

**FY11 Annual Services Plan**  
Quad County Decategorization Project  
Serving: Lee, Louisa, Henry and Des Moines Counties

Submitted by:  
Nicole Mann  
Decategorization Coordinator

October 1, 2010

## **Executive Summary:**

The Quad County Decategorization Project maintains a viable community approach to protect and enhance the lives of at risk youth by engaging community members through service on the Decategorization board or participation in various focus groups. Quad County Decategorization was formed from the merger of two former Decat Projects, a number of years ago. Des Moines, Henry, Lee, and Louisa Counties make up the Decategorization Board's area of purview. The board is composed of the following members:

- Marc Lindeen – Henry County Supervisor
- Frank Jamison – Louisa County Supervisor
- John Wauters – 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Chief Juvenile Court Officer
- Bob Beck – Des Moines County Supervisor
- Larry Kruse – Lee County Supervisor
- Gary Lippe – Eastern Service Area Manager
- Leta Hosier – Iowa Department of Human Service Community Liaison
- Jackie Wilson – Iowa Department of Human Service Supervisor

The monitoring process for services under the purview of the Quad County Decat Board is assigned to staff that is contracted from the Scott County Decategorization Program. The process includes planning, program and fiscal monitoring, grants management, and outcome measurement. Quarterly reports including qualitative and quantitative measures are required by contract along with specific outcome measures that must be met. Site visits are conducted periodically to ensure compliance and provide technical assistance where needed. The Board regularly reviews service utilization and outcomes achievement. It is the Board's role to determine the actions taken under service contracts such as withholding payment due to poor outcomes achievement. Board members share information with other community entities regarding the actions of the Board and the issues and successes that are encountered.

***1. A description of the community planning used in developing the annual plan. This description should include information on the community members and organizations that were invited to and actually participated in developing the plan. Community participation can be achieved through strategies such as community forums, community education events, and community focus groups.***

Community stakeholders have been tentative to participate in long term community planning due to the lack of consistent funding. Each year Decategorization carry over funding is subject to retraction and moved to the Iowa General Fund according to administrative rules. Community members are aware of this instability and are reluctant to completely invest in the community planning efforts. This also makes it difficult to plan new services while working with tentative budgets.

In order to address the community's needs, Quad County Decategorization hosted a community forum on March 3, 2010. There were 16 community stakeholders in attendance representing a wide range of local agencies. The intent of the forum was to allow for an open discussion addressing sustainability of services during challenging economic times to assist the Quad County Decategorization Board in making informative decisions about future funding. Information gathered at the community forum revealed that agencies have experienced a decrease in funding for FY09 and FY10; most participants were anticipating a decrease in funding for FY11 as well. Participants also discussed concerns of children "falling through the gaps", transportation barriers, and an under-reimbursed and over-worked children's mental health system further impaired by a lack of awareness in accessing the system (see Attachment A).

Quad County Decategorization started an email distribution list with agencies and individuals who attended the Community Forum; we have been building this list over the last six months. One week prior to a Decategorization Board meeting we email information regarding the meeting, including agendas. This community email list is a convenient way to distribute RFP notices, job listings, and upcoming trainings. This strategy has increased the number of public attending our Decategorization meetings.

Quad County Decategorization staff has been invited to numerous community planning committees. This is a seamless way to understand the various services and initiatives occurring in the county to assist with community planning efforts. The following is a list of the current meetings attended by Quad County Decategorization staff:

- Henry County CPPC Committee
- Des Moines County Interagency
- Des Moines County Health Department Accreditation Planning Meetings
- Statewide DMC
- Casey Family Breakthrough Series Collaborative: Reducing Disproportionality and Disparate Outcomes for Children of Color in the Child Welfare System

Quad County Decategorization Annual Plan was developed from input from the various committee work and community forums gathered from the sources listed above. This process was used in order to gain the broadest possible perspective on issues. If funding was available to meet a particular community need the Request for Proposals (RFP) would be used to contract for services. Members of the community sit on the RFP review team to evaluate each proposal and make suggestions to the Decat board on which bidder should be awarded the contract. This allows for more community input and diversity into the Decat funding opportunities.

**2. A description of the Decategorization project's efforts to network and coordinate with other community planning initiatives [i.e. school improvement plans, Community Empowerment Areas, Community Partnership for Protecting Children projects, United Way, etc.] affecting children and families within the boundaries of their project.**

The Quad County Decategorization will look for trainings that can be offered to help support the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District's need for continuing professional development to help enhance their services by bringing best practices into their work with youth.

Healthy Henry Counties is the CPPC site in the Quad County Area which has contractual oversight by the Quad County Decategorization. One of the Quad County Decat board members also sits on the CPPC Shared Decision Making Board which has increased the collaboration of these two entities.

The Quad County Early Childhood Iowa areas are community partners which receive updated information about Quad County programs funded through Decat. We are planning to engage Early Childhood Iowa staff to effectively provide programming and information throughout Quad County.

Quad County Decategorization will continue to address the needs our youth at risk of entering Juvenile Court and Child Welfare systems. While addressing mental health systemic issues, Quad County Decategorization is still committed to providing leadership and collaboration with community partners.

Decategorization staff will share partnering activities, funding opportunities and linkage to the broader community events at Decategorization and other community meetings.

As a part of the Department of Human Service effort to address disproportionality, one of the Quad County Decategorization areas, Des Moines County has been accepted to participate in The Casey Family Breakthrough Series Collaborative; Reducing Disproportionality and Disparate Outcomes for Children and Families of Color in the Child Welfare System. This is an opportunity for DHS Child Welfare staff along with the community partners to evaluate the process and examine policies for families of color who are involved with DHS Child Welfare System. Seeking solutions through diverse community collaboration will align resources, establishes relationships, and gain momentum on implementing creative strategies to reduce over representation in the DHS Des Moines county area. The Casey Family Breakthrough Collaborative has assisted other states and areas in overcoming institutional barriers to decrease the number of families of color in the child welfare system. Addressing this systemic issue will allow Des Moines county to achieve a more demographically

representative participation in child welfare services by implementing services and strategies aimed at preventing child abuse and neglect in families of color and result in the achievement of the federal mandated outcomes which can result in the loss of federal funds. Quad County Decategorization is providing funding for the Day to Day manager of the project. This project is a central to progressing the mission and vision of Decategorization.

**3. A description of any community needs assessment process and/or data [child welfare outcomes data, need indicator data from other systems such as health, education, community empowerment, etc.]. that was used in developing the annual plan to enhance child welfare and juvenile justice service systems in the area.**

1. Decategorization staff gathered data and information from the sources listed in Question 1. A community forum and information collected from various community meetings assisted Quad County Decategorization with the annual plan. Please refer to Attachment A for a more detailed description of community needs.
2. Reviewed the priorities for CJJP
3. The following documents were reviewed by Decategorization staff:
  - 2009 Iowa Community Empowerment Annual Report
  - DHS Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) 2010 State Wide Assessment
  - Iowa Kids Count 2008: Trends in the Well-Being of Iowa Children
  - DHS Olmstead Plan for Mental Health and Disability Services: Draft State Plan Framework (7/01/10)
  - Iowa Child Abuse Prevention Program 2009 Annual Report
  - Serving Iowa Youth and Families with a Youth Development Approach: JJDP Act Formula Grant Application and Three-Year Comprehensive Plan (March 2009)
  - State of Iowa Juvenile Delinquency Annual Statistical Report 2008
  - Statewide Community Partnerships Evaluation 2010
  - Iowa Child Welfare Decategorization Handbook August 2010
4. Quad County Decategorization developed a plan for building capacity and achieving outcomes (See Attachment B).

***4. A description of the project's specific and quantifiable short term plans and desired results for the state fiscal year; as well as a description of how these short term plans align with the project's longer term goals for improving outcomes for children and families.***

**LONG TERM GOAL #1**

Provide services in the community that will assist in the achievement of the Child and Family Service Review outcomes of child well-being, safety and permanency.

Short Term Strategies:

- If funding is available issue RFP's for services that will systemically enhance well being, safety and permanency for at risk youth
- Monitor and review current programs aimed at improving child well-being, safety and permanency to ensure they meet their objectives and outcomes
- Collaborate with community agencies to leverage funding to enhance the current continuum of care for children and families

**LONG TERM GOAL #2:**

To keep youth from entering the more expensive child welfare and juvenile justice systems and to ensure a safe and permanent exit from those systems if already involved

Short Term Strategies:

- Monitor current program outcomes to ensure that they are meeting the target population and objectives
- Explore evidenced based programs that have proven to divert youth away from the child welfare and juvenile justice systems

**LONG TERM GOAL #3**

To maintain positive leadership role in the community and a reputation for excellence through the continuity of qualified staff and board members

Short Term Strategies:

- Update personnel policies, procedures and performance standards that promote excellence
- Provide incentives that encourage improvement in work performance
- Establish market rate salary ranges for each level of position within the organization
- Encourage Board members to designate substitutes for meetings when they will be absent
- Develop a clear plan for addressing succession of Board members
- Hire and retain qualified staff
- Promote the importance of the 28E

## **LONG TERM GOAL #4**

Continue to be fiscally responsible with state funds

### Short Term Strategies:

- Maintain subcontract with Bi-State Regional Commission for the purposes of obtaining necessary financial and personnel services
- Engage qualified CPA firm for annual audits
- Each fiscal year Scott County Decategorization will have an unqualified audit, which includes Quad County Decategorization
- Complete and submit financial reports for the Eastern Service Area Manager and the DHS Contract Manager
- Quad County Decategorization Governance Board shall practice general accepted accounting practices
- Be aware of the operating budget and make contracting decisions based upon this knowledge
- Research contracting opportunities to make sure they align with the vision and mission of Decategorization

***5. A description of the project's proposed plans to use funding available within their Decategorization services funding pool during the fiscal year, including plans to use their available carryover funds- resulting from Decategorization operations during the previous fiscal year- by the close of the current state fiscal year.***

Community Restitution Program (7/1/10-6/30/11) – provide community restitution services for youth who are sentenced to community restitution hours by either the Juvenile Court Officer or a court judge.

Decat Coordination (7/1/10-6/30/11) – provides Decategorization Coordination and support services for the Lee, Louisa, Henry, and Des Moines Counties. This includes providing technical support, facilitation of meetings, collaboration with community stakeholders, monitoring program spending, issuing RFP's, writing contracts, and maintaining contract compliance. This includes the Day to Day Manager for the Casey Family Breakthrough Series Collaborative.

Henry County Community Partnerships for the Protection of Children (10/1/10-6/30/11) – provide leadership and coordination of activities to implement the Community Partnership for the Protection of Children Initiative in Henry County.

In-Home Brief Intensive Services (7/1/10-6/30/11) – provide in-home family-centered brief intensive services to children (age six to seventeen) in Henry, Lee, Louisa, and Des Moines Counties who are not currently involved with but are at-risk of becoming involved in the juvenile justice system and/or child welfare system.

Other services that have not yet been contracted for, but are in the development stages are:

- Parent Partner Program
- Treatment Foster Care Training
- Disproportionality Training
- Expansion of the Iowa Youth Dream Team Initiative
- Legal Guardianship Services
- Violators Program
- IJAG or Related Education Services

***6. A description of the project's plans to track results and outcomes achieved by funded programs during the year.***

The Decategorization Coordinator tracks and monitors each program's outcome measures and contract compliance through various mechanisms. The contractor provides quarterly reports containing information regarding progress towards achieving program outcomes and objectives. The Decategorization Coordinator reviews the reports and addresses any questions with the contractor. The Decategorization Coordinator meets with the DHS Contract Manager on a quarterly basis to monitor and review quarterly reports, performance outcomes, communication with contractors, and address any concerns. If a performance improvement plan is needed the Decategorization Coordinator will bring this to the attention of the board.

The Decategorization Coordinator is readily available to assist the contractor with any program or budgetary questions or barriers that may arise. This open communication is effective in maintaining the integrity of the program deliverables and the quality of the services provided. The Decategorization Coordinator maintains the contract file and includes all relevant documentation of communication with the contractor to assist in audits and determining contract compliance. The monitoring ensures that the Quad County Decategorization Board is a good steward of state funds.

Annual site visits are another way of monitoring and tracking the results of contracted programs. During site visits the Decategorization Coordinator can speak directly with staff members to gain insight on the effectiveness of the program and the specific impact they have on children and families. Depending on the program the Decategorization Coordinator is able to read through case files, see the program in action, review financial records, and review how data is tracked through the contractor's monitoring systems.

The information gathered from the various methods is then compiled and reported to the Decategorization Board to review the outcomes and outputs of each program. The Decategorization Coordinator or Board Members may make suggestions for program improvements as long as the intent of the contract is not

compromised. The Board votes on any changes and Decategorization Staff would communicate those changes with the contractor.

It has been difficult to monitor program outcomes due to the limited time frame Decategorization Projects have each year to plan and implement new programs. This cycle of unstable funding leads to programs that are not able to provide consistent services that are flexible enough to make the changes needed to address family needs and produce the long term outcomes needed to address program achievements.

Quad County Decategorization is committed to writing effective contracts. In order to remain on top of contracting guidelines the Decategorization Coordinator attends trainings provided by DHS related to contracting and the DHS contracting system (C-2); attends various conference calls related to Decategorization; and reads the DHS Services Contracting Newsletter.

***7. A description of the project's plans to monitor and maintain fiscal accountability during the year [fiscal accountability includes monitoring the performance and results of contractors receiving funding and monitoring expenditures for Decategorization services during the year].***

The Quad County Decategorization Program values the opportunity to provide outstanding services to at risk youth and realizes that maintaining fiscal accountability is an integral part in sustaining those services. Bi-State Regional Commission is the fiscal manager for the Scott County Decategorization Program. These services are extended to the Quad County Decategorization Project through the coordination contract between the two entities. They are a valuable resource in providing information regarding fiscal accountability requirements, monitoring and reviewing billings, preparing Decategorization budgets, and conducting on site fiscal reviews.

Each month contract holders are required to submit billings with detailed invoices and backup documentation to the Decategorization Coordinator. The bills are subsequently sent to Bi-State Regional Commission for review of budgetary and contract compliance. Then processed bills are submitted back to the Decategorization Coordinator for an additional review. The Coordinator provides the bills to the Department of Human Services where they are again reviewed and processed for payment.

At every Decategorization Board meeting an expenditure report is submitted to the members. The Decategorization staff and board members review expenditures and monitor the overall program budget. If programs are under spending or overspending the Decategorization staff are asked to contact the contractor to assess the situation.

All Decategorization contracts are performance based contracts. Performance based contracting focuses on the desired results of the program by using measurable performance standards and plans for quality assurance. If a contractor is not achieving the required outcomes the board has the opportunity to reduce payment based on the unmet outcomes. Decat programs would prefer to issue multiyear contracts in order to gather long term data however with the unstable funding cycle this is not possible.

## **Attachment A:**

### **QUAD COUNTY COMMUNITY FORUM**

Planning with Henry, Lee, Louisa, and Des Moines Counties

March 3, 2010

Community members representing various private agencies, public agencies, and the community at-large in the Quad County (Lee, Louisa, Des Moines and Henry Counties) Decategorization area gathered at the Burlington Public Library to discuss their successes and concerns within their local communities. While the discussion was framed by the five formal threads presented in Figure 1, the unique themes in the dialogue revealed strained dynamic for service providers and their consumers (Figure 2). The formal threads are presented to document the group's ideas which served as a mechanism for the dialogue.

#### **STAGE 1: IDENTIFICATION OF THEMES, CONTRIBUTING FACTORS, AND IDEAS**

The reduction in funding in FY09 and FY10 and the anticipated reduction in FY11 created an initial service strain across the state as providers scrambled continue services with less funding. This was combined, in the Quad County area, with an increase in utilization of services and no formalized access point to communicate available public and private funding opportunities. As a result, community members shared agencies stressors however; the discussion focused was on trying to increase collaboration and decrease service disparities to children and families. The community concerns included the integration of several topics:

- (1) Children “falling through the gaps” of various program requirements and stipulations from funding sources
- (2) Transportation barriers for clients combined with high costs of travel for agencies
- (3) An under-reimbursed and over-worked children's mental health system further impaired by a lack of awareness in accessing the system

## Formal Threads

### Solutions & Celebrations

- Crisis Childcare
- United Way Funding
- Remedial Services
- Brief-Intensive Services
- Mid-Iowa Telepsych
- Interagency Meetings
- Volunteers to provide Interpretation Services
- Des Moines County Bus System
- Community Foundation

### School Issues

- Schools need to know who to coordinate with for MH
- Unfunded Mandates
- Needs of children are up in schools
- After school programs

### Needed Programs

- Parenting Classes
- Flexible Services that meet families where they are at
- Substance abuse for youth

### Community Concerns

- Higher substance abuse
- More DHS referrals
- Drop out rates
- Bullying in schools
- Transportation to services/work
- Less resources available, even less after July 1
- Limited # of Psychiatrists
- No local DHS
- Increase in need for bilingual services and staff
- After school programs in the schools
- Rural area needs are different
- Rural areas usually have less funding

### Agency Concerns

- Need for mentoring is up; funding is down
- More funding cuts after agencies already took 10% cuts
- Inability to serve children who fall between the gaps
- DHS taking less referrals for families in crisis
- Having a better connection between agencies in helping each other out
- Increase in on-call

Figure 1

## STAGE 2: FROM IDEAS TO PROCESS

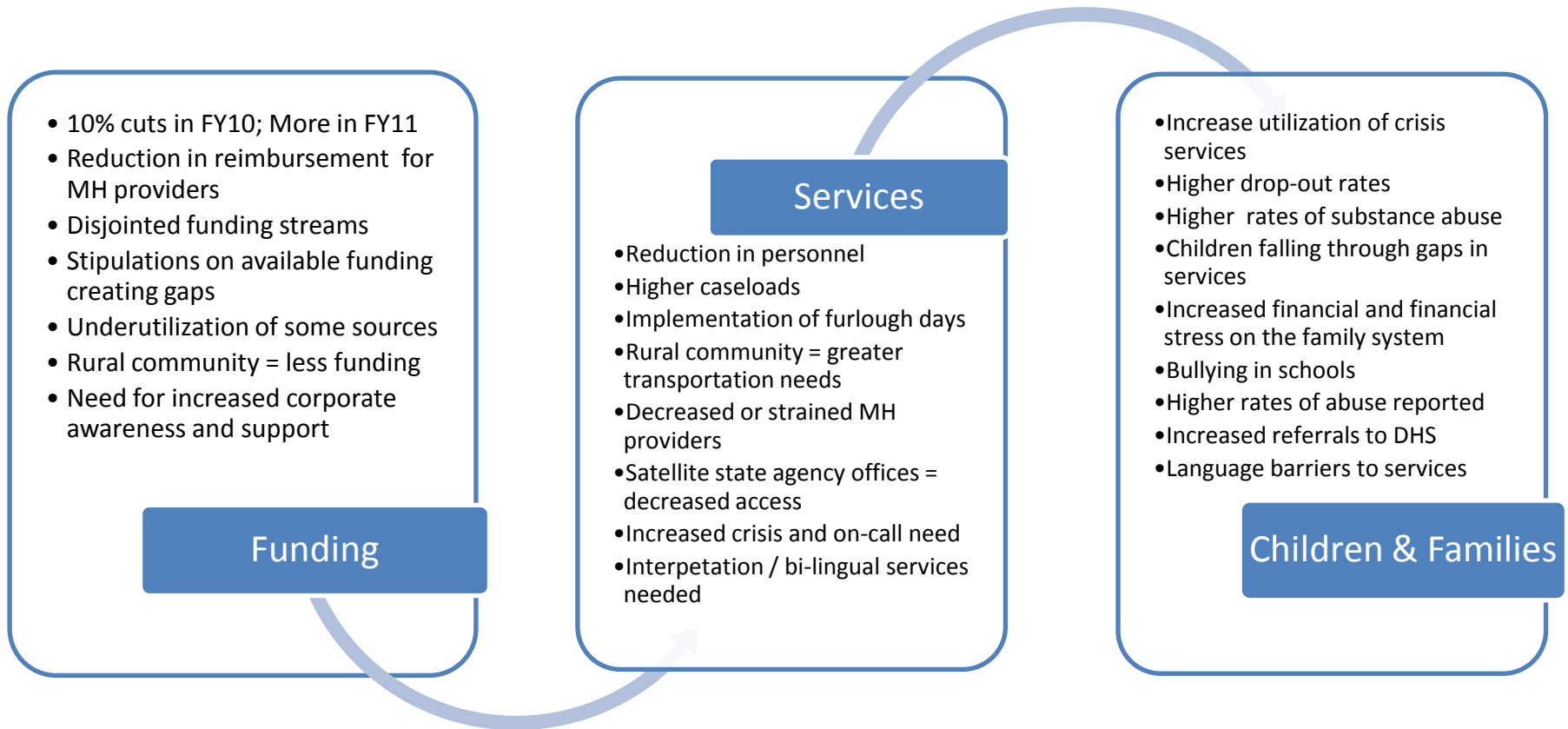


Figure 2

## **I. Funding Streams**

Throughout the discussion, it became clear that the Decategorization project in the Quad County area was not as visible as the project would hope. This was indicated by the voiced concerns of several group members on the lack of knowledge of Decat's activities or processes. United Way and Community Foundation shared their funding shared their agency priorities and how to access funds. Community members learned where to find state funded RFPs.

## **II. Community Resources**

While agencies demonstrated resiliency to reduced funding however, the funding changes nonetheless created higher strain on agency employees with less compensation with which to maintain seasoned and quality staff. Agency and program representatives discussed the overall personal knowledge of resources their seasoned staff had collected. Experienced staff members know which programs have certain admission criteria and which programs have specialized staff unique to the needs of the clients they intend to refer. While this can serve as a great resource for these agencies, this knowledge leaves the agency when the staff member does. Subsequently, newer staff might not be as adept at navigating the system as their predecessors. Whereas most communities have some form of a resource guide specific to their own community to enhance both the worker's and the family's knowledge of available resources, these guides vary in their distribution breadth, comprehensiveness, and user friendliness. Indeed the Quad County area is not resource poor, which echoes participants in the forum. Instead, the area has some reported gaps preventing a smooth service continuum.

## **III. Strength and Resilience**

Despite the financial shortcomings imposed with the current economic status, many solutions were already in place for agencies throughout the Quad County area. These included, among others: crisis childcare, interagency meetings, volunteer interpretation services, a county bus system, TelePsych, remedial services, and brief-intensive services. Forum participants discussed the successes of these services in addressing the needs of their clients and the community as a whole. It was discovered that although some services were available to select areas within the Quad County area, they were not universally accessible throughout the Decat area. This serves as a point for further review for the capacity of the Decategorization Board.

### **STAGE 3: FROM IDEAS TO PRACTICE**

#### **SYNTHESIZING SOLUTIONS**

##### **School and Community Collaboration**

- Continue interagency meetings, where implemented, and explore this as a collaboration effort for other communities
- Greater communication on available funding sources between service providers and funding bodies.
  - Implement an information share-point for available funding sources that are known to the community.
- Work towards a collaborative community approach where agencies are open to refer individuals and families between programs, despite agency affiliation, so that their needs are appropriately met.
- Resource Guides are available in multiple communities; explore their dissemination to providers and clientele including cross-community sharing.
- Schools can act as a hub for services to integrate services and decrease strain on individual agencies, multiple and distant appointments for families, and subsequent transportation costs

##### **Mental Health**

- Work toward greater collaboration regarding available MH professionals and available client slots
- Work toward greater collaboration in decreasing barriers to access of services for limited resources
- Schools need to know who to coordinate with regarding Mental Health services
- A central point of information, such as United Way, is needed to access information for available services for the community.

##### **Transportation**

- Continue to utilize creative solutions to identified transportation barriers in the area
- Team with local school districts wherever possible to integrate services including use or implementation of after-school programming
- Affordable, reliable transportation was a recurrent theme expressed for the community which warrants further exploration.

## Attachment B: DECATEGORIZATION: BUILDING CAPACITY AND ACHIEVING OUTCOMES

