot of disconnected youth are in foster care ▪ In Cecil County, foster families don't want teenagers ▪ Move around a lot - *Pulled away from family, stay with another family for a while, kicked out then go to another family.*	**74**
• **BARRIERS TO CONNECTION WITH SCHOOL AND WORK** ○ **FEARFUL OF SUPPORT/PROGRAMS - 35** ▪ Perception of DSS: • DSS is scary to people • DSS is here to take their kids away, that's what we think • People will go hungry before calling DSS ▪ *Me and my fiancé are scared to call, hesitated for weeks. Have to because we need help. Petrified they were going to take our kids.* ○ **TRANSPORTATION - 25** ▪ *Every single one of my friends, don't have money for cars. If I don't have a car, can't get a job.* ▪ Stuck in one area ▪ With transportation, could explore other areas and other opportunities. ▪ No transportation makes it difficult to visit incarcerated parent ○ **LACK OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES - 9** ▪ Minimum wage ▪ Discrimination - tattoos, criminal record ▪ *Now have a job, but have transportation issues.* ○ **LACK OF SUPPORT / OPPORTUNITIES - 9** ▪ Missed opportunity or not given opportunities to go to school ▪ Leave home at age 18 ▪ Not what they thought it would be ▪ No one to help them ▪	**78**

Themes	Total Comments
CHARACTERISTICS OF DISCONNECTED YOUTH	
IMPACTS OF INCARCERATED PARENTS ○ **EMOTIONAL RESPONSE / IMPACTS – 37** ▪ Bitterness and resentful of incarcerated parent ▪ Youth do not want to talk about their incarcerated parents ▪ *He goes into grizzly bear mode if asked, won't talk too much about it.* ○ **RELATIONSHIP IMPACTS/ MISSED OPPORTUNITIES – 35** ▪ Lost opportunities to be there for kids, for holidays and birthdays ▪ *Because of it he tends to be extra protective of daughter. Every little thing, has to be there because his father was not there for him.* ▪ Limited ability to visit incarcerated parent - transportation, visiting hours, other parent discourages visits ○ **LOST SUPPORT/GUIDANCE – 7** ▪ Parental incarceration immediately changes ability to support child ▪ May cause child to go down the same path ▪ *Don't have someone there to show you the right way*	**79**
• **AVAILABLE SERVICES TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF DISCONNECTED YOUTH** ○ **PERRYVILLE OUTREACH PROGRAM - 19** ▪ Police chief ran program: took kids to basketball/baseball games ▪ Youth were acquainted with and looked up to police chief ▪ *Program kept me in school. Kept me safe. Kept me away from drugs. Earned my trust.* ○ **DSS - 13** ▪ Perception of DSS depends on the situation: *If you think DSS is going to take your kid, the view of DSS is bad. But, if want them to remove kids from a bad parent and DSS does not, then DSS is also viewed as bad.* ▪ At age 18 youth has the option of remaining in the system.	**32**
• **GAPS/NEEDS** ○ **RECREATION CENTERS - 29** ▪ Activities for youth ▪ No transportation, bring rec centers to communities ▪ Nothing to keep us out of trouble ▪ Kids want to be part of something – *Nothing for kids to do here. You see everyone hanging out laughing, a gang on the corner. You know they are doing drugs, but at least it's something to do.* ○ **ADDRESS FEAR OF DSS/SYSTEM - 22** ▪ Increase public awareness ▪ Public needs to hear a good story ▪ Invite foster care children to tell their stories ○ **STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS - 6** ▪ Need student loan forgiveness ▪ *Ruined my life. Lost financial aid for one semester of zeros. Now can't get another loan until pay back $14k. Ruins credit.* ▪ *Can't get car, apartment*	**57**

The focus groups were designed to understand the challenges and opportunities experienced by Disconnected Youth. Each group shed light on the priorities identified in both the LMB and FLF meeting. The table below illustrates the challenges and gaps described by both youth and adults around each priority area.

<table>
<tr><th rowspan="2">LMB and FLF Priorities</th><th colspan="2">Focus Group Highlights</th></tr>
<tr><th>Challenges</th><th>Gaps</th></tr>
<tr><td>• Parent/Family MH/SA

• Parental Incarceration</td><td>○ Unstable home life
○ Moving around a lot
○ Substance abuse in the home
○ Parenting skills lacking
○ Lack of affordable housing</td><td rowspan="2">○ Additional MH/SA services
• Personalized services
• Detox
• School-based MH/SA programs
○ Access to services
• More programs, activities for youth
• Transportation
• Insurance
• Childcare
○ Education/training
• Life skills
• Job training
○ Rec centers/community centers
• Activities
• Mentoring programs
○ Job opportunities
• Job training to lead to rapid employment
• Internships
• Transportation
○ Stable living environment
• Affordable housing</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Youth MH/SA -</td><td rowspan="2">○ General
• Lack of motivation
• Hopelessness
○ Significant MH/SA Issues
• Emotional, social, intellectual immaturity
○ Nothing to do
• Lingering/loitering
○ SA
• Drugs readily available
• Parent drug use, it's what we know
○ MH
• Unstable home life
• Lack of MH/SA services
• Homelessness
○ Academic underachievement
• Academic challenges stemming from home
• Not engaged
• Health and learning issues
○ Work
• Floundering after HS
• Lack of jobs
• Transportation
• Lure of drug trade</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Disconnected Youth</td><td>○ Academic support
○ Affordable housing
○ Job/life skills training
○ Internships
○ Financial literacy
○ Mentoring programs</td></tr>
</table>

Focus group youth and adults recommended that programs, activities and services be expanded, particularly mental health and substance abuse programs. But, they added the need for an expansion of opportunities and activities to provide safe places to experience enjoyable, affordable programs or events that would keep youth engaged and out of trouble in the first place.

FY16 Youth Needs Assessment Survey – Youth and Adult Versions

During April and May 2016, The Cecil County Youth Survey was implemented to youth and adults involved in various Cecil County programs. A total of 45 youth surveys and 36 adult surveys were collected. A summary of the responses of these youth is provided below followed by a summary of adult responses.

Summary of Youth Respondents

Most of the youth respondents were from Elkton (41%) and lived in a family home (82%). They were mostly white/Caucasian (68%), under the age of 16 (69%), and evenly split by gender. In terms of education and employment the majority were still in Middle, High School or GED programs (91%) and unemployed (87%). The majority of these youth reported plans for graduating high school (73%), going to a 4-year college (64%) and getting a job (55%).

These youth were asked about problems youth may face as well as the strengths or positive things they like about Cecil County. Specifically they were asked about problems they may face in their family and the community, health related problems and education and employment problems. Bullying and cyber-bullying was seen as the biggest problem you may face in their

family and community. Teen smoking and alcohol/substance use among teens was reported as the health related problem the most teens might face. Skipping school was seen as the biggest education and employment issue youth may face, though dropping out of school and independent living issues were also by many as educational and employment issues youth may face. The strength or positive thing that these youth reported liking about Cecil County the most was the recreational activities. The Schools were also seen as positive aspects of Cecil County.

Summary of Adult Respondents

Most of the adult respondents were from Elkton (53%) and lived in a family home (58%). They were mostly white/Caucasian (83%), under the age of 44 (64%), and female (83%). In terms of education and employment less than one-third (28%) had received some sort of college degree and more than one third were unemployed (37%).

These adult respondents were also asked about the same questions that the youth were about problems youth may face as well as the strengths or positive things they like about Cecil County. Substance use by parents, lack of recreational activities, bullying and poverty were seen by adults as the biggest problems youth may face in their family and community. Mental health, obesity, substance use and emotional trauma were reported by adults as the health related problems the most teens might face. Independent living skills were seen by adults as the biggest education and employment issue youth may face. The strengths or positive things that these adult respondents reported liking about Cecil County the most were the libraries and the schools.

Incarcerated Persons Survey

Between April 14 and April 30, 2016, The Incarcerated Persons Survey was implemented at the Cecil County Detention Center with all new intakes. Of the surveys collected, a total of 144 survey respondents reported being parents of children under the age of 18.

The majority (67%) of these incarcerated parents were males, ages 25 to 35 (55%). Just under half (43%) were sentenced while just over half (57%) were awaiting trial. In terms of education level, about 70% only had a high school diploma or less. Forty percent had attended a vocational program. Regarding working status, prior to incarceration, less than half of the respondents (44%) were working.

The majority (71%) reported having a substance abuse/addiction problem. Respondents were also asked about housing. Prior to their incarceration, the majority were living with a friend or relative (62.5%) in Cecil County (82%). More than half (53%) planned to live with family after their release.

These incarcerated parents reported having a range of one to six children under the age of 18. Almost half (48%) however reported having only one child. The average number of children was 2. Over three quarters (76%) reported that their children had not visited them while they had been incarcerated. After their release only about half (54%) planned to live in the same household as their children, while another 25% reported plans for regular visits with their children. The majority (60%) of parents reported their incarceration having a large, very disruptive impact on their family with the largest issue being on the children's emotional health.

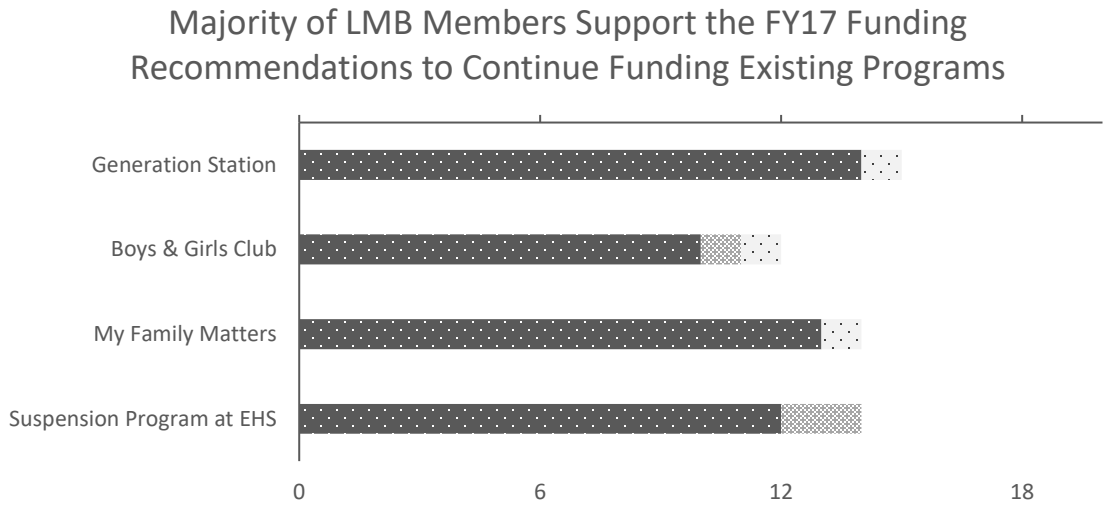
LMB Meeting #2 (N=20) May 2, 2016

The second LMB meeting, Shattuck & Associates provided a topline summary of the FLF and LMB meeting as well as the focus groups. The meeting was scheduled for one-hour, but was extended 30 minutes as board members engaged in a lively discussion about the implications and recommendations. Following the meeting, Shattuck and Associates developed an online survey to provide LMB members with an opportunity to cast a vote on the programs they would like to see funded in 2017. The survey highlights are shown in the figures below.

Cecil County LMB Online Survey (N=14) to Cast Votes on FY17 Funding

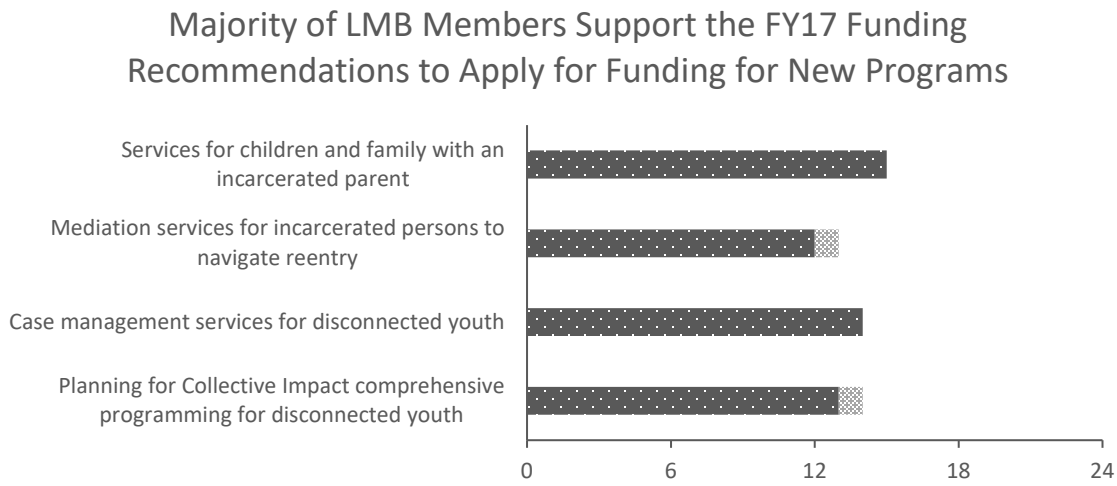
Between May 11 to 16, LMB members participated in an online survey providing them an opportunity to cast a vote on the programs they would like to see funded in 2017. LMB members strongly supported continuing to fund existing programs and apply for new funding to support the new programs listed in the online survey. The survey highlights are shown in the following figures.

Figure 1. Support for Continuing Funding for Existing Programs



	Suspension Program at EHS	My Family Matters	Boys & Girls Club	Generation Station
Yes	12	13	10	14
No	2	0	1	0
I recuse myself	0	1	1	1

Figure 2. Support for Funding New Programs



	Planning for Collective Impact comprehensive programming for disconnected youth	Case management services for disconnected youth	Mediation services for incarcerated persons to navigate reentry	Services for children and family with an incarcerated parent
Yes	13	14	12	15
No	1	0	1	0

Conclusion

The findings presented in this study lend support to the results from the 2014 Cecil County LMB Needs Assessment as well as data around current Results, Indicators, and Strategic Goals (see appendices). As indicated in the current study, the county received high marks for its effective collaboration, advocacy around mental health, and good schools. In contrast, the county received lower marks for family stability; a measure that may help explain Cecil's high truancy rates from elementary through high school.

Like the current study, the 2014 assessment identified family stability as the greatest challenge: child maltreatment, out of home placement, poverty, and homelessness. The current study shed light on the core issues that precipitate a wide range of these and other negative social outcomes - namely, mental health and substance abuse. Mental health and substance abuse challenges are pervasive among youth/young adults and parents/families and there is a persistent shortage of services to deal with the related outcomes.

In light of these findings, it is not surprising that Disconnected Youth surfaced as the most pronounced Strategic Goal, followed closely by Parental Incarceration. As the youth shared in the focus groups, a great deal of their disconnection started at a young age and stemmed in large part from the lack of family stability that they experienced growing up. Family instability, in many cases, was often exacerbated by parental incarceration. The impacts are far reaching with youth reporting going into 'survival mode' at very young ages, having difficulty with peers, being bullied or bullying, falling behind academically , dropping out of school, or finishing high school with little or no future prospects. Several youth reported leaving home when they

turned 18 or graduated from high school and with little or no resources, they ended up homeless.

While focus group participants had much to say about their challenges, they also offered up many creative solutions to address those challenges. They were most interested in having additional opportunities to get a GED or job training, to work, to get a car, and to learn how to live independently. They spoke passionately about finding a place where they felt safe, where they could begin to figure out what was important to them and to develop life skills and a plan for independence. They talked openly about wanting more intensive one-on-one counseling services and case management so they could get and stay on their feet.

The strategies identified in the current study highlight the following solutions:

- Expanded Mental Health/Substance Abuse services for youth/young adults and parents/families
- Provide greater access to services - transportation, insurance, childcare
- Safe places, strategically located - e.g., Youth, Rec, or Community Centers
    - Mentoring programs
    - Fun, affordable activities - art programs
    - Life skills training - e.g., financial literacy
    - Education, academic support - e.g., GED
    - Job Training, career counseling, job fairs
- Job opportunities
- Stable living environments

No single agency can address the complex challenges described in this report. The Cecil County LMB would greatly benefit from using a sound Collective Impact Framework (fsg.org) to identify and develop solutions to complex problems. LMBs, by design, utilize a pseudo- Collective Impact approach, but that approach could be strengthened to include all 5 Collective Impact elements. Collective Impact and Results Based Accountability combined provide a very strong basis for collaboration, planning, implementation, and evaluation.