LIAISON REPORT

AGENCY: \_ACPC\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ LIAISON: \_\_\_Andrea Rich\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**1. Need for Program.** Describe who the target population is and whether their numbers are increasing or decreasing. Indicate the source of this information. Also, indicate how the program/service is different and how it is similar to others and what would happen if the program/service ceased to exist. List the priorities established by ASSET Funders, which the programming addresses.

ACPC provides services for children 18 months to 5th grade. The main center serves children aged 18 months to five years for all-day care. ACPC also provides before and after school care to school age children at five schools and two churches throughout the Ames community. School-aged care is expanded to full day during no-school days and summer vacations.

ACPC provides childcare on a sliding-fee scale to allow lower income families access to high quality, dependable child care. ACPC serves a diverse cross-section of the Ames community, which includes a mix of cultures, ethnicities and incomes. ACPC leadership estimate that the current group of students are the most diverse group of children the center has ever had.

**2. Program Strengths.** Pick two to four factors that contribute most importantly to the program/service outcomes. Do not list everything that is satisfactory. We will assume that things not mentioned are okay. For each strength describe some supporting evidence.

ACPC has worked to address the community’s shortage of childcare by expanding services. The school aged program has expanded and an additional staff member has been hired to oversee the after-school program to ensure each site has appropriate supervision and staff are supported. ACPC is in planning stages to expand capacity for full-time daycare as well, as infrastructure changes are coming to completion. This effort will help fill the gap in childcare shortage.

**3. Program Weaknesses.** Select factors that detract most from the program/service achieving its outcomes. Present details as described above. Recommendations for reducing these weaknesses should follow the discussion of each weakness.

ACPC continues to have difficulty finding qualified staff. Low unemployment has contributed to an employee shortage throughout the Ames Community, which ACPC has also experienced. Full-time staff has remained stable but part-time staff to support lead teachers and meet ACPC’s objective of higher staff: child ratio has continued to be an issue.

**4. Financial Outlook.** Current funding concerns should be described. In addition, the assessment of the program's plan to cope with shrinking resources should be given.

ACPC has a strong financial footing due to historically conservative financial management and continued careful stewardship. Childcare centers differ from other ASSET agencies in that shrinking resources will not impact their bottom line, but rather impact the families they are able to serve. With ongoing childcare shortages in Ames and a steady waitlist of 50+ children waiting for an opening, ACPC would continue to serve families, they just would not be able to provide scholarships to families with limited resources.

**5. Internal Management Practices.** Summarize your assessment of the management of the agency, and the role of the Board. If there are deficiencies, details should be provided. Conclude with recommendations when appropriate.

ACPC leadership was engaging and forthcoming during interactions with ASSET volunteers. ACPC has an established and active Board.

**6. Agency Suggestions/Comments.** Make note of any suggestions, comments or questions agencies may have with regard to the ASSET process, budget forms and or anything else that relates to the process.

ACPC’s director mentioned interest in exploring a sliding scale fee structure with a more graduated structure, allowing more families to be provided some assistance with childcare by spreading the funding around as well as more accurately assessing need than the current stepped program. Additional discussion would be needed with the Asset Admin Team as this would require an adjustment in reimbursement unit.

**GENERAL ASSESSMENT:**

ACPC continues to fill a critical need in the community, by providing child care services for roughly 450 toddlers and youth. The agency utilizes ASSET funds to subsidize the sliding fee scale which allows for safe, high-quality, dependable, child care to be open to families that otherwise would not have access.