

*The mission of ACS is to provide education, advocacy and networking opportunities to all sectors of the Howard County community to advance its capacity and effectiveness.*

## **2011 ADVOCACY PRIORITIES**

### **Finances**

- The County must continue to implement every measure and mechanism at its disposal to "hold harmless" health and human service programs.
- Community Services Partnership grants should remain a critical County funding priority.
- Operations funding for the nonprofit community should be recognized and supported by government, private donors, businesses and philanthropic organizations.
- The County should pursue all available opportunities of funding, both federal and state, to support critical human services needs.

### **Human Services Infrastructure**

- Effective human services programs must be preserved and protected to meet the existing and growing needs of the most vulnerable citizens in Howard County.
- Support the development and utilization of volunteer services among health and human service organizations to strengthen programs.
- Processes for developing the Howard County General Plan and Human Services Master Plan should be initiated.
- Mechanisms enabling the nonprofit community to be competitive with government and private enterprise to hire and retain qualified staff should be researched and implemented.

### **Community Infrastructure**

- The Full Spectrum Housing Plan, including prevention strategies, should be implemented.
- Legislation enabling the Downtown Columbia Housing Trust should be enacted.
- The County should support the work of the Board to Promote Self-Sufficiency and its priorities: Ending Homelessness, Ending Hunger, and Raising Income/Building Assets.

### **Health Care**

- Strategies should be developed to address health insurance reform and access to health care for all residents including enrollment, employer impact and state level policies.
- Support improved access to all health and behavioral health services including consumer education
- Affordable long-term care insurance should be available for all older adults.
- Continued access to all crisis intervention services should be ensured.

### **Work Support**

- Job opportunities should be stimulated throughout the County, but particularly for the 19,000 county households with incomes at or below \$50,000
- Additional training programs and qualified educators should be developed to meet the County's growing need for professional, entry level and service workers.
- Support an increase in available qualified child care providers through training and small business development assistance.
- The Howard County Transportation Development Plan five-year plan should be implemented.

### **Education**

- Advocate for services within the Howard County School System budget that support families with incomes below \$50,000 including Pupil Personnel Workers, after school programs, ESL, etc.

*NOTE: Data and background information supporting these advocacy positions is available in the Association of Community Services (ACS) 2010 Priority Issues Papers available at [acshoco.org](http://acshoco.org) or by calling 410-715-9545.*