

Buncombe County

# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH & JUSTICE SUPPORT

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## Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2017

July 1, 2016 – June 20, 2017



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## Introduction

Buncombe County Government is dedicated to strengthening quality of life for everyone by taking fiscally and socially responsible actions to ensure the prosperity of future generations. We are committed to building a community that is healthy, safe, well-educated and thriving. Buncombe County invests in services provided through a variety of programs to support and enhance core, mandated services. These community investments aim to reduce the costs of core services such as child welfare and public safety. This report focuses on community based behavioral health and criminal justice collaboration efforts.



## Buncombe County's Behavioral Health and Justice Support Strategies

- Take a holistic approach to facilitating individual, family, neighborhood, and community wellness
- Fill gaps in the existing resource grid to ensure robust behavioral health services
- Create seamless linkages with systems that people navigate – including health care, housing, education, workforce, family services, law enforcement and the courts
- Provide victim centered, trauma informed support to survivors of domestic and sexual violence
- Offer criminal justice system diversion and alternatives to incarceration for low-level, first time nonviolent offenders and people with mental illness and substance use disorders
- Enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system
- Protect public safety, and hold people accountable for criminal behavior
- Use data-driven methods to maximize outcomes
- Make investments and deliver services grounded in collaborative, inclusive, and transparent processes that are conducted with integrity

## Contact

For more information about Buncombe County's Behavioral Health and Justice Support partnerships, please contact the office of the County Manager at (828) 250-4100 or by mail at 200 College Street, Asheville, NC 28801. Connect with Buncombe County online at [www.buncombecounty.org](http://www.buncombecounty.org).



## Behavioral Health Collaboration Programs

### Access for the Uninsured

Through a contract with Buncombe County, All Souls Counseling provides low cost behavioral and mental health services for un-insured and under-insured residents of Buncombe County. All Souls Counseling provides therapy, group sessions, clinical coordination and psychiatric services. In FY 17:

- 556 New clients were served
- 5,101 Client sessions were provided
- 407 Psychiatric sessions were provided



ALL SOULS COUNSELING CENTER

### Comprehensive Care Center

The Comprehensive Care Center at 356 Biltmore Avenue (C3356) is designed to provide crisis intervention, response, and stabilization services and supports within the context of a recovery-oriented and community resilience system of care. At one location and under one roof, individuals and families can access crisis prevention, intervention, stabilization, and response services embedded within in a full continuum of behavioral health care. Included on site are a behavioral health urgent care, facility based crisis unit, a peer living room, NAMI family support services, and a community pharmacy operated by ABCCM. Buncombe County provides the facility where the Comprehensive Care Center is located.

In FY17:

- 3,410 Individuals accessed walk in services
- 2,467 Individuals accessed the Behavioral Health Urgent Care
- 2,088 Individuals were supported in the Peer Living Room
- 2,666 Individuals were served by the ABCCM Pharmacy onsite

C3356 COMPREHENSIVE CARE CENTER

### Interconnected Systems Framework

Interconnected Systems Framework is a comprehensive strategy that integrates Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and School Mental Health (SMH) into an Interconnected Systems Framework (ISF) model that is both evidence based and data driven. In FY17, Buncombe County Schools, Buncombe County Department of Health and Human Services, Vaya Health and many other community partners formed a multidisciplinary District Leadership Team. Five schools were selected as demonstration site pilot programs and will initiate Interconnected Schools Framework in August 2017. They are each participating in universal screening of students to identify internalizing and externalizing behaviors and will use the data collected to evaluate the needs of the school and ensure that they have services in place to meet those universal student needs. Buncombe County HHS has contracted to provide coordination of this collaborative effort.

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## Substance Abuse Prevention and Response

### Drug Free Communities

Buncombe County Health and Human Services remains committed to prevention, allotting a portion of its behavioral health funding for prevention programs. With these funds, the County funds the Partnership for Substance Free Youth through RHA Health Services. In FY17, the Partnership held 10 Prescription Drug Take Backs. Through these Take Backs and drop boxes placed throughout the community, the Partnership collected over 850 pounds of old prescription medications. These medications are then safely destroyed and not available for potential abuse.



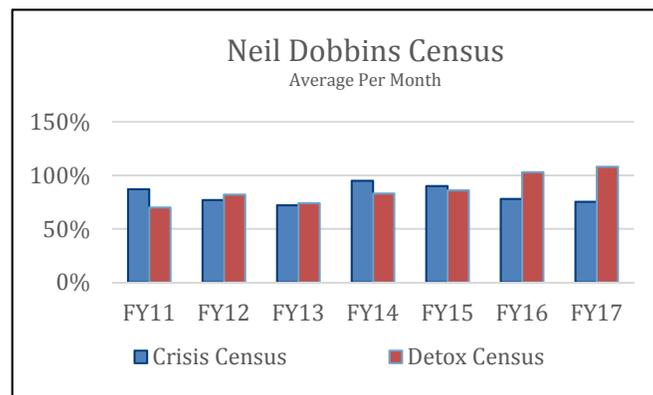
### Harm Reduction



The Steady Collective works to reduce rates of overdose and the spread of infectious disease by providing support services for people with substance use addiction. They provide overdose reversal kits and link people with addiction to behavioral health care services. With Buncombe County's support in FY17, The Steady Collective distributed 561 overdose reversal kits.

### Facility Based Crisis

The Neil Dobbins Center is a 16-bed detoxification and psychiatric crisis unit. Buncombe County supports the work of the Neil Dobbins Center by providing the facility. In FY17, census numbers for detoxification and psychiatric crisis beds were 108.2% and 75.4% respectively. 90% is considered full capacity. Beginning in FY18 the Neil Dobbins Center will be co-located at C3356, extending the continuum of care available at that location.



### START Model

Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams (START) is a child protective services program for families with parental substance abuse and child maltreatment that helps parents achieve recovery and keeps children in the home when it is possible and safe. START uses many strategies including peer supports, quick access to intensive services, specialized training, and a focus on mothers and fathers. In other jurisdictions, START has shown roughly twice the sobriety rates, half as many children in foster care and 77.6% of children remained with or were reunited with their families. In Buncombe County, one START team has been formed through a contract with Family Preservation Services. The model began in Buncombe County in July 2017.



## Programs to Prevent and Respond to Homelessness

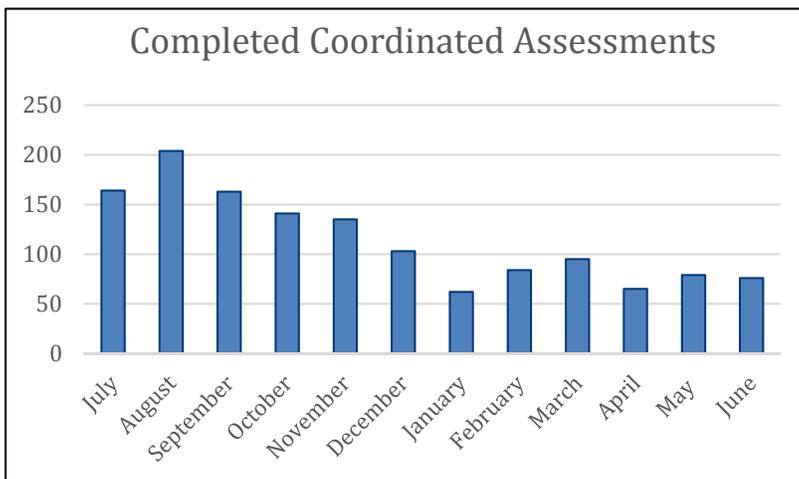
### Homeless Initiative

In partnership with the City of Asheville, Buncombe County funds a Homeless Coordinator to provide leadership for the Asheville-Buncombe Homeless Initiative Advisory Committee (HIAC) and the Strategic Plan on Homelessness, as well as administration of federal homeless funds. Since 2005, the HIAC and the Homeless Coalition have implemented “housing first” strategies and reduced chronic homelessness by 75%. In FY17 HIAC adopted a new five year strategic plan on homelessness in Buncombe County including interventions that target the needs of subpopulations such as chronically homeless individuals, veterans, and families.



### Supportive Housing Programs

In addition to HIAC, the County provides funds to Homeward Bound to support programs and services aimed at reducing homelessness. Through its Housing Case Management programs, Homeward Bound provides intensive case management and permanent supportive housing for formerly chronically homeless individuals. In FY17, 52 individuals received case management services with 100% of them retaining housing.



As part of its “housing first” programs, Homeward Bound also provides coordinated assessment through its AHOPE day program. Coordinated assessment paves the way for more efficient homeless assistance systems by helping people move through the system faster, offering prevention and diversion resources upfront, and improving data collection and quality. Homeward Bound completed 1,371 coordinated assessments in FY17. 320 individuals were moved into housing.

### Hard to House at Woodfin Apartments

A partnership between Buncombe County Health and Human Services and Homeward Bound encourages permanent supportive housing for the hard to house population. At The Woodfin 18 units are currently housing ‘hard to house’ clients. Hard to House clients may have physical and/or behavioral health care needs that often cause housing disruptions. Because many of these clients need supervision, structure, and protection, the security officer paid for by Buncombe County makes it possible for this population to remain safely housed.



## SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Program



**PISGAH**  
LEGAL SERVICES

Pisgah Legal Services identifies persons who are homeless and may be eligible for disability benefits, and attempts to fast-track the application process with the Social Security Administration. Buncombe County HHS contracts with Pisgah Legal Services to provide this service.

In FY17, the project leveraged \$2,423,531 in value of benefits, resulting in a leveraging ratio of 1:54. That is, for every county dollar invested in the Project, \$54 are returned to the county over the span of the average entitlements.

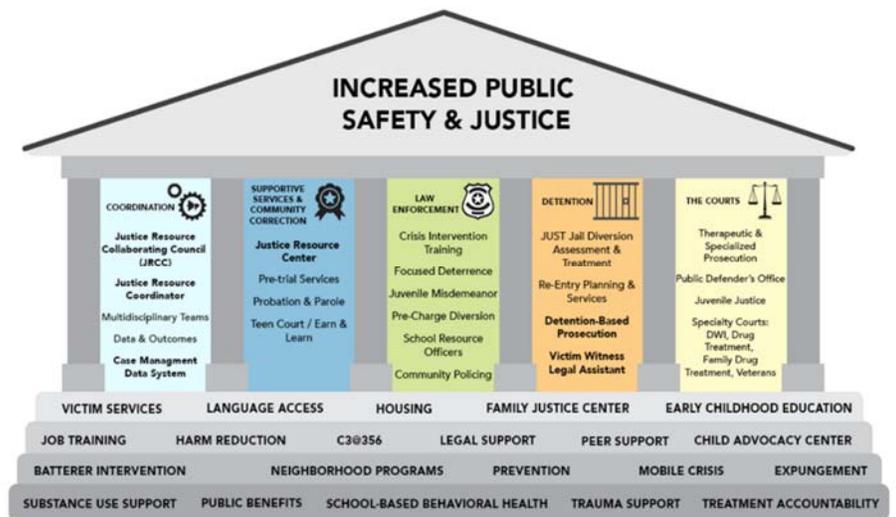
### SOAR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Approved applications	19
Average time for approval	69.9days
Dollars leveraged	\$2.4 M

## Criminal Justice Collaboration Programs

### Justice Resource Advisory Council

In spring 2017, Buncombe County partnered with criminal justice officials to form a collaborative council designed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system. The council will focus on best practice programs and policies aimed at saving county dollars, enhancing diversion, reducing recidivism, and promoting a safer community.



### Justice Resource Center

One of the first initiatives of the council will be a Justice Resource Center, which will open in FY2018. Located on the 15th floor of the Buncombe County Courthouse, it will be a place for individuals involved in the criminal justice system to access meaningful services and supports to help them on a path to stability and wellness. Using a multi-agency model, the center will offer an array of on-site services as well as extensive case management services that link individuals to housing, employment, mental health and substance abuse treatment, etc. The center will be accessible to individuals involved in any stage of the criminal justice system. Some pre-trial defendants will be able to engage in the program as a diversion option, with participation in exchange for the dismissal of charges. Services will also be available for post-conviction offenders and other justice-involved individuals.



## Stepping Up Initiative



The Stepping Up Initiative is a national campaign sponsored by National Association of Counties. The

Stepping Up Initiative is aimed at reducing the number of people with mental illness in jail. In 2015, the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution committing to the goals of this initiative and is essentially the framework that guides many of the justice programs that are provided in the jail, courts and in the community. This includes the crisis centers, pre-

booking services, jail diversion programs and specialty courts. Representatives from Buncombe County presented at North Carolina Practice Improvement Collaborative Stepping Up Summit in May 2017 about approaches to reducing the population of people with behavioral health needs in the local jail.



## Pre-Booking Services

### Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program

Often, an underlying behavioral health issue is the root cause for a law enforcement call. Buncombe County invests in CIT training which provides law enforcement with methods to deescalate a potentially volatile situation caused by a behavioral health crisis. As part of Buncombe County's Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program, law enforcement has the ability to "drop off" persons for a psychiatric evaluation, when appropriate, instead of booking them in the detention facility. A total of 60 members of law enforcement completed CIT training in FY17.

### VCI Focused Deterrence

Buncombe County contracts with The SPARC Foundation to utilize the Focused Deterrence Model for the Violent Crimes Initiative (VCI). In partnership with community members, Probation, Law Enforcement and the District Attorney's Office this model holds offenders of violent crime accountable and offers them access to supportive services. In FY 17:

- 56 individuals were notified of the program and offered services
- 6 notified individuals were charged with a new trigger crime after notification

### Juvenile Diversion Program

Until recently, North Carolina was the only state that prosecuted all 16 and 17 year olds charged with criminal offenses in the adult system, which can lead to many direct or indirect (collateral) consequences. With the passage of the "Raise the Age" bill by the General Assembly, North Carolina will begin phasing in a plan to prosecute many of these in the juvenile court system. Buncombe County is filling in the gap with its Juvenile Misdemeanor Diversion Program. This is a voluntary program to divert first time arrests or citations for eligible misdemeanor charges. Instead of a criminal justice consequence, youth are connected with tailored services to for education, wellness and prevention. Buncombe County funds a coordinator and supportive services for this program.



## Jail Prosecution Team

As a strategy to address jail population management while prioritizing public safety, Buncombe County entered into a new partnership with the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts in FY2017 for a jail prosecution team. The team consists of a Assistant District Attorney who serves as Jail Case Facilitator and a District Attorney Legal Assistant who serves as Jail Case Coordinator. These positions work with criminal justice system partners to efficiently address the needs of people in the detention facility. These efforts toward timely dispositions include both misdemeanants and felony cases. Buncombe County provides funding for these positions.

## Post-Booking Services

Delivered by RHA Health Services, through a contract with Buncombe County, post-booking diversion efforts aim to save jail resources and connect individuals in need of mental health and substance abuse treatment to appropriate services. RHA provides qualifying individuals with mental health (MH) and substance abuse (SA) case management as well as access to the JUST Program, an alternative to a mental health court.



## MH/SA Jail Reentry Case Management

Aligned with the Stepping Up Initiative, there were a total of 1,028 MH and SA screens conducted in the detention facility, in FY17.

### JAIL REENTRY CASE MANAGEMENT

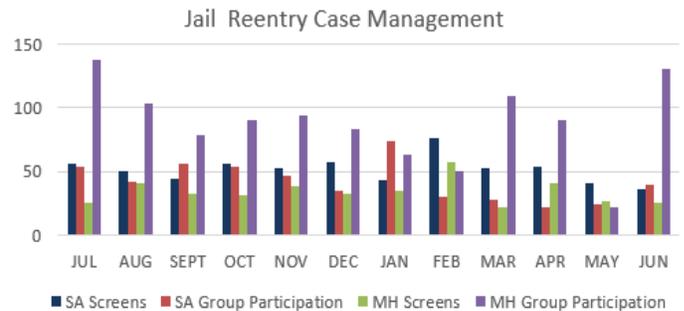
	<i>Substance Abuse</i>	<i>Mental Health</i>
Avg group participation:	42.2	87.7
Screens FYTD:	619	409
Diversion plans FYTD:	44	41

## JUST Jail Diversion Program

In FY17, 568 eligibility screens were completed and there was a total of 156 active participants.

Throughout the year,

- 46 individuals were admitted to the program
- 63% of individuals exiting the program successfully completed
- 73% were able to secure or maintain housing



## Post-Conviction Services

### Prison Reentry Services

The County is the recipient of grants from the NC Governor's Crime Commission and the NC Department of Public Safety, which support a prison reentry program operated by RHA Health Services with administration and matching funding from Buncombe County. As part of the grant requirements, the program works with individuals who have recently been released from prison and are living in Buncombe County. The program is designed to reduce recidivism and create a stable environment for individuals reentering society.

In FY17, 144 people were formally admitted to program. Of those,

- 15.9% were successfully linked to housing;
- 54.9% were successfully engaged in employment; and
- only 2.1% recidivated



### Specialty Courts

Through County funding and grant support, Buncombe County has four problem-solving courts. These programs are designed to keep individuals out of the detention center and in community-based treatment.

#### Veterans Treatment Court

Modeled after drug courts, veterans treatment courts were developed to provide an alternative to incarceration for men and women who have served in one of the five branches of the U.S. Armed Forces and are in need of mental health or substance abuse services. The Buncombe County Veterans Treatment Court was developed in July 2015. The Court is an 18-24 month program during which veterans with certain non-violent felony charges can receive intensive case management, mental health treatment, and/or substance abuse treatment. Upon successful completion, veterans have their case dismissed. As of June 2017, Buncombe County's Veterans Treatment Court had accepted 24 clients. The court has had 1 successful graduation of this long-term program with 7 additional graduations scheduled for 2017. Buncombe County funds supportive services for this court.



#### Sobriety Court

Sobriety court is designed as a voluntary treatment court for high risk, high need, and repeat DWI offenders. Through collaborations between the criminal justice system and local treatment agencies, individuals are able to remain in the community under supervision and attend substance use treatment. The goal of the program is to reduce recidivism of DWI offenders by addressing their substance use disorders. Buncombe County administers grant funds from the North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program to support a coordinator and supportive services for this court.



## Adult Drug Treatment Court

This voluntary criminal court program seeks to reduce recidivism, while providing guidance, treatment, and discipline to individuals seeking recovery from drugs and alcohol. The Adult Drug Treatment Court Team, comprised of probation, law enforcement, treatment providers and court officials, offers individuals the tools necessary to help maintain sobriety for years after program completion. Buncombe County funds a coordinator position and supportive services for this court.

In FY17, there were a total of 292 active participants in the program. Of those,

- 22 were admitted to the program
- 14 were successfully completed the program.
- 191 were successfully engaged in vocational/educations programs.

## Family Drug Treatment Court

This is a voluntary civil court program that provides case management, care coordination, and treatment support to parents/caregivers who have substance use issues and children that are in protective custody through Child Protective Services. The program supports parents in achieving and maintaining recovery, with the goals of increasing their ability to safely care for their children and decrease the time required to achieve permanency for children. Buncombe County funds a coordinator position and supportive services for this court.



## Expungement

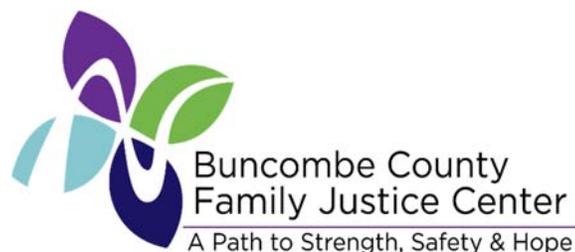
A criminal history, even for low-level, one-time offenses can be a barrier to obtaining gainful employment and becoming self-sufficient. Expungement can remove charges and convictions from a criminal history in limited circumstances. In FY17, funding from Buncombe County was approved for Pisgah Legal Services to expand their expunction services. This program provides outreach and education. In addition, a panel of volunteer attorneys assists individuals through the process to expunge criminal charges and convictions so they can improve their chances for employment and earn higher wages.



## Coordinated Community Response to Domestic and Sexual Violence

### Family Justice Center

Survivors of domestic or sexual violence can access counseling, civil legal services, safety planning, sexual assault medical exams, education, and criminal justice support from agencies located at the Buncombe County Family Justice Center (FJC).



On July 1, 2016 nonprofit partners, law enforcement, health care providers and government agencies began providing victim-centered and trauma informed services for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Onsite Partners include: Asheville Police Department, Buncombe County Health and Human Services, Buncombe County Sheriff's Office, Buncombe County District Attorney's Office, Helpmate, Mission Health, Mountain Child Advocacy Center, Our VOICE, Pisgah Legal Services and the YWCA Asheville.

Buncombe County provides the FJC facility and a coordinator for these services. Many of the services provided at the FJC are supported by grants from the US Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women and the North Carolina Governors Crime Commission through Buncombe County.

Before the FJC, victims had to navigate a fragmented system to get the help they needed. Now at the FJC they are able to access integrated intake from an FJC Intake Specialist who helps assess needs and coordinate access to additional service providers. In FY17:

- 417 people accessed integrated intake services at the FJC
- 84% identified domestic violence as the primary victimization
- 12% identified sexual assault or stalking as the primary victimization

### Increasing Safety; Reducing Fear and Anxiety

After meeting with an FJC Intake Specialist, 92% of survey respondents indicated that they had a plan to keep themselves safe and they knew what to do if they were in danger and 71% of survey respondents reported a decreased fear and anxiety level.



## MANY PARTNERS, ONE LOCATION.



When asked what the most helpful part of their experience at the FJC was, survivors shared comments like: “getting the help and resources that I needed”, “being able to talk through my situation with a person who listened”, “everybody making me feel comfortable”, “being able to talk with all the different agencies in one stop”, “coordinating between staff and law enforcement”, and “I could talk to the police without being scared.”



The Buncombe County Family Justice Center is an Affiliated Family Justice Center with the National Family Justice Center Alliance.

## Improving our Response to Crimes of Domestic and Sexual Violence

Chief Tom Tremblay, a national and international advisor and trainer for police, prosecutors and advocates trained over 40 FJC partner agency staff about impacts of trauma. This training on trauma informed interviewing improved our community’s understanding of how to work with and interview someone experiencing trauma – especially trauma resulting from sexual assault and domestic violence.



## Engaging the Community



FJC partners collaborated with faith leaders, medical providers, first responders, the Buncombe County Sheriff’s Office’s Community Oriented Policing (COPS) Teams and other community agencies to share about the impacts of domestic and sexual violence and how to connect victims with the FJC. In FY 17, FJC Partners provided over 40 community presentations and hosted 17 community tours of the FJC.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic or sexual violence, support is available at the Family Justice Center located at 35 Woodfin Street in downtown Asheville or by calling (828)250-6900.



## Domestic Violence Offender Services

### Specialized Domestic Violence Prosecution Unit

As part of the Coordinated Community Response to Domestic and Sexual Violence, Buncombe County invests in a Specialized Domestic Violence Prosecution Unit. This adds an Assistant District Attorney, Legal Assistant and Investigator to work from the Family Justice Center and focus on domestic violence cases.

### Offender Services

Buncombe County invests in support services to engage offenders in behavior change. Through these supports, people using violence in relationships have the opportunity to learn new ways of dealing with conflict. The SPARC Foundation offers Batterers Intervention, Strong Fathers, and Domestic Violence Focused Deterrence. These programs include case management to support offenders in accessing stable housing, employment and education.



### Batterers Intervention Program

The SPARC Foundation provides a 26 week Batterers Intervention Program following the Emerge Abuser Education Group curriculum. This curriculum focuses on battering not just as physical violence, but instead as a range of behaviors that include physical, sexual, psychological, verbal and economic abuse. In FY 17:

- 102 people referred to the program were assessed and enrolled
- 50 people successfully completed the 26 week Batterers Intervention Program

### Strong Fathers

Strong Fathers is a free 20-week strengths-based educational program group for fathers who have engaged in domestic violence or are at-risk of doing so. Strong Fathers recognizes that participants' behavior in relationships is heavily influenced by their past, particularly the experiences as children. In FY 17:

- 44 people were assessed and enrolled
- 12 people successfully completed the Strong Fathers Program

### Domestic Violence Focused Deterrence

The SPARC Foundation and community partners including Probation, Law Enforcement and the District Attorney's Office are utilizing a modified High Point Domestic Violence Focused Deterrence Model to hold domestic violence offenders accountable and offer them access to supportive services. In FY 17:

- 20 Domestic Violence offenders were notified of the program
- 2 notified offenders were charged with a new domestic violence related crimes after notification
- 2 notified offenders were charged with non-domestic violence related crimes after notification

### Pretrial Services Domestic Violence Protocol

Buncombe County Pretrial Services received a John D and Catherine T MacArthur Foundation: Safety and Justice Challenge grant to plan and implement a 12-month pilot program that will enhance pretrial supervision of defendants charged with domestic violence offenses. Stakeholders including Judges, the District Attorney's Office, The Public Defender's Office and Family Justice Center partners collaborated to develop a new Domestic Violence Defendant Supervision Protocol.

