

LIVE UNITED



United Way of Hancock County

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

United Way of Hancock County, in conjunction with The Community Foundation, Alcohol Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board, and Findlay Health Department, conducted a community needs assessment that studies both health and social issues in Hancock County in 2013. This served as an addendum to a community health assessment completed in 2011. United Way followed up with community conversations in 2014. 514 people responded to the needs assessment, a participation rate of 45%. 289 people participated in facilitated small groups of 8-12 participants which discussed issues and vision for Hancock County.

This Executive Summary will serve as a consolidated report which highlights the major issues addressed in the 2013 Community Needs assessment and the 2014 Community Conversations. (The full text of the reports, along with other pertinent information can be accessed through links provided below.)

Nine topics have been identified of which six were addressed in both studies. The six topics are: abuse/safety, alcohol/drugs, housing, literacy, transportation, and income/employment. The three topics most mentioned in the needs assessment were: mental health, food and nonprofit assistance requests.

The following will provide a snapshot of these issues as related in the two studies: NA=Needs Assessment, CC =Community Conversations

Abuse & Safety

NA: 5% of adults were threatened, and 11% were abused in the past year. 14% were concerned with neighborhood safety. 17% of Hancock County adults were currently experiencing lingering issues with regards to the August 2007 flood.

CC: The issue of safety revolved mostly around bullying and gang activity. The participants want more outreach programs for kids to teach them how to deal with bullying and how to stop bullying. Also included in this issue was the need for more block watch areas and less cuts in law enforcement. It should come as no surprise that the community wants to be flood-free.

Alcohol & Drugs

NA: Hancock County adults reported the following concerns in the community: alcohol and drug abuse (44%) and opiate/prescription drug abuse (31%). Almost one-quarter (23%) of Hancock County adults were considered binge drinkers, increasing to 33% of those ages 18-25. The 2012 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System reported binge drinking rates of 18% for Ohio and 17% for the U.S.

CC: There appears to be a consensus that we have our “head in the sand” regarding the breadth and depth of drug addiction. Drug addiction is an issue across social and economic classes.

These comments were made regarding drug testing in schools:

“Kids are removed from sports and have their parking passes taken away.”

“Drugs and alcohol are easily accessible from parents or older siblings.”

“There is a lot of peer pressure and kids who feel left out in the world find a sense of community with others who use drugs.”

“No one teaches kids how to help with friends that have problems with drugs and alcohol.”

A possibility would be to have mandatory sexual/drug issues discussed within the school system each year. The cost and availability of rehabilitation was mentioned as a concern but also cited was that the ADAMHS Board does not do a good job of getting the word out regarding their successes or ability to help. Multiple people mentioned the problem of a path to addiction and that we seem to be caught in a dilemma of prevention versus intervention. The community should have a 24-hour counseling facility available.

Affordable Housing

NA: 7% of adults reported that 50 % or more of their total household income went toward their housing, lack of affordable housing (19%), 27% of Hancock County adults were worried or stressed about having enough money to pay their rent/mortgage.

CC: The ‘doesn’t exist’ mentality exists with poverty and homelessness. Several points were made regarding the lack of communication about services and assistance available to people in need and a lack of low-income housing.

Literacy and Early Childhood Development

NA: 13% of Hancock County adults or immediate family members had a literacy need.

CC: While this category could be combined with jobs/education, the main points mentioned in the conversations were health, financial, and technical literacy. In addition, some comments regarding teaching life skills in schools and educational settings was brought up. Other participants thought there were educational barriers to enter preschool. The community should have a high school dropout prevention program. Teachers have a difficult time with the number of mandates combined with the increase in students who are unprepared for school. A solution could be to develop a city or county-wide after school curriculum.

Transportation

NA: 14% reported a lack of affordable transportation

CC: There is a lack of convenient, affordable transportation. This includes kids missing the bus and cannot get to school, people who are trying to improve themselves by attending classes but cannot get to them, and others who need to get to work. The wait times for Hancock Area Transportation Services (HATS) is too long and does not run 24/7 for people on afternoon or night shift. Additional transportation services from the senior towers to community and university events along with rides to doctor's appointments and shopping are needed.

Income & Employment

NA: 35% unemployment, 21% underemployment, 8% have been poor, 7% employed but not enough to support family

CC: This issue had multiple components. First, people felt there was a lack of strategy to match the skill needs of the businesses and workers. These skills and training gaps need to be identified and then partner with businesses to match workers with the business's needs. Second, people are stuck in dead-end, low-wage jobs but they can't move forward without skills training. Some positions, like welding or construction, don't need a four-year degree. Third, for those under 18, there is a lack of opportunities and access to education. Finally, a plan should be developed to assist felons in getting a decent job. Other communities have programs such as 'Second Chance Business' or a 'Bridges Program'.

The following are the three additional topics discussed in the 2013 Needs Assessment:

Mental Health

In the past year, 40% of adults in Hancock County felt worried, tense, or anxious, 23% of Hancock County adults were depressed in the past year, 56% of adults had at least one Adverse Childhood Experience

Food Insecurity

25% did not have enough money to buy food, 58% of people with income less than \$25K were stressed about obtaining nutritious food, 71% of adults were concerned about nutrition in general, 8% were not concerned.

Non-Profit Assistance Requests

16% or 1 in 6 attempted to get assistance, 69% received assistance.

COMMUNITY GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The Community Conversations also addressed “What Kind of Community do you want?”

We find several themes in addition to those addressed above:

People also want a more civil, inclusive and diverse community that accepts people of all economic status, race and religious views. This also includes advocating for seniors such as providing low-income housing, exercise facilities, and activities (movies, etc.) that are stimulating for seniors. Senior communities should network and communicate and also have gerontology services. We need to be a community that supports artists and the contribution they make to a vibrant city.

Lastly, community members specified a desire for improvements in the following areas: opportunities for healthy lifestyles (more pedestrian friendly walkways, healing/community gardens, education/treatment for obesity problem); addressing urban decay; and, overall, making sure that Findlay/Hancock County remains a fun, safe and productive place for children to grow up.

UNITED WAY STRATEGIC POSITION

The United Way of Hancock County embarked on a process to update its current strategic position as well as establish short and long term goals in the spring of 2014. The board and staff used the needs assessment, community conversations, and current program data to establish the strategic position and goals. Subsequently, the board determined that United Way would implement two pilot projects, a Pre-K scholarship program for underserved children and a “Crunch Out Obesity” program for fourth and fifth grade students, based on the information gathered. These two programs are currently being rolled out as of January 2015.

It is the intent of the United Way board and staff to use the data collected, the results of the Community Mapping Project as well as other baseline data being collected, to help establish community initiatives which can be embraced by the public, private and non-profit sectors to develop collective impact to address identified root issue in Findlay and Hancock County.

The following are links to the:

[Community Health Assessment Report](#)

[Community Conversations Summary Report](#)

[United Way Strategic Position document](#)

Media releases which describe two current United Way pilot projects:

[Crunch Out Obesity](#)

[Additional Preschool Sessions](#)