

Family Connection

Community Three-Year Strategic Plan

FY 2009 - FY 2011
(July 1, 2008 - June 30, 2011)

Plan Cover Sheet

County: Forsyth Region: 2

Submitted on Apr 17, 2008

Table of Contents

	Page
Section I - Community/Collaborative Context	
A. County description	3
B. Summary of Issues Affecting Children and Families	8
C. Documentation of the Community Assessment Process	10
D. Collaborative Description	13
E. Family Engagement Description and Activities	14
Section II - Goals and Benchmarks	
Results for Children and Families	16
Section III - Sustainability	
A. Collaborative Development	19
B. Strategy Resource Development and Sustainability	22
C. Community Engagement	23

Section I - Community/Collaborative Context

TYP - I A. County Description

Location:

Forsyth County is located 40 miles north of the State Capital, bounded by Fulton and Gwinnett counties to the south. The completion of Georgia Highway 400 twenty years ago turned Forsyth County into a suburb of Atlanta.

Government:

Forsyth operates under a commission-county manager form of government. The Board of Commissioners is made up of five members, each living in a specific district but elected by voters countywide to serve four year terms. The five members elect one of their own to serve as chairman of the board for the coming year.

The County Seat is Cumming, and although there are several named communities within the county, there are no other incorporated towns or cities.

History:

Forsyth County was created in 1832 from parts of the original Cherokee Country. It was named for John Forsyth, Governor of Georgia from 1827-1829 and Secretary of State under Presidents Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren. The county seat of Forsyth County is Cumming, and it was established in 1834. The city is named for Colonel William Cumming of Augusta, a prominent lawyer.

Topography:

Much of the eastern side of the county borders the shores of Lake Sidney Lanier, which is one of the busiest recreational bodies of water in the nation. Lake Lanier has 200 miles of shoreline. It was created in the 1950s with the impoundment of the Chattahoochee River at Buford Dam. The lake has accelerated the growth of the county, as well as provided recreational enjoyment for many throughout north Georgia. The lake is home to Southern Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons, both endangered species.

Indian and colonial history:

Several Indian archaeological sites are located within Forsyth County. An Indian mound and village are located on Settendown Creek near the mouth of the Etowah River. Another Indian village is located near Sawnee Mountain on Big Creek. Two places of historic note in Forsyth County are Pool's Mill Covered Bridge and the Settles Home. One of the few remaining covered bridges in the country, Pool's Mill is on the National Register of Historic Places. The Settles Home is considered to be the oldest home in the county and is under consideration to be listed as a historic landmark.

Population:

We were recently acknowledged to be the 6th fastest growing county nationally. According to the US Census, the estimated population of Forsyth County in 2006 was 140,393. This is a 42.7% increase in population in relation to the 2000 Census, where

Name of County: Forsyth

the total population was 98,407. This gives Forsyth County a population ranking of 13 out of 159 counties. (GA. Department of Community Affairs, 2007, GA Dept of Labor, 2005 Area Labor Profile; US Census, 2007) Of this estimated population, Forsyth County has 93.5% Caucasian residents, 2.2% African American residents, 7.6% Hispanic residents, and 3.29% were classified as "Other". (GA County Guide, 2007; GA DCA, 2007; US Census, 2000) Overall, we are less diverse than the state population, but our Hispanic population is growing at a similar rate. Georgia is 65.3% white, 29.9% black, and 7.6% hispanic.

The median age of Forsyth County residents in 2005 was 33.8 years old. (GA. Department of Community Affairs, 2007, GA Dept of Labor, 2005 Area Labor Profile; US Census, 2007) Forsyth is slightly younger than the State overall. It is estimated that in 2005 27.31% of the county's residents were age 18 or younger, compared to 26.5% for the State. The median age in Forsyth is 33.8% compared to 34.6 for Georgia, And even the percentage of residents over 65 is smaller - only 7.14% compared to 9.6% statewide

The 2000 Census reports 4.6% of Forsyth County's households were headed by females with children under 18 years of age, compared with 12.2% statewide. Total households with children under 18 represented 51.3% of all households in the county, compared to 49.8% statewide. The total number of households grew 41.2% from 2000 to 2005, with an estimate of 51,536 housing units in 2005. 88% of residents in Forsyth County own their home, compared to the state rate of 67.5%. (U. S. Census, 2000; GA County Guide, 2007)

Employment, Income, and Poverty in Forsyth:

In 2004, over half of the employees in Forsyth County - 56.9% - worked in the service producing sector of the economy. This mirrors statewide data. Another 31.6% were employed in the goods producing sector and 11.3% were employed in government. Statewide, the service producing industry is the largest employment sector, contributing 65.4% of the state's jobs.

In that same year, the top employers in Forsyth (in alpha order) were Greko LLC, Northside Hospital, Scientific Games, Inc. (the producer of the lottery tickets for the Georgia Lottery) Siemens Energy and Automation, Inc. and Tyson Poultry, Inc. (DCA County Snapshots)

In 2005, Forsyth County had a 3.2% unemployment rate compared to the State's rate of 5.3%. Between 2000 and 2004, Forsyth County's annual unemployment rate averaged 2.9%, compared with the state's average of 4.4%. Nationally, the unemployment rate for the same period averaged 5.5%. (GA DCA, 2007)

In 2003 it was estimated that 5.7% of all residents in Forsyth County live in poverty, compared with the state average of 13.4%. (GA Dept. of Community Affairs, 2007) In 2005 over 2,300 children in Forsyth County lived in poverty. Although the percentage of children who are poor in Forsyth was 6.1% in 2005, comparing very favorable with the State's high rate of child poverty (20.3%) it must be noted that Forsyth's rate of child poverty has risen since 2002, when it was 5.8%.

Name of County: Forsyth

In addition, the percentage of students in Forsyth who are eligible to receive free or reduced price means has also risen from 10.9% in 2002 to 14.2% just 4 years later. Again, these are lower rates than the State (44.2 in 02 and 49.8% in 06) but this still represents a great many children - over 3,600 in 2006 who are living at, or close to, the poverty line.

Forsyth County's estimated median household income in 2003 was \$73,125. This amount was greater than the state's median household income of \$42,421 in that same year. Nationally, the median household income in 2002 was \$42,409. A recent study based on the 2006 census information has ranked Forsyth County as the 13th wealthiest community in the nation and we were recently recognized by Forbes magazine as the 2nd best place to get ahead in the country.

Healthy Start:

In 2005, 84.0% of infants born to mothers who live in Forsyth County were born healthy. This is defined as a child whose mother received pre-natal care, whose mother did not drink or smoke during pregnancy, and who weighed more than 5.5lbs. at birth. (Family Connection Website, 2007) In 2005, there were four occurrences of infant mortality in Forsyth County. There were five deaths of a child between the ages of 1-14, and seven deaths of children between the ages of 15-19. (GA Kids Count Fact Sheet, 2007)

The teen pregnancy rate for girls ages 15 to 17 has held fairly constant, ranging from 19.5 per 1,000 in 2002 to 19.4 in 2006. This rate represents 53 pregnancies for girls of this age in 2006. Although Forsyth's rate of teen pregnancy for this age group is nearly half that of the state (37.7 in 2006), it is important to note that teen pregnancy rates have been dropping throughout the state but have not dropped in Forsyth.

Child Abuse and Neglect:

In 2002 Forsyth County's rate of substantiated incidents of child abuse and/or neglect was 12.8 per 1,000, while the state's rate was 19.8. This meant there were 161 substantiated incidents of abuse and/or neglect in Forsyth County in that year. By 2006 the state's rate had dropped to 16.1, while Forsyth was able to reduce its own rate of substantiated incidents by one-half, down to a rate of 6 per 1,000, or 42 incidents. Agencies partnering to help reduce this rate are DFCS, Juvenile Court, Family Haven, Forsyth County Schools, and others that work to support stable families.

Our community is also working to improve services available to families experiencing domestic violence. In 2007 Family Haven sheltered 194 women and children. 2,090 hotline calls were received and 3,572 referrals were made to other helping agencies.

According to Kids Count, in 2006 12.8% of children born in Forsyth County were born to mothers with less than 12 years of education. The mother's level of education is often the best predictor of a child's ability to succeed in school. Unfortunately, the percentage of babies born in Forsyth to mothers with less than 12 years of education has increased from 11.8% in 2003 to 12.8% in 2006. This rise is faster than that exhibited by the State (only .3% over the same time period). And although Forsyth's rate is still only half that of the state (GA was 23.8% in 2006) this still represents over 1,100 babies who may

Name of County: Forsyth

enter the school system less prepared for success than their peers.

Educational Opportunity:

In 2006 there were 74 eligible 3-year old children enrolled in Head Start. There were 1,055 eligible children enrolled in the Georgia Pre-K program, and 54.7% of these children were from low income families. (GA Kids Count, 2007) There are 26 public schools in Forsyth County. These schools include 16 elementary schools, six middle schools and four high schools. There are multiple colleges or universities with over 2000 students near Cumming, including Gwinnett Technical College (about 17 miles away), Gainesville College (about 18 miles away), North Georgia College and State University (about 25 miles away), Emory University (about 32 miles away), and Devry Institute Of Technology (about 32 miles away).

There were 27,908 total students enrolled in Forsyth County Schools during the 2006-2007 academic school year. Most of the students were Caucasian, totaling 85%. African American students made up two percent of the population, with Hispanic students making up nine percent of the population, Multi-Racial students making up one percent of the population, and Asian students making up three percent of the population. (GA Department of Education, 2006-2007)

In 2007, 98% of the eighth grade students Met or Exceeded state standards on promotional tests in reading. In 2007, 96% of eighth grade students Met or Exceeded state standards on promotional tests in math. This rate has been increasing since 2003.

Between 2001 and 2005, Forsyth County school system reported an average high school dropout rate of 3.5% for students in grades 9 to 12. Statewide, this rate is 5.6% for the same period of time. 1.6% of the students in grades 7 - 12 dropped out of school during the 2006-2007 school year. This rate was lower than the rate in the 2005-2006 school year, in which 2.3% of the students in grades 7-12 dropped out of school. In grades 9-12, 2.5% of the students dropped out of school during the 2006-2007 academic school year. This rate also decreased over the last three academic school years, with 3.5% of students dropping out in 2005-2006, and 3.8% dropping out in during the 2004-2005 school year. (GA DOE, 2007; GA DCA, 2007).

Absenteeism:

Forsyth has made steady progress in reducing the percentage of children absent more than 15 days from school. In 2003 over 10.7% of children missed three weeks of classes (the state rate was 13.8%). By the 2006-2007 school year that percentage had dropped to 8.6%, reflecting a similar downward trend statewide. Although the percentage has dropped, this still means that in Forsyth County approximately 2,400 children were missing 3 weeks of schooling. The local school system has been very proactive about addressing absenteeism and is energetic to partner with community based organizations as our population continues to grow.

Overall, we are finding very positive trends in our community. In March 2008 we were named by Forbes magazine the 2nd of the "best places to get ahead." What we are unfortunately seeing is a greater divide between those with great wealth and those living

Name of County: Forsyth

in poverty. We are seeing affordable housing disappear in our community and an inability for those in need to access services due to transportation issues. The collaborative is concerned that while many of our benchmarks are positive now, with the rapid population growth we could face tremendous challenges in maintaining high levels of service. We truly want to get a grasp on the services we are wrapping around target populations to determine their effectiveness. This will help to better allocate stretched resources.

Section I - Community/Collaborative Context

TYP - I B. Summary of Issues Affecting Children and Families

Narrative Summary

In our planning process two major topics came to the front of our focus; Abuse/Neglect and School Completion. Our teams wanted to better understand how many women with children were re-referred to DFCS due to domestic violence and what preventative services they were receiving. They also sought to better define improvement in services and using the community partnerships to fill service gaps. The teams acknowledged that the schools are often our best vehicle for reaching students that were in need, and school attendance and completion came to the front of discussion.

Abuse:

Child abuse and/or neglect is an issue facing all Georgia counties. There are several types of abuse. Physical abuse is any injury to a child, other than an injury sustained accidentally, that is caused by willful cruelty and applied trauma. Sexual abuse is the sexual exploitation of a child by an older person. Neglect includes emotional neglect, as well as physical neglect, such as lack of proper food, clothing, medical care, guidance or supervision.

As mentioned previously, Family Haven sheltered 194 women and children escaping domestic violence situations. Over 2,090 hotline calls were received and 3,572 referrals were made to other helping agencies.

Sexual Assault cases are also increasing in our county. In 2006 Northside Hospital saw 8 sexual assault cases. In 2007, 30 patients were seen and already in the 1st quarter of 2008 16 cases have been seen.

School Completion and Attendance:

Between 2001 and 2005, Forsyth County school system reported an average high school dropout rate of 3.5% for students in grades 9 to 12. Statewide, this rate is 5.6% for the same period of time. 1.6% of the students in grades 7 - 12 dropped out of school during the 2006-2007 school year. This rate was lower than the rate in the 2005-2006 school year, in which 2.3% of the students in grades 7-12 dropped out of school. In grades 9-12, 2.5% of the students dropped out of school during the 2006-2007 academic school year. This rate also decreased over the last three academic school years, with 3.5% of students dropping out in 2005-2006, and 3.8% dropping out in during the 2004-2005 school year. (GA DOE, 2007; GA DCA, 2007). While this data states that we are overall doing well with this effort, to continue to make AYP and stay ahead of our growing population we must increase our understanding of program success and how they affect the success rate.

When delving deeper in the data for specific schools we found that Forsyth Central High School had a graduation rate of 77.8% which was the lowest of our three existing high schools. Of the middle schools in the county Otwell Middle School had the highest rate

Name of County: Forsyth

of students that were absent more than 15 days in a school year - right at 10%. Interestingly, Otwell School is the main feeder school for Forsyth Central High School.

"According to a 2007 study by Georgia Southern University, for every 1 percent of the population age 25 and older that doesn't complete high school, per capita income in Georgia's counties is lowered by \$98.20. High school non-completion in Georgia costs the state \$18 billion per year in foregone income. Add the loss of state output, and this figure increases to \$24.5 billion. Additionally, high school non-completion reduces state employment by approximately 200,000 jobs." (Source: Business to Business, Nov 2007)

Forsyth County spent an average of \$6,644 per student for public education each year between 2001 and 2005, while the statewide average was \$6,603. Based on the 2004 graduating class for that county school system, 71.3% of the students were eligible for the HOPE Scholarship Program. The scholarship is available to eligible students to attend a post-secondary school in Georgia. Statewide, 62.0% of the graduating students were eligible for the HOPE scholarship. (GA DCA, 2007) We were able to identify many programs that are in place to support student success, particularly among high achieving students, but we lacked data and confirmation on their effectiveness with the target at-risk population. This drove our teams to push for a strategy level evaluation of the strategy centering around school success.

Addressing the Issues

To address community issues over the next three years, the Forsyth County Community Connection plans to play an active role in the development of strategy teams around our areas of focus which are Abuse and School Completion.

We will begin to convene the Abuse Strategy Team, which will consist of many new members and give them a new venue for communication. We will also expand on our already strong School Completion Strategy Team. Both teams will seek to identify community based programs that support the strategies and to better understand how they work together.

TYP - I C. Documentation of the Community Assessment Process

Overall Process

The Center for Community Studies, Inc. assisted with the data collection and the data analysis. The assessment allowed the collaborative to identify the needs, problems, and assets of local children and families. In addition, the collaborative was able to gauge the amount and types of services available to them. The assessment process ended in September 2007.

Community Meetings were also held in the fall to give key partners the opportunity to present information on key groups they work with. Presentations were made by DFCS, Juvenile Justice, School Graduation Coaches, Transition Services, and the Chamber of Commerce.

Methods

The following surveys were distributed:

- ?A one-page opinion survey to adults in the community through civic organizations;
- ?A three-page comprehensive survey to service providers to identify unmet needs and barriers to services; and
- ?A two-page youth survey distributed to students at the Forsyth County middle and high schools.

Adult Survey

A one-page adult survey was distributed by the Family Connection organization to Forsyth County residents. Also, a web survey was available along with the paper version. 503 forms were returned. The top twenty most serious unmet needs chosen by the providers as being, "Very Serious," or "Somewhat Serious" were:

1. Substance abuse - drugs, alcohol, or tobacco;
2. No positive place for teens to "hang out" after school or on weekends;
3. Dysfunctional families (with problem relationships);
4. Child abuse or neglect;
5. Availability of public transportation;
6. Domestic Violence;
7. Crime, property related;
8. Poverty, low income families without resources;
9. Affordable housing that meets standard codes;
10. Having a baby before finishing high school;
11. High school drop outs;
12. Post-secondary education (college, technical college);
13. Affordable quality child care;

Name of County: Forsyth

14. Violent Crime (rape, murder, assault);
15. Jobs/job training for youth;
16. Recreational activities / facilities for everyone;
17. Access to health/medical service (doctor, hospital, health dept....);
18. Jobs/job training for adults;
19. Access to mental health services (counselors, support groups, psychologists); and
20. Easy access to law enforcement services.

Social Service Provider Survey

The three-page provider survey was distributed to community providers. Also, a web survey was available along with the paper version. 739 surveys were returned for analysis. Providers were asked to rank the seriousness of unmet needs in the county as being, ?Very Serious,? ?Serious,? ?Somewhat Serious,? or ?Not Serious.? Providers ranked the top unmet needs in the following in order of importance:

1. Child abuse and neglect;
2. Parent education;
3. Tie - Foster care for children and adolescents;
3. Tie - Delinquency prevention;
4. Drug-abuse prevention and outpatient treatment; and
5. Crime prevention.

Social Service Provider Survey Continued

Providers were asked to rank the barriers preventing people from using or accessing services. Providers ranked the top barriers in the following in order of importance:

1. Language barriers;
2. Lack of information about available services;
3. Lack of transportation;
4. Lack of child care; and
5. Cost of services.

Youth Survey

A two-page youth survey was distributed to students at the local middle and high schools. 489 surveys were returned for analysis. The survey asked the youth to rank 12 services from 1 - 12 according to, "How much youth in the community need them." #1 equaled the highest priority and #12 equaled the lowest priority of those on the list. The youth ranked the items in the following order:

1. Academic support (enrichment, remediation, tutoring);
2. Recreation programs (sports, games, clubs);
3. Health education (pregnancy prevention, HIV/AIDS prevention);
4. Job readiness, work experience;
5. Alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention classes or activities;
6. Cultural programs (music, trips, art or drama performances);
7. Conflict resolution or violence prevention activities;

Name of County: Forsyth

8. Leadership development;
9. Health management (nutrition, self-management of chronic conditions such as asthma);
10. Summer Activities;
11. Health services (screening, treatment); and
12. Mental health services (counseling, referrals for treatment).

The youth were also given open-ended questions. Approximately 19 pages of text summary are available for review.

TYP - I D. Collaborative Description

The Forsyth County Community Connection is a 501 c (3) organization. The below outlines its history:

- 1993, representatives from the Forsyth County School System and Juvenile Justice System realized the need for a forum which encourages the exchange of information and resources among community agencies " the Cumming/Forsyth County Council on Youth is created and incorporated October 1994.
- 1993, first funding from United Way of Forsyth County.
- May 1995, first annual Rising Star Luncheon recognizes students making personal improvements.
- July 1997, after three failed attempts for inclusion, Forsyth County's collaborative begins its strategic planning process as a Family Connection Partnership; an executive director is contracted.
- April 1998, the collaborative is designated as a 501 c (3) non-profit agency by the IRS.
- July 1998, implementation and evaluation of the community plan begins; the plan expands to over 50 different programs, activities and services.
- January 2000, a lease is signed between Georgia Baptist Health Care Foundation and the collaborative to renovate the former hospital facility into a family resource center; expands to include offices for 17 different social service agencies and public meeting space.
- January 2002, Board of Directors retreat changes the name to Forsyth County Community Connection to better reflect the role in community and revises mission and vision statements.
- October 2003, Family Center sold to Ninth District Opportunity, Inc. as managing partner.
- March 2004, community-wide strategic plan adds third goal of family stability and self-sufficiency to those of child health and students succeeding in school.
- November 2004, executive director of seven (7) years leaves the Connection. The Collaborative Board revises the mission and vision statements. Executive Director hired and resigns after 1 year. New Director hired in June 2006 and currently in place.

Beginning in January of 2005, we began referring to our monthly meeting of agencies and organizations as the Network Meeting and our Board of Directors as the Collaborative. The Network Meeting is attended by a good representation of our community agencies, government entities, counseling services, school system, etc. The Network tends to currently be weak in representation of the Faith community and families. The Collaborative Board is currently made up of fifteen (15) individuals representing the faith-based community, the school system, DFCS, civic groups, business, and other important community partners. The Collaborative Board is engaging the Network in decisions concerning the strategic plan, programming, focus, etc. Historically, the primary partnership that the Community Connection has had has been with the local school system. There has not been a strong partnership with the local government, United Way, Chamber of Commerce, etc. We are currently in the process of building strong partnerships with these entities. Evidence of this work is in increased attendance at all Network meetings and greater participation on community initiatives.

TYP - I E. Family Engagement Description and Activities

The Forsyth County Community Connection currently has a family member on our collaborative board. Family representation participated in all board trainings and planning sessions. They have been engaged in the planning of community initiatives and collaborative sustainability.

We also currently have family representation on our School Completion Strategy Team, but need to expand our family engagement to the Abuse Strategy Team. This is a goal for implementation the first fiscal year of this strategic plan.

Name of County: Forsyth

For each activity, specify the year(s) in which it will be implemented:

Code	Activities	FY09	FY10	FY11
FE1	Collaborative will assess itself on family support principles and family engagement.	X	X	X
FE2	Collaborative will participate in training about family engagement.	X		
FE3	Collaborative will develop plan for effective family engagement.	X		
FE4	Collaborative by-laws will provide for parent/family positions on governing body and family members participate in that role.	X		
FE5	Family members will participate as members of collaborative committees, task forces, etc.	X		
FE6	Family members will participate as leaders or co-leaders of committees, task forces, within the collaborative.		X	
FE7	Family members will participate as leaders or co-leaders of committees, task forces of collaborative partner(s).			X
FE8	Collaborative will establish meeting times and locations that are convenient for family participation.	X		
FE9	Collaborative will provide leadership development opportunities for families (examples: training, peer mentoring).		X	
FE10	Collaborative will establish a family advisory board.			X
FE11	Family members will serve on interview committees to hire collaborative staff.			
FE12	Family members will serve on interview committees to hire staff in programs of collaborative partner(s).			
FE13	Collaborative will hire family members as staff.			
FE14	Collaborative partner(s) will hire family members as staff.			
FE15	Collaborative will involve families in planning process and in designing strategies.	X		
FE16	Collaborative will support family participation in collaborative meetings and in events (examples: transportation, childcare, stipends, meals).		X	
FE17	Collaborative will actively seek input of family members (examples: surveys, focus groups, community assessment).	X		
FE18	Family members will provide their opinions about services or programs within the collaborative.		X	
FE19	Family members will provide their opinions about services or programs by collaborative partner(s).			
FE20	Adult family members will be involved in programs and activities for their children and youth.		X	
FE21	Other Family Engagement activities related to collaborative development (please specify)			

Section II - Goals and Benchmarks

TYP - II A. Results for Children and Families

Goal # 1: All children in Forsyth county will be raised in a safe and healthy environment.

Benchmark Objective: Reduce the number of mothers with children being re-referred to DFCS for domestic violence incidents by 5% in 2011 based on data collected in 2009 (locally developed indicator). (Data source: Forsyth County DFCS, 2009)

Code: LD1

Indicator: Locally-developed.

Overall Three-Year Strategy # 1.1

Strategy: Ensure that women with children referred to DFCS for Domestic Violence situations improve their stability by having access to support services.

Types of programs and activities will include counseling resources, basic needs (food, shelter, transportation), job training, translation services, emergency shelter, and legal services.

Target Group(s): Mothers with children referred to DFCS for domestic violence

Supporting Evidence for the Strategy:

- ? Growing up in a violent home is a terrifying and traumatic experience that can affect every aspect of a child's life, growth and development. It can make children less likely to succeed in school, more likely to suffer and commit violence, and more likely to face a host of health problems that can last throughout their lives. Children growing up with domestic violence are also at risk of facing violence themselves. The overlap between domestic violence and child abuse has been well documented: where one form of family violence exists, there is a likelihood the other does as well. Growing up in a violent family is also a significant risk factor for youth and community violence.
Source: (<http://endabuse.org>), Publication: , Author: , Date:
- A growing body of evidence supports the need for early intervention into childhood development of criminal propensities. Research has shown that early intervention efforts enjoy public support and are proving to be effective in reducing criminal and delinquent behavior.²⁹ The social factors that these successful prevention programs address are similar to those found to be associated with domestic violence and child abuse, and the contribution of family violence to later youth violence, is clear. This overlap cries out for collaborative prevention efforts between the fields of family and community violence. Specific project strategies should be created through a dynamic partnership between local public agencies and service providers, including CPS, domestic violence agencies, home visitation programs, fatherhood programs, early childhood development and daycare programs, the schools, the police, healthcare providers, after school youth programs, and economic development programs, to name a few. Ideally, the policies and practices of each of the partnership agencies would be reviewed and changed to integrate a strong prevention focus into services and programs.
Source: <http://www.mincava.umn.edu>, Publication: Domestic Violence, Child Abuse, and Youth Violence: Strategies for Prevention and Early Intervention, Author: Janet Carter, Date:

Name of County: Forsyth

Goal # 2: All children will succeed in school.

Benchmark Objective: Improve on-time graduation rates from 83% in 2007 to 88% in 2010. (Data source: Forsyth County Schools, www.forsyth.k12.ga.us, 2008)

Code: CS5

Indicator: Students who graduate from high school on time

Benchmark Objective: To decrease the number of students who are absent 15 days or more from 8.6% school year 2006-2007 to 5.6% by school year 2009-2010. (Data source: Forsyth County Schools, www.forsyth.k12.ga.us, 2007)

Code: CS1

Indicator: Children absent more than 15 days from school

Overall Three-Year Strategy # 2.1

Strategy: Ensure that those students who are most likely at-risk of not completing high school receive services to support their academic success in school.

Types of programs and activities will include targeted attendance programs, Graduation Coaches, mentoring, volunteer in class tutoring, truancy officer, Kick It Up clubs (group based sessions around goal setting, time management, and self awareness for middle and high school)

Target Group(s): Students enrolled at Central High School identified by the Graduation Coach, Students enrolled at Otwell Middle School with 15+ days absent

Supporting Evidence for the Strategy:

- ? "a high school diploma or GED is increasingly deemed necessary to obtain all but the most low skill of jobs?.Grade school dropouts have one-half and high school dropouts have two-thirds the lifetime earning capacity of high school graduates according to the U.S. Department of Education. The U.S. Labor Department reports that since the late 1970s the average real earnings for men without a high school diploma fell by 26% and for women without a diploma by 9%." ("Adult Literacy: The Foundation for Progress," page 2, <http://literacy.kent.edu>)
Source: ? "a high school diploma or GED is increasingly deemed necessary to obtain all but the most low skill of jobs?.Grade school dropouts have one-half and high school dropouts have two-thirds the lifetime earning capacity of high school graduates according to the U.S. Department of Education. The U.S. Labor Department reports that since the late 1970s the average real earnings for men without a high school diploma fell by 26% and for women without a diploma by 9%." ("Adult Literacy: The Foundation for Progress," page 2, <http://literacy.kent.edu>) , Publication: , Author: , Date:
- ? "Education plays a vital role in preparing individuals to participate actively in the political, economic, and social aspects of their communities. For instance, more education may increase a person's sense of responsibility to be informed of national and state issues, to participate in community service activities or to be a member of organizations, for example a community or church group."
Source: ("Economic and Other Outcomes of Education," page 2, The Condition of Education 1998, <http://nces.ed.gov>) , Publication: , Author: , Date: 1998
- Student engagement has emerged as a key ingredient of effective dropout prevention programs and strategies. Rather than simply decreasing dropout, these programs focus on promoting school completion through approaches that are strength-based, involve multiple systems in the students' lives, occur over time, and are individualized to meet student needs.
Source: Christenson, Sinclair, Lehr, & Hurley, 2000, Publication: Increasing School Completion: Learning from Research-Based Practices that Work, Author: Camilla A. Lehr, Date: August 2004
- In Philadelphia, researchers found that 50 percent of all eventual high school dropouts could

Name of County: Forsyth

be identified as early as sixth grade on the basis of just four educational indicators?low attendance, receiving a poor classroom behavior mark from one or more teachers, failing mathematics, or failing English. Among eighth graders with low attendance or a failing grade in math or English, fewer than 75 percent graduate on time. And ninth graders who show no risk factors in eighth grade but have low attendance, earn fewer than two credits, or fail to be promoted also have at least a 75 percent chance of dropping out. By tracking students over time, researchers in Chicago have created an "on-track indicator" that accurately identifies 85 percent of the ninth grade students who will eventually drop out of Chicago's public high schools. A student is considered on track at the end of ninth grade if he or she has accumulated enough course credits to earn promotion to tenth grade while receiving no more than one F (based on semester marks) in core academic subjects.

Source: Achieve Inc., Publication: Policy Brief, Author: Achieve Inc, Date:

Section III - Sustainability

TYP - III A. Collaborative Development

As a result of Forsyth County being one of the fastest growing counties, we have heard much in the way of lack of understanding/knowledge of resources, duplication of services, and ability to access services. With the rapid population increase in the past few years it has been increasingly difficult to effectively market to the public, and referring professionals, that we have many resources available in this community. We are currently in the process of updating our community resource directory and utilizing network meeting to facilitate better interagency communication. Improvements are beginning to be made, but this will be critical to the success of this plan in the next three years.

The Collaborative would also like to explore the possibility of establishing a benchmark around family health and wellness. So often there are basic needs that affect school success and abuse/neglect, but we have yet to develop a way of measuring this link. We feel that developing this would help to better serve the client population and identify gaps in service.

Access to transportation for clients is also a critical concern for the collaborative. Regional transportation to and from the city of Atlanta is available through GRTA, but basic public transport to and from service provider appointments is very limited. Clients currently access Dial-A-Ride and local taxi companies. Forsyth Central High School recently partnered with one of the local taxi companies to bring at-risk youth to school prior to the traditional start time to enable them to have access to tutoring and mentoring services. This has been with a very limited target group of students and we have seen the costs become almost prohibitive in a very short period of time. As a result of this information being shared during the strategic planning process, the collaborative partners acknowledged a need for a unified voice on this issue as local and regional transportation issues are brought before local government.

This collaborative also serves as the housing organization for the Hands On Forsyth Initiative. This program recruits, trains, places, and retains volunteers within the community. We currently have nearly 1500 registered volunteers in the database that volunteer on a regular basis with community partners and help to strengthen their organizations. In 2007, our volunteers made a \$130,000 economic impact on the community through their service hours. These are funds the non-profit partners would have otherwise had to raise in order to support programming. In the next three years of this strategic plan we would like to grow this volunteer database to 4,000 registered volunteers.

Name of County: Forsyth

For each activity, specify the year(s) in which it will be implemented:

Code	Activities	FY09	FY10	FY11
Governance				
CA1	Develop collaborative membership requirements.	X		
CA2	Develop collaborative by-laws, written procedures and/or policies.	X		
CA3	Develop executive or governing board/body.	X		
CA4	Develop sub-committee structure (examples: finance, evaluation, personnel).	X		
CA5	Develop member roles & responsibilities.	X		
CA6	Broaden collaborative membership to reflect all segments of the community.	X		
CA6a	Include youth in the collaborative .	X		
CA6b	Include business representatives in the collaborative.	X		
CA6c	Include local government representatives in the collaborative.		X	
CA6d	Include faith community representatives in the collaborative.	X		
CA6e	Include family representatives in the collaborative .	X		
CA6f	Include other underrepresented community sector in the collaborative.	X		
CA7	Develop and implement training for collaborative members.	X		
CA8	Link with other collaboratives within the county.	X		
CA10	Other collaborative development activity related to governance.	X		
Strategic Planning				
CA11	Conduct comprehensive community assessment managed by the collaborative.			X
CA12	Develop groups to plan, manage and implement strategies (examples: task forces, strategy teams).	X		
CA13	Develop a process to review and modify the strategic plan on a regular basis.	X		
CA14	Develop best practice strategies based on research.	X		
CA20	Other collaborative development activity related to strategic planning.	X		
Evaluation				
CA21	Provide evaluation findings to collaborative on a regular basis.	X	X	X
CA22	Complete and distribute collaborative reports (examples: results report, Kids Count factsheet, collaborative annual report).	X	X	X
CA23	Develop a system for keeping records and sharing data for evaluation.	X		
CA24	Designate roles and resources to conduct strategy level evaluation.	X		
CA30	Other collaborative development activity related to evaluation.	X		
Finance				
CA31	Complete community resource map to determine the level of resources directed toward a specific strategy.			

Name of County: Forsyth

Code	Activities	FY09	FY10	FY11
CA32	Conduct cost analysis of prevention strategies by the collaborative.			
CA33	Redirect existing funds controlled by the collaborative to support plan implementation.	X		
CA34	Local partners support collaborative strategic plan implementation (examples: staff, funding).	X		
CA35	Partner agencies work together to develop resources (examples: joint grant writing or fund raising).	X		
CA36	Develop long term financing/sustainability strategies for the collaborative process.	X		
CA37	Allocate local government funds received for the implementation of the community plan.			
CA40	Other collaborative development activity related to finance.	X		
Administration and Operation - Communication				
CA41	Create collaborative publicity material (examples: logo, brochure).	X		
CA42	Regularly inform the community about conditions for children and families.	X		
CA43	Create and distribute resource guide and/or directory of agencies/services.	X		
CA44	Utilize a website for communication.	X		
CA50	Other collaborative development activity related to administration and operation.	X		
CA60	Other activity related to Collaborative Development.	X		

TYP - III B. Resource Development and Sustainability

As a result of Forsyth County being the wealthiest community in the state of Georgia and the 13th wealthiest in the nation, we have been very fortunate to find that our community is very willing to support social initiatives to improve the quality of life for all residents. What we are seeing is a call for greater accountability and reporting practices. As a collaborative we believe that this can only make us stronger.

We are committed as a collaborative board to implementing MOUs with partner agencies, and improving reporting on issues and results to the community at large. By working at a basic level with this, we have been successful at recruiting funding to support plan initiatives and feel strongly that this will continue as long as the collaborative functions at a high level and works consistently to improve systems.

Due to the positive indicators in our community partners are experiencing challenges in being awarded grants, particularly those centered around education programs. The strategy teams have decided to try to partner as often as possible to hopefully improve the chances of being awarded grants and to make available information that could be helpful to other partners in the application process.

The School Completion Strategy team is focused on the long term sustainability of the programs being implemented. With an understanding that available funds are decreasing the group is focused on developing programs that are volunteer driven and are successful with in-kind donations.

TYP - III C. Community Engagement

The collaborative board is committed to reaching out to the community through various tools such as surveys and community meetings.

The collaborative has a positive relationship with various media outlets in the community, which are a great way to keep the general public informed. We also have a large sized email subscriber list through which we publicize meetings, community announcements and significant developments. This collaborative also publishes a mid-year and annual report to the community.

Monthly Network Meetings are held to bring together community partners and interested parties. Speakers present of pertinent, timely topics. These meetings are a venue for partners to network among each other and to make connections that will better serve clients.

Our volunteer center, Hands On Forsyth, is a vehicle for publicizing community needs. Through this service we recruit people to assist with community initiatives and in the process make them more aware of challenges our county is facing. We have already seen the positive increase in awareness in the first two years of this program and believe it will only continue to grow.