



TO: BAINBRIDGE ISLAND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: HEALTH, HOUSING & HUMAN SERVICES COUNCIL
SUBJECT: HUMAN SERVICES RECOMMENDATIONS
DATE: JANUARY 3, 2011
CC: BRENDA BAUER, BAINBRIDGE ISLAND CITY MANAGER

Over the last 11 years, HHHS has successfully assisted City Council to implement the Human Services Element of the Comprehensive Plan. It has done so by 1) fostering improvement in the range, delivery and quality of service programs, 2) ensuring access to all island residents in need, 3) promoting long-range planning, 4) enhancing coordination of services across the network of care and, 5) identifying community needs through needs assessments and public forums. We are proud to have served our community. We are also honored to have been trusted to act as the principal advisory and programmatic arm for the City Council and Mayor on matters pertaining to the development and delivery of health, housing and human services to the Bainbridge Island community.

The enduring financial crisis is bringing this chapter to a close. As City Council moves forward and begins to consider its responsibilities in regard to the health, housing and human service needs of the community, HHHS offers the following recommendations:

- **Start now to develop a plan for dedicated, stable financing to provide efficient, coordinated health, housing and human services on Bainbridge Island.** The need will persist for dedicated funding to support services applied across the network of care to foster coordination, create efficiencies, assure equity and increase effectiveness.
- **Make sure that City dollars go to what the City can do best.** Prioritize investment in assessing what problems face Bainbridge residents, how those problems are evolving and, consequently, targeting precious financial resources to what will make the biggest difference. It's easier for an agency to focus fundraising efforts on visible problems such as hungry families, caregivers needing respite or children requiring after-school care. It is not as easy but just as important to fund assessment of community-wide needs, staying ahead of evolving needs and assuring that less visible areas of need are attended to. That's what government dollars can do best.
- **Think beyond City financing to develop approaches that serve to maximally leverage and coordinate all available funding.** Direct services are primarily funded by private giving. There is more "bang for the buck" when public dollars are directed toward strategies that enhance/or leverage private funding. This recommendation highlights the importance of a perspective of global advocacy across the whole as opposed to focus on the individual parts.
- **Protect the future from disinterest and vested interest through independent community oversight.** It is more important than ever that Council works to assure that the funding system works for each agency within the system of care and not just to preserve the status quo. Regardless of model, it will be critical to assure distribution of precious public dollars with effective equity across competing agencies and advised by clear awareness of the breadth of existing critical need.
- **Sustain commitment to human services which makes BI unique.** There are many island residents who would find it unacceptable to fill one more pothole if it meant serving one less hungry family or needy child, or if it contributed to an overall less healthy Bainbridge. Bainbridge Island is a giving, caring community that endorses and supports the promotion of island-wide health. It prioritizes the good of the neediest among us and recognizes that in so doing the community as a whole benefits. This defines Bainbridge and it is an important part of what makes us unique.