



## Executive Summary

In 1996, the Governor's Task Force on Children, Youth and Families Systems Reform reaffirmed Maryland's commitment to reforming its system of services to children and families. Charles Bruner, recognized systems reform consultant, conducted a number of focused groups, and shared with Maryland leadership stories from the field. He noted that there are "no simple structural or legislative solutions to committed leadership with strong reform vision". Maryland was urged to build opportunities where a fully realized vision of reform could be explored. This would include concrete illustrations of change in operations, fiscal, management, etc.

This Expression of Interest on behalf of Baltimore City is driven by The Family League of Baltimore City's commitment to effectuate change and reestablish a momentum for reform. It will describe Baltimore's Results and indicate the linkage with State Results. Our partnerships at the local and state level will be introduced as well as efforts to integrate strategic plans. Finally, the Expression of Interest will present anticipated outcomes, impact and timeframes for the work.

Some specific areas for work under the BOOST project for Baltimore City would include:

- Establishing a process where constraints for FLBC are based on overall goals, objectives, and results rather than terms of funding and regulatory flexibility.
- Establishing a streamlined state – local process for supporting community-defined reform initiatives.
- Establishing a state/local team that is dedicated to assist with "barrier busting" around inevitable issues that will arise as Baltimore moves its reform efforts to the next phase.
- Establishing a protocol to redirect administrative funds to service with an eye towards the fact that considerable systems reform agents must be in place to sustain a reform agenda in our City and State.
- Developing an action plan to coordinate the implementation of system reform with welfare reform, changes in Medicaid managed care and block granting.
- Developing for changes in budget formulas to move indirect and administrative costs to the local level.

Planning for the indirect costs to be considered in any allocation methodology.

- Assessing the use of specific indicators. Are we moving towards the Results?



# Expression of Interest

*“Better Opportunities and Outcomes  
Starting Today” – BOOST for Kids*

## **I. Introduction**

The current community building landscape in Baltimore City reflects a rich pattern of initiatives for change. Clearly these initiatives represent interests among Baltimore stakeholders in improving outcomes for children and their families. The Family League of Baltimore City (FLBC) has been the catalyst for service systems reform in Baltimore since 1991. For the past eight years, FLBC and its local, state and private partners have incrementally built upon the community’s vision for the welfare and safety of children, youth and their families.

A set of results were developed by Safe and Sound and FLBC. These results and indicators sanctioned by the community are driving much of the reform effort in the City. Over the past seven years, reforms have been subtle. Most recently, however, a critical mass of programs, projects, interests, and city-wide planning initiatives have spontaneously developed. Each project begins essentially the same – with a community planning process, goal identification, outcomes development and a written plan of action. Often the same stakeholders are essential players in numerous reform efforts. What is missing is a detailed operational or tactical strategy to create the synergy necessary to achieve sustained impacts around the results. FLBC is further convinced that effective collaboration in Baltimore City depends upon the integration of strategies and creative management around the areas of divergence and convergence of the reform efforts.

The momentum of reform in Baltimore City is impacted by fragmentation, duplication, competition for scarce resources, poor communication and value clashes of the various reform approaches (i.e. community and economic development, service systems reform, and community organization). In addition, inconsistent use of terms like “goals”, “results”, “outcomes” and “objectives” tend to create confusion as the work progresses.

FLBC is the trustee of efforts to improve outcomes for the children and families of Baltimore. Each year, the organization negotiates a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with The Governor’s Office of Children, Youth and Families through which it establishes its governance activities. The

organization has been charged with the responsibility of working with stakeholder groups to weave together their individual plans, programs, and projects into a comprehensive action plan that seeks to achieve the results and indicators developed by the community.

As the governance entity for children and family services, FLBC has built a strong foundation to lead the planning process by developing a 5-Year “process plan” that creates a framework for broad-based collaborative planning. Baltimore City’s comprehensive action plan will produce more than a conventional planning document. It will, by necessity, become a community building process and detailed tactical strategy to address inertia, culture and other impacts on successful implementation of action strategies.

The Casey Foundation was approached and agreed to fund the technical assistance that Baltimore City seeks to support the project. A two-year grant has been awarded. Work has begun to operationalize the comprehensive action plan and to identify the necessary infrastructure to support the work. The Better Opportunities and Outcomes Starting Today initiative dovetail our proposed action plan process. Baltimore City is interested and intrigued by the potential dramatic impact that direct work with Federal and State representatives to remove long standing barriers may bring to our change process. Maryland state administrators have had experience with interest based negotiation and will be able to bring lessons from the community partnerships (vision-to-scale) in other local jurisdictions that may be helpful.

## **Local Steering Committee**

The Board will convene by resolution a steering committee consisting of federal, state, and local partners. Funders would be asked to join the group as well. With the support of the forty (40) member local governance board, the steering committee and external change agent(s) will begin the strategic action planning. State and Local agency heads would sit on this steering committee as would the Mayor’s representative. Once resolution of an issue is reached, the changes will be brought forth in a tactical strategy that institutionalizes comprehensive coordination and collaboration.

Previous experiences and discomfort of state and local leadership with pooled funding will need to be addressed with candor and openness. Leadership is anxious to streamline administration. Agencies have been (with some caution) willing to look at shared resources.

BOOST offers FLBC an opportunity to do new work over the next two years. It enhances the capacity of FLBC to catalyze the community and maximize resources. Moreover FLBC will rework relationships and repair, as necessary, those that are essential to reaching positive results. Baltimore has a saturation of reform programs. Most are in the planning phase. BOOST and the Casey Foundation proposal will propel Baltimore forward to implementation.

Baltimore has made tremendous strides. The sections that follow in this Expression of Interest will illustrate our progress, results, partnerships, and our strategic action efforts.

## **II. Baltimore's Results**

In FY 1996, a process was undertaken to identify desired results for the children and families of Baltimore City. Sponsored by the local management board, the process first involved the identification of the child and family outcomes that had been chosen by other jurisdictions around the country. A conference, the VOICES conference, was held that drew together a broad range of community representatives to explore possible results for Baltimore City. Finally, a core of six results were adopted by The Family League of Baltimore City:

- ✓ Children live in nurturing families
- ✓ Children enter school ready to succeed
- ✓ Children and young adults are educated
- ✓ Children and their families are healthy, with youth avoiding high-risk behaviors
- ✓ Children live in safe and supportive neighborhoods
- ✓ Children's families are self-reliant

These results have since been ratified by the Mayor of Baltimore City and his Human Services Subcabinet. The Safe and Sound Campaign has also adopted these six results.

In order to measure the success of Baltimore City in implementing these results, indicators have been identified by research staff that will illustrate the status of each result. In the school area, for instance, indicators include third grade reading level, school attendance and high school program completion. Sources of data for each indicator has been identified, with most sources being already established as reliable data collection systems. A complete list of the results and indicators is included as an attachment.

To oversee the data collection and analysis process, a Data Collaborative has been formed. The Collaborative includes research staff from FLBC, the Safe and Sound Campaign and the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health. The Data Collaborative will coordinate city-wide data collection efforts, analyze data, evaluate the progress in achieving the results and disseminate progress reports to the broader community of Baltimore City.

### **III. Partners**

FLBC is Maryland's system reform site for Baltimore City. In accordance with State statute, it was created in 1991 to provide leadership in the development and implementation of a coordinated interagency service delivery system for the families and children of Baltimore City. It has the mandate and critical partnerships necessary to successfully implement "BOOST for Kids".

At the State level, the Family League is responsible to the Office of Children, Youth and Families. OCYF has principal responsibility for the coordination and integration of State services for families and youth. OCYF is supported in these efforts by two key partnerships. These partnerships bring together key members of the Governor's cabinet, along with representatives of the business, non-profit and advocacy communities. FLBC's "BOOST for Kids" application is strongly supported by OCYF.

At the City level, the Mayor has designated FLBC as the primary governance entity for service to families and children. In this leadership capacity, the Family League has the pivotal role of drawing together Baltimore's stakeholders for the purpose of weaving a comprehensive web of services and opportunities for the City's children and families. In 1998, the Mayor further strengthened the Family League leadership capacity by expanding its Board of Directors to fully represent City governmental agencies, local businesses, the non-profit and faith communities, and its youth and parents.

FLBC has acted decisively on its mandates by creating a series of partnerships that are unifying the City's major child and family focused initiatives. Key partners are the Safe and Sound Campaign, Comprehensive Strategy and HotSpot Communities.

The Safe and Sound Campaign, funded by a five-year implementation grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, has developed Baltimore's Action Plan for Children and Youth. This plan identifies 12 goals that promise to give Baltimore's children the opportunity to grow up "safe and sound". Over 7,000 citizens met in September 1997 at Baltimore's Promise Summit to select five of these goals for immediate implementation. Those selected are the availability of comprehensive family support services, non-

school hours programming for all children and youth, an end to juvenile gun homicide, reading by age nine for all children, and Baltimore's promise to support its children.

As trustee of Baltimore's Action Plan, FLBC has worked effectively with the Safe and Sound and other partners to implement these five goals. A Letter of Intent to Collaborate, approved by FLBC's Board of Directors in September 1998, clearly defines a set of long term, interlocking responsibilities between FLBC and the Safe and Sound Campaign.

Other key partnerships, critical to the implementation of the five priority goals, are now being forged between FLBC, Safe and Sound, the United Way of Central Maryland, the Open Society Institute, the Mayor's Human Services Sub-cabinet, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and other key organizations. As a testimony to the community's faith in this process, close to \$20,000,000 new dollars have been pledged toward these goals over the last six months. Importantly, much of this funding will be dispersed and monitored by FLBC – meeting "BOOST for Kids" goals of joint planning, pooled resources, and simplified administrative processes. Baltimore is on the move!

Comprehensive Strategy is a second key initiative that the FLBC is helping to weave into an overall plan for Baltimore City. Comprehensive Strategy, an initiative of Federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, is being implemented in Maryland by the State Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). In August 1998, FLBC's Board of Directors voted to place Baltimore City's Comprehensive Strategy plan under its auspices. As a result, the Family League is collaborating with other partners on the development of Comprehensive Strategy's five-year plan. A specific focus is on the integration of this work with Baltimore Action Plan for Children and Youth.

The HotSpot Communities Initiative is under the jurisdiction of the Mayor's Coordinating Council and Criminal Justice. Its mission is to decrease crime in six of Baltimore's most troubled neighborhoods by increased interagency coordination, community involvement, and innovative programming. In its first joint effort, HotSpots and FLBC are exploring the feasibility of FLBC assuming responsibility for the allocation and oversight of HotSpots recreational funds for its six communities. These discussions are based upon a joint recognition of the need for administrative simplification and joint planning and integrates HotSport's recreational programming with Baltimore's Action Plan for Children and Youth. This is another clear demonstration that Baltimore is committed to and already moving toward the goals envisioned in "BOOST for Kids".

In order to broaden its collaborative structures and partnerships beyond the City's major child and youth initiatives, FLBC created the Early Childhood

Umbrella Groups Committee. Composed of Baltimore's eight major early childhood umbrella groups, this committee has adopted broad coordinating and planning goals. These included promulgating information on best practices in order to create a common theoretical base; developing collaborative responses to grant opportunities; reviewing each others structures and capacities to reduce redundancy of effort; serving as a central point for information sharing; and providing consultation and support to the roll-out of Baltimore's Action Plan for Children and Youth. The early successes of the Umbrella Group's Committee in its first 18 months of existence is another demonstration that Baltimore's service network is actively engaged in finding new ways of conducting business. These ways permit its partners to coalesce around a common agenda, adhere to a single set of results and indicators, and develop new structures that facilitate joint planning and reductions in administrative overhead.

#### **IV. Strategic Plan**

To build a strong foundation for its governance role, FLBC has developed a process plan (i.e., "5- Year Plan") which maps an explicit path between the present and the future. More specifically, the plan includes a comprehensive view of the goals, strategies and action steps needed to improve conditions for families and children in Baltimore City.

Because no one entity can fulfill this role alone, FLBC has brought partners together to weave the best thinking and planning around core results. FLBC's strategic plan reflects a strong partnership with the Safe and Sound Campaign (a city-wide initiative designed to strengthen youth, families and communities) and the synthesis if FLBC and the Safe and Sound Campaign's goals into Baltimore's Results. Baltimore's Results parallel those of the State in measuring system reform efforts.

Because Baltimore City is close to reaching critical mass and a state of readiness, FLBC has requested and received a technical assistance grant from The Annie E. Casey Foundation to integrate the various systems reform efforts, incorporate them into a unified plan, and bring them to scale. In particular, this technical assistance grant would:

- Enable FLBC to obtain an impartial perspective, which is regarded as legitimate, to identify barriers and stumbling blocks, facilitate key meetings with stakeholders, and structure interactions.
- Help FLBC with facilitation and guidance in strategic planning and change management, through which roles among its collaborative partners are clearly developed.



FLBC feels that one comprehensive plan would serve as a blueprint for the sustained collaborative partnerships and action needed to strategically move Baltimore's Results.

## V. Impacts, Outcomes and Timeframes

FLBC will engage in a twenty-four (24) month transformation experience. With its partners and the support of the Casey Foundation, FLBC will catalyze the momentum of change in Baltimore City and the State of Maryland. The most significant impact is that state, federal, and local change agents are brought together for collaborative planning around a set of six (6) Results. This dynamic partnership will identify barriers, remove red tape, provide better ways to provide services, manage for results, streamline administration, and maximize the use of resources for services for children.

Central to this new phase of reform for Baltimore City will be the engagement of the top leadership of all the major public agencies and initiatives in the City to eliminate conventional principles that are embodied in the operating processes, regulations, professional education, benchmarking approaches, contract requirements, and behavioral expectations, which have frequently led to the public sector aborting all of the downside risks of reform. The new approach to planning using the criteria in BOOST for Kids and the basis tenants of community building will allow the values and collective vision of stakeholders to generate strategic actions that are sanctioned and supported by all levels of government and by the community residents. The process is an empowering one. Partners work through phases of change and apply action strategies as they move through the work. The six areas of work highlighted above create a manageable content. Agency heads should be intrigued by the opportunity to negotiate changes with the state and local representatives. The gains are evident and the process supportive.

FLBC anticipates developing a rich and dynamic technical assistance process that will utilize the unique perspective and expertise of all partners. The following timeline and activities are anticipated areas of work:

### YEAR ONE PHASE ONE:

The collective vision is clearly articulated and sanctioned by each partner through modified vision/mission statements as necessary. Board is engaged to generate policy statement, modify mission if necessary.

- ◆ Roles of the Baltimore City government to FLBC State Partners is clearly defined, enhanced, and incorporated in MOU with state.
- ◆ Complete Values Scann

- ◆ Strategic actions are developed, categorized into phases of work that are fully documented as chapters in a Comprehensive Action Plan for Baltimore City.
- ◆ FLBC Board and staff obtain skills and become proficient in the management of divergent and convergent agendas for Results.
- ◆ Partnership will develop real incentives that achieve effective coordination.

**PHASE TWO:**

- ◆ Data Use: Barriers, New Resources Opportunities.
- ◆ Regulatory and statutory barriers are identified by agency heads. Each prioritized considering the Board priorities and those of the public agencies.
- ◆ Draft language is developed for waivers; amendments, resolutions and sign off process is initiated.
- ◆ Plan to address elimination of red tap is drafted.
- ◆ Items for work begin, red tape is eliminated.
- ◆ Process is fully documented by staff with guidance from consultant/technical assistance.
- ◆ Updates are provided to Board regarding Progress/Evaluation.
- ◆ Plan to share lessons learned is developed.

**YEAR TWO PHASE ONE:**

- ◆ Analysis of current process for administration of grants and funding in Maryland and Baltimore is conducted.
- ◆ Reviews of lessons from the field and Best Practice are conducted.
- ◆ Plan to streamline process is developed.
- ◆ Focus groups and training/orientation is conducted.
- ◆ Protocol for negotiation regarding savings is developed (Interface with FLBC Fiscal Strategies Workgroup).
- ◆ Signed Resolution from Partnerships are signed.

PHASE TWO:

- ◆ Proposed changes to administration of grants and resources are implemented.
- ◆ Review of process, savings, etc. is conducted.
- ◆ Savings plan as developed in the protocol is implemented.
- ◆ Lesson learned are shared with other states.
- ◆ Articles are written to tell the stories.

# ATTACHMENTS

A. Governor's Task Force Report

B. Baltimore's Results

C. Baltimore's Action Plan for Children and Youth

D. Comprehensive Strategy

E. 5-Year Plan