

Executive Summary

What Matters

United Way of
Central Ohio

Community Assessment 2004

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Community Research Partners

The research in this assessment was conducted by Community Research Partners, a nonprofit organization established in 2000 by United Way of Central Ohio, the City of Columbus, and the John Glenn Institute for Public Service and Public Policy at The Ohio State University. Community Research Partners provides leadership and expertise in measurement, evaluation and research that advances human services and community development policy and practice, as a means to create positive community change.

CRP collects, analyzes and disseminates original and secondary data on community demographic, economic and social trends and conditions for use by funders, program providers, grant writers, researchers and the general public.

In addition to providing data on community conditions, CRP also provides services in the areas of outcome-based programming, program evaluation and research and planning.



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Community Assessment Background and Overview

What is the Community Assessment?

In 1993, United Way of Central Ohio began an ambitious journey to refocus its purpose as an organization from fundraising to creating community impact. Creating community impact means effectively responding to important community needs and problems by developing effective strategies that address the underlying causes of those problems. That strategic vision is based on three core principles:

1. Focusing on the achievement of *meaningful and measurable results* at a community level;
2. Developing those results through strategies based on *inclusiveness, collaboration and integration*; and
3. Building the *capacity* of agencies, systems and the community itself to contribute to the achievement of those results.

In response to those principles, United Way has organized its work around seven critical need areas – education, employment, health, housing, neighborhood development, race relations/diversity and safety. United Way volunteers are organized into board-level committees called Vision Councils that address these areas.

Though the community goals and objectives have been reaffirmed and fine-tuned in recent years, they have not been fully re-examined since their creation in 1998. In 2003, United Way determined that it was time to undertake a formal community assessment process and use the results to affirm or revise critical need areas, community goals and community objectives to ensure that they represent the most significant community needs that are most appropriate for United Way support.

What Matters: United Way of Central Ohio Community Assessment 2004 is the first step in this process, describing community conditions and community responses to those conditions. United Way volunteers and staff are using the information in *What Matters 2004* as a context for redeveloping long term community goals and objectives to guide United Way's community impact efforts over the next three to five years.

How the assessment was conducted

What Matters 2004 is a comprehensive report, incorporating data from multiple original and secondary sources. United Way formed a 29-member volunteer advisory committee, chaired by Columbus Compact President and CEO Jonathan C. Beard, to provide leadership in the development of the study. Community Research Partners, a nonprofit organization formed as a partnership of United Way of Central Ohio, the City of Columbus, and The John Glenn Institute at The Ohio State University, was asked by United Way to undertake the research for *What Matters 2004*.

Community Research Partners and United Way placed priority on seeking the perspective of community members as well as gathering research data on central Ohio from a variety of sources. The multiple research methods and project components are outlined in the sidebar on this page.

"The report is intended to be a big picture overview or snapshot of our community, not a comprehensive or definitive piece of work on the many individual program and policy areas included in the assessment."

—Community Assessment
Advisory Committee

Components of the Community Assessment

- 50 key informant interviews
- 18 focus groups (196 participants)
- United Way of Central Ohio donor and agency staff Web survey (566 responses)
- Demographic and social indicator data
- Local planning documents
- Human services funding inventory
- Literature review



Community Assessment Background and Overview

Is United Way working on the right things?

For the last seven years, United Way of Central Ohio has focused on seven critical need areas: education, employment, health, housing, neighborhood development, race relations/diversity and safety. Interview and focus group participants were asked for feedback on the current United Way critical need areas. Most indicated that United Way should keep the current structure, and many offered suggestions for improvement. Other participants noted that current vision councils often operate as “silos” and need to interrelate and work together in order to address critical community needs more effectively.

Scope of the Executive Summary

This summary presents an overview of the information found in the full report, What Matters: Community Assessment 2004 and its companion technical report. For more detail, as well as further descriptions of the methodology and data sources used to prepare the assessment, please refer to these reports, available from United Way of Central Ohio. These documents can also be downloaded in PDF format from the United Way and CRP Web sites:

www.uwcentralohio.org or www.communityresearchpartners.org.

Community Assessment Overarching Themes

• Yes—but

Underlying many overall positive trends and conditions in Franklin County are areas of concern. Disparities exist for population groups and geographic areas in Franklin County.

• The transportation barrier

There is a need for improved transportation so that residents can access employment, training and services.

• A holistic approach

It is important to address the needs of the whole person, the whole family, the whole neighborhood, and the whole community.

Franklin County Population Overview

Population growth

Franklin County continues to gain population, increasing by 11.2 percent from 1990 to 2000. However, migration figures show that Franklin County had a net loss of population to adjacent central Ohio counties since 1994.

Increasing racial and ethnic diversity

Since 1990, growth rates of black or African American, American Indian, Asian, and Hispanic or Latino populations far surpass that of the white population. In 2000, 90,000 people in Franklin County reported speaking a language other than English at home.

Aging population

The median age of the Franklin County population increased to 32.5 years in

2000, compared to 30.8 years in 1990. The age profile of Franklin County will continue this shift over the next 20 years as the “baby boomer” cohort ages.

Changing households

The total number of households in Franklin County increased by 15.9 percent from 1990 to 2000, growing at a faster rate than the population. Households are also smaller, as there are fewer married couples with children and more persons living alone. The average number of persons per household in 2000 was 2.39, compared to 2.47 in 1990.

Franklin County Population Change 1990–2000



Population change 1990-2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

Basic and Emergency Needs

Trends, gaps and needs

United Way of Central Ohio defines basic needs as shelter, food and clothing. Homelessness is a priority based on responses from interviews, focus groups, and Web site surveys on basic and emergency needs in central Ohio. More than 25 percent of interview respondents and half of the focus groups mentioned homelessness as a pressing community concern. More than 75 percent of United Way agency staff and donors completing the Web survey identified homelessness as a “major” or “medium” community problem in Franklin County.

Community interview responses highlight hunger as an alarming trend in central Ohio. Said one focus group participant: “Food is a need. People are running out of food, especially those with large families.” Hunger was cited in 16 percent of interviews and half of the focus groups as a problem; it was identified by 36 percent of Web respondents as a major community problem.

Finally, members of the central Ohio community participating in the community assessment focus groups and Web survey identified that residents also need a range of basic and emergency services and resources such as transportation, rental assistance, medical costs, clothing and child care.

Social and demographic data provide additional information about basic and emergency needs trends and conditions in Franklin County.

- Providers of services to homeless families in central Ohio witnessed an 18 percent increase in families served between 2002 and 2003.
- In January 2004, there were more than 10,000 persons on the waiting list for Section 8 housing assistance.
- Food pantries received 21.3 percent more food requests in 2003 than three years prior, serving in excess of 1 million meals in central Ohio.
- Between 2002 and 2003, demand for all major forms of public assistance increased.
- Adult emergency assistance allocations to counties is completely eliminated from the 2003-05 state biennium budget.

Resources for basic and emergency needs

The resource inventory identified more than \$192 million in annual funding resources in Franklin County for basic and emergency needs.* This total does not include private pensions, general social security benefits, or child support. More than half (62.4 percent) of this total funding is used for food and nutrition, while 26 percent is used for public assistance/benefits. Spending on homelessness totals \$13.9 million, or 7.2 percent of the total. United Way of Central Ohio spends its resources for basic and emergency needs primarily on disaster relief/emergency response and homelessness.

How United Way resources for basic and emergency needs are used

Disaster relief/emergency response	40.1%	Food/nutrition	17.8%
Homelessness	37.3%	Clothing/household goods	4.8%

*Figures include selected resources; for a listing of resources and a description of the inventory methodology, please refer to the full What Matters 2004 report and companion technical report.

Current Conditions

- 🚩 More emergency food assistance requests
- 🚩 Increasing family homelessness
- 🚩 Declining emergency resources for low-income single adults
- 🚩 Long waiting lists for public housing and rental assistance
- 🚩 Increases in persons receiving public assistance

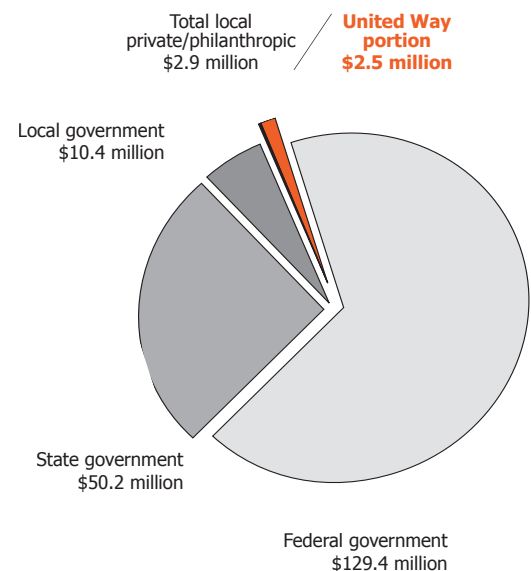
Community Perceptions

“There are more kids in schools who are homeless. Something needs to be done to help. Homelessness is becoming more commonplace, more often.”

—Key informant interview

“Hunger in central Ohio is the most urgent issue to address. Without proper nutrition, people are not able to benefit from the other programs available to better their situations.”

—Web survey participant



Education

Trends, gaps and needs

Education was cited as a need by 38 percent of interviewees, 12 of 18 focus groups and the majority of Web survey respondents. Although Franklin County residents have above average rates of educational attainment and higher education enrollment, community members cited graduation rates from public schools as a key concern. One key informant also emphasized, "We need to increase opportunities for education in the minority community." While the graduation rate for African American students is higher than the rate for white students in the Columbus school district and two other districts, it is lower in all other Franklin County districts.

While many responses from interviews, focus groups, and Web site surveys identified educational attainment as a top issue, many also expressed concern about the quality of education in central Ohio public schools. In fact, 57 percent of Web survey respondents identified the quality of public schools as a major problem in Franklin County. Community respondents identified overcrowding, the perception of the Columbus Public School system and the availability of early childhood education and after-school opportunities and programs as issues of educational quality.

Also mentioned by interviewees was the need for early childhood education and after-school programs. They also noted that early education and child care are not numerous, and there have been cutbacks made in child care eligibility for working parents.

Social and demographic data provide additional information about education trends and conditions in Franklin County.

- In 2000, 85.7 percent of Franklin County residents age 25 and over had earned a high school diploma; those residents holding a bachelor's degree or greater increased from 26.6 to 31.8 percent since 1990.
- In the 2002-2003 school year, Columbus Public Schools moved out of Academic Emergency and increased its graduation rate from 56 percent to 59.3 percent.
- Only 49 percent of Columbus low-income students enrolled in college, compared to 78 percent of high-income students.
- In 2003, 16,358 children were authorized for subsidized child care in Franklin County. There are significant shortages in child care services for evenings, weekends, and children with special needs.

Resources for education

The resource inventory identified over \$125 million in annual funding resources in Franklin County for education.* This figure does not include expenditures for K-12 public or private schools' student instruction or postsecondary education. United Way of Central Ohio spends a majority of its resources on youth and teen services, with another important portion going to early childhood care and education programs.

How United Way resources for education are used

Child care/early childhood	39.6%	After-school/school-based	20.3%
Youth/teen services	33.2%	Adult education/literacy/GED	4.5%
Life-skills/budgeting/parenting	2.3%		

*Figures include selected resources; for a listing of resources and a description of the inventory methodology, please refer to the full What Matters 2004 report and companion technical report.

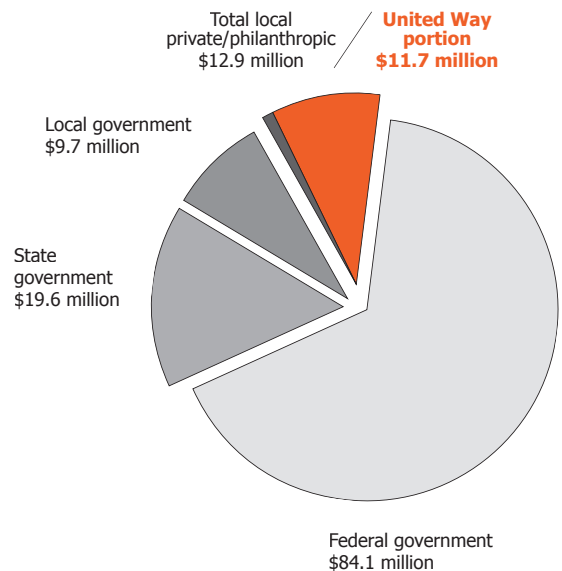
Current Conditions

- ☆ Educational attainment in Franklin County above Ohio and U.S. averages
- ⚠ Barriers to college access for low-income students
- ⚠ More children eligible for free and reduced price lunch program
- ⚠ Unmet needs for subsidized child care
- ◆ Majority of Franklin County school districts met state proficiency test and graduation rate standards
- ≠ Racial disparities in the areas of educational attainment, high school graduation rates, and achievement

Community Perceptions

"There is fallout from welfare reform [for low-income students]. We need to assure that systems work effectively so children don't fall through the cracks."

—Key informant interview



Employment and Income

Trends, gaps and needs

Employment and income are of keen interest to Franklin County residents and community leaders. Job losses experienced over the last three years, in areas such as manufacturing and retail, make layoffs an important issue for key informants and focus group participants.

Nearly 40 percent of Web survey respondents identified the quality of new jobs as a major community problem. Although job growth is projected for central Ohio, the service sector may account for almost half of it. Community members expressed concern that new jobs being created in central Ohio were primarily lower paying service jobs. Respondents also noted a disconnection between jobs and workers, since most job growth is occurring in suburban areas while most lower income residents live in the central city.

Respondents identified the perceived gap between the “haves” and the “have-nots” as a pressing community issue. More than 50 percent of Web survey respondents cited poverty as a major problem. Interviewees also highlighted the situation of the working poor, who may fall through gaps in the network of human services that exists for unemployed persons but who may also need some of those services because their wages place them at risk.

Social and demographic data provide additional information about employment and income trends and conditions in Franklin County.

- Persons in central Ohio have a median income of \$42,734, higher than the state and the national medians.
- Nearly 150,000 new jobs are projected in the Columbus area between 2000 and 2010, the largest increase of all metropolitan areas of the state.
- In 2002, the mean hourly wage for a worker in a service occupation in Columbus was \$11.42—or \$23,754 a year for a full-time job, well below the annual income of \$36,200 required for a family of four avoid economic hardship.
- African American, American Indian, and Hispanic/Latino households have median incomes from 20-30 percent below the county median and poverty rates more than twice the Franklin County figure.
- Although the poverty rate dropped from 13.0 percent in 1990 to 11.6 percent in 2000, the number of persons in poverty remained the same at about 120,000.
- In 2000, the poverty rate for female-headed households with children under age 5 was 42.9 percent, compared to 2.9 percent for married couple families.

Resources for employment

The resource inventory identified nearly \$32.9 million in annual funding resources in Franklin County for employment.* This figure does not include business capital improvements, business development loans, and economic development. The largest portion (83.9 percent) of this funding is used for workforce development. United Way of Central Ohio spends all its employment funds on workforce development activities.

How United Way resources for employment are used

Workforce development 100%

*Figures include selected resources; for a listing of resources and a description of the inventory methodology, please refer to the full What Matters 2004 report and companion technical report.

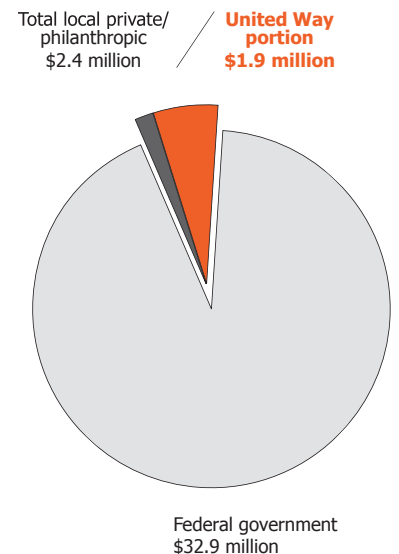
Current Conditions

- ★ Strong job growth projected
- ★ Median income and wage rates higher than regional and national averages
- 🚩 Three years of job loss
- 🚩 Suburban job growth while low-income residents live in central city
- 🚩 Number of persons in poverty unchanged
- ◆ Unemployment higher than in the past but still relatively low
- ≠ Racial disparities in income, poverty rates, unemployment and business ownership

Community Perceptions

“We have an obligation to help people overcome barriers to employment so they can have long-term success. In doing so, we reduce their reliance on public assistance and other social services.”

—Focus group participant



Trends, gaps and needs

Access to affordable health care and medical insurance, according to community key informants, focus group participants and Web survey respondents, is a need in Franklin County. Health care access was the need identified by the largest percent (42 percent) of key informants interviewed and was mentioned in all 18 focus groups. Mental health and substance abuse services were also highlighted by respondents who pointed to timeliness and availability as important concerns.

Community members were also concerned about behavioral and lifestyle links to health and wellness. More than 51 percent of Web site survey respondents identified a sedentary lifestyle as a community problem. Respondents also perceived a chronic shortfall in substance abuse services in Franklin County. Tobacco, drug and alcohol use by both teens and adults were listed as major problems by survey participants.

In focus groups, cultural issues also emerged as important community considerations in health care. Systems of care were viewed by participants as hard for immigrants to navigate, and language barriers were also mentioned as contributing to barriers to health care access.

Social and demographic data provide additional information about basic and emergency needs trends and conditions in Franklin County.

- Death rates in Franklin County from four of the five leading causes of death—cancer, stroke, chronic lower respiratory disease and diabetes—are higher than for Ohio and the U.S. The death rate for heart disease is higher than for the U.S.
- In 2001, 87.6 percent of Franklin County mothers began prenatal care within the first three months of their pregnancies, compared to 83.1 percent in 1990.
- More Ohioans with disabilities are receiving services in their homes rather than in nursing facilities.
- Young adults (ages 18-24), African Americans and persons below 200 percent of poverty are more likely to lack health insurance.
- One out of three adults has not seen a dentist in the last year.
- About 70,000 residents are potentially in need of services funded through the ADAMH Board, but services are reaching about half of this group.

Resources for health

The resource inventory identified more than \$1.7 billion in annual funding resources in Franklin County for health.* This figure does not include private health insurance, environmental health services, health inspection services, or hospital funds. The majority (62.8 percent) of this funding is used for primary health care and wellness activities. United Way of Central Ohio distributes its resources for health among a variety of initiatives.

How United Way resources for health are used

Leading causes of death prevention/treatment	24.4%	Substance abuse	11.9%
Primary health care/wellness	18.8%	Disease management	6.2%
Older citizens services	15.7%	Mental health/disabilities	6.2%
Physical disabilities services	12.5%	HIV/AIDS/STDs	4.3%

*Figures include selected resources; for a listing of resources and a description of the inventory methodology, please refer to the full What Matters 2004 report and companion technical report.

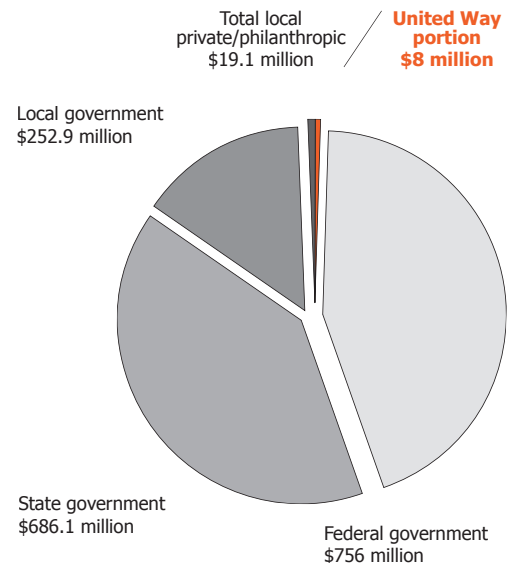
Current Conditions

- ☆ Fertility rate increasing but fewer births to teens
- ☆ Decreased alcohol, drug and tobacco use by youth
- ⚑ Many adults with diabetes not receiving regular medical care
- ⚑ Children at risk from overweight and inactivity
- ⚑ Higher rates of sexually transmitted diseases than Ohio and U.S.
- ⚑ Low-income persons have higher risk of depression
- ⚑ More women and minorities among new HIV diagnoses
- ≠ Racial disparities in teen birth rates, infant mortality, leading causes of death, homicide and health insurance coverage, among others

Community Perceptions

"I see a great need for more access to affordable health care for those who are uninsured."

—Web survey respondent



Housing

Trends, gaps and needs

Affordable housing is a key area of need in central Ohio, according to community members participating in the community assessment. Affordable rental and owner housing was mentioned as an area of concern by more than 30 percent of survey respondents, 20 percent of interviewees, and 12 of 18 focus groups. They also described the housing needs of groups such as recent college graduates, low-income people, ex-offenders, disabled citizens and immigrants.

The condition of existing housing in central Ohio was also noted by survey respondents. Other housing issues identified as a major problem were affordable rental housing, housing for persons with disabilities, and rent/mortgage/utility assistance.

Social and demographic data provide additional information about housing trends and conditions in Franklin County.

- In Franklin County, a full-time worker must earn \$12.31 an hour in order to afford a two-bedroom apartment at the area's Fair Market Rent. This "housing wage" has increased by 15 percent since 1999.
- Extremely low-income renters need about 41,000 housing units in Franklin County, but only 27,175 exist – and 44 percent of these units are occupied by persons with higher incomes.
- In 2003, the average price of a house in central Ohio (new and existing) was \$166,928, a 41.5 percent increase since 1995.
- In 2002, there were 21,300 Franklin County housing units with physical problems.
- About 11,000 low-income Franklin County homeowners pay over half of their income for housing.
- In 2001, there were 5,077 new home foreclosure filings in Franklin County courts, compared to only 1,552 in 1994.

Resources for housing

The resource inventory identified more than \$123 million in annual funding resources in Franklin County for housing.* This figure does not include mortgage loans. This funding is primarily spent on affordable housing development/rehabilitation (39 percent) and supportive housing for the homeless and disabled (40 percent). United Way of Central Ohio expends its housing resources on supportive housing for the homeless and disabled, with another substantial portion for fair housing issues.

How United Way resources for housing are used

Supportive housing for homeless/disabled	58.7%	Homebuyer counseling/financial services	4.3%
Fair housing/legal assistance	37.0%		

*Figures include selected resources; for a listing of resources and a description of the inventory methodology, please refer to the full What Matters 2004 report and companion technical report.

Current Conditions

- ☆ Homeownership rate increased
- 🏠 Rental housing unaffordable to many working households
- 🏠 Most lowest-income residents paying more than half of their income for housing
- 🏠 Home foreclosures tripled over the last seven years
- 🏠 Subsidized housing demand far outstrips supply
- ≠ Racial and ethnic disparities in homeownership, homelessness and overcrowding

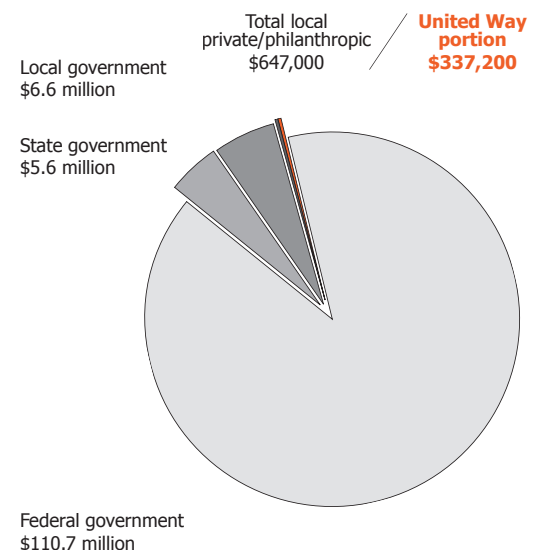
Community Perceptions

"Affordable housing is a huge issue here, despite all the work that has been done."

—Key informant interview

"Minority groups are over-represented in emergency shelter and under-represented in homeownership."

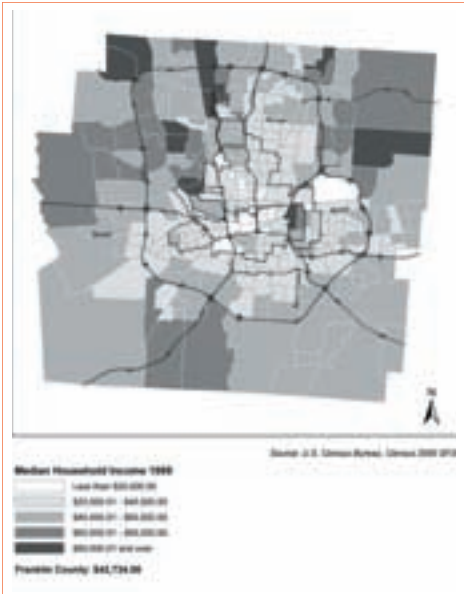
—Focus group participant



Neighborhood Development

Trends, gaps and needs

The Neighborhood Development section provides a “small geography perspective” for the trends and needs described in the other sections of *What Matters 2004*. The data include health data by zip code, social and economic characteristics by census tract. The assessment also distinguishes older Columbus – the area within the city’s 1950 boundaries, which has the characteristics of an urban central city – from newer Columbus – the area annexed since 1950, which has the characteristics of a growing suburb.



Issues related to neighborhoods were mentioned as a need by 20 percent of key informants, 11 of 18 focus groups, and approximately 30 percent of Web site survey responses.

Community members perceived that differences exist among Franklin County geographic areas in key indicators such as health status, income, safety, housing and education. Interviewees and focus group participants favored funding community-based and/or grassroots organizations that were located in neighborhoods with specific service needs.

Revitalization of the central city with programs and services was also identified by participants as an important trend to address neighborhood development.

Social and demographic data provide additional information about basic and emergency needs trends and conditions in Franklin County.

- Disparities in health, housing and safety exist in Franklin County based on geographic areas.
- While Columbus and Franklin County populations grow, the population of older Columbus continues to decline.
- Out-migration of white households from older Columbus is a primary factor contributing to its population loss.

Resources for neighborhood development

The resource inventory identified more than \$2.3 million in annual funding resources in Franklin County for neighborhood development.* This figure does not include neighborhood capital improvements or recreation and cultural arts programs. Programs targeting neighborhood improvement account for the majority (80.5 percent) of expenditures of neighborhood development funding. While United Way of Central Ohio spends a large portion of its neighborhood development resources on improvement, it also funds community empowerment programs.

How United Way resources for neighborhood development are used

Neighborhood improvement 54.1% Community empowerment 45.9%

*Figures include selected resources; for a listing of resources and a description of the inventory methodology, please refer to the full *What Matters 2004* report and companion technical report.

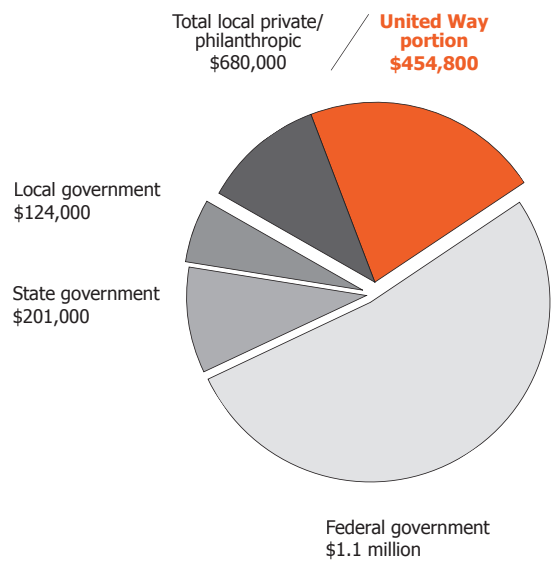
Current Conditions

- ☆ Older Columbus poverty rate dropped over the last decade
- ☆ Older Columbus neighborhoods near employment growth areas
- ⌘ Since 1970, 30 percent of population loss in older Columbus
- ⌘ Most housing units with physical problems in older Columbus
- ⌘ Median income in older Columbus two-thirds that of the newer city
- ⌘ Labor force participation rate in older Columbus below that of Franklin County
- ⌘ Residents of older Columbus less likely to have access to a vehicle

Community Perceptions

“There needs to be a strong focus on neighborhoods. Organizations based there are in the best position to meet human services needs.”

—Key informant interview



Race Relations and Diversity

Trends, gaps and needs

Persons invited to participate in community assessment interviews and focus groups were selected to represent a broad and diverse cross-section of stakeholders, interest groups and points of view. Issues related to racial and ethnic diversity were cited as community needs by 14 percent of key informants and by 12 out of 18 focus groups. About 30 percent of respondents to the community assessment Web survey indicated that racial and ethnic disparities and racism/racial discrimination are major problems in the community.

Participants identified several trends and needs associated with demographic diversity, including changing neighborhood populations and the influx of recent immigrants. Many believe that racism and racial discrimination persist in Franklin County, though their expression may be more covert.

When asked if United Way was working on the right areas of community need, there were a number of comments related to race relations and diversity in interviews and focus groups. One participant noted that: "African American community is well-represented in the United Way race relations/diversity [critical need area], but Appalachians and other low-income groups are not." Another believed that putting African Americans and recent Somali immigrants into the same category may be skewing community statistics. Other participants also pointed to a need for more people of color in positions of leadership in human services in central Ohio.

Social and demographic data provide additional information about basic and emergency needs trends and conditions in Franklin County.

- Overall residential segregation decreased in central Ohio, though it is still high between African Americans and whites and African Americans and Asians.
- Residential segregation increased among persons under 18 in Columbus between 1990 and 2000 as families with children moved out of the central city.
- In 2003, the number of housing discrimination cases decreased by half compared to 2002.
- In 2002, 50 hate crimes based on race or ethnicity were reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation by central Ohio law enforcement agencies.
- The 2001 Race Relations Buckeye State Poll showed a marked increase in the percentage of Franklin County African American and white respondents saying that race relations have improved.

Resources for race relations and diversity

The resource inventory identified more than \$5.3 million in annual funding resources in Franklin County for race relations and diversity.* This figure does not include general parks and recreation or cultural arts funding. Programs for immigrant and refugee services account for the majority (79.7 percent) of this funding.

How United Way resources for race relations are used

Race/diversity activities 100%

*Figures include selected resources; for a listing of resources and a description of the inventory methodology, please refer to the full What Matters 2004 report and companion technical report.

Current Conditions

- ☆ Overall residential segregation decreased
- ☆ Fair housing charges based on race or national origin down
- ⚠ Most hate crime reported is motivated by race or ethnicity
- ⚠ One of four African American Columbus residents reported discrimination
- ⚠ Children are living in more segregated areas
- ◆ Many differences between black and white residents in perceptions of issues related to race
- ◆ Racial and ethnic groups have differing residential patterns

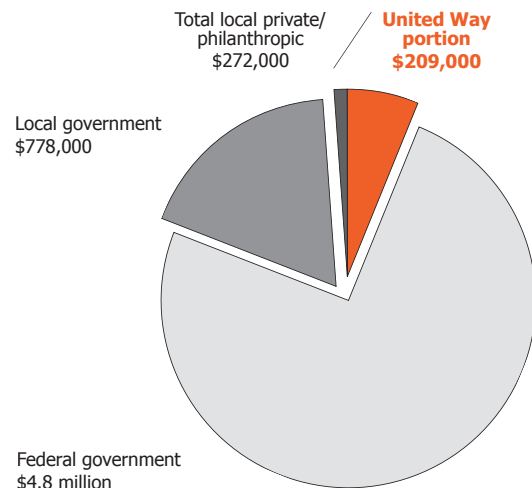
Community Perceptions

"Problems and issues within the community are, more often than not, color blind. They affect everyone."

—Web survey respondent

"How many agencies have African American directors? Do Executive Directors reflect the population they serve?"

—Focus group participant



Trends, gaps and needs

Respondents to the Web site survey perceive violence to be an important community issue – over 50 percent thought violent crime and nearly 50 percent thought domestic violence were major problems. Safety issues were mentioned as a need by six percent of interviewees and 6 of 18 focus groups. When safety needs were identified as issues, violent crime was a key area of concern. More than 60 percent of Web site survey respondents thought child abuse and neglect and youth crime were major or medium problems for the central Ohio community.

The fact that youth often witness family violence taking place in central Ohio homes was particularly troubling to community members, who pointed out that children may see violence as a normal part of life.

Social and demographic data provide additional information about basic and emergency needs trends and conditions in Franklin County.

- Violent crime increased in Columbus by 20.4 percent in four years, while the Columbus population increased only 12.4 percent between 1990-2000.
- For the first six months of 2003, the number of property crimes in Columbus was down 14.2 percent over the same period in 2002.
- Admissions to the Juvenile Detention Center decreased by nearly 30 percent between 1997 and 2002.
- The total number of delinquent and unruly youth cases in Franklin County courts increased by 8.6 percent from 2000 to 2002.
- In 2002, 6,157 domestic violence charges and 561 civil protection order violations were filed in Franklin County.
- The number of children served by Franklin County Children’s Services increased 10.4 percent between 2001 and 2002.

Resources for safety

The resource inventory identified more than \$65 million in annual funding resources in Franklin County for safety.* This figure does not include police and sheriff departments, other courts, or jails, prisons, and detention centers. Programs targeting child abuse and neglect account for the majority (55.5 percent) of this funding.

United Way of Central Ohio spends the largest proportion of its safety resources on youth crime prevention.

Current Conditions

- ☆ Recent drops in property crime
- ☆ Decreases in youth in juvenile detention
- ⌘ Four years of increases in violent crime
- ⌘ More commitments to county jails and state prisons
- ⌘ Strong link between substance abuse and incarceration
- ≠ Majority of admissions to juvenile detention are African American youth
- ≠ Domestic violence disproportionately involves black victims and defendants

Community Perceptions

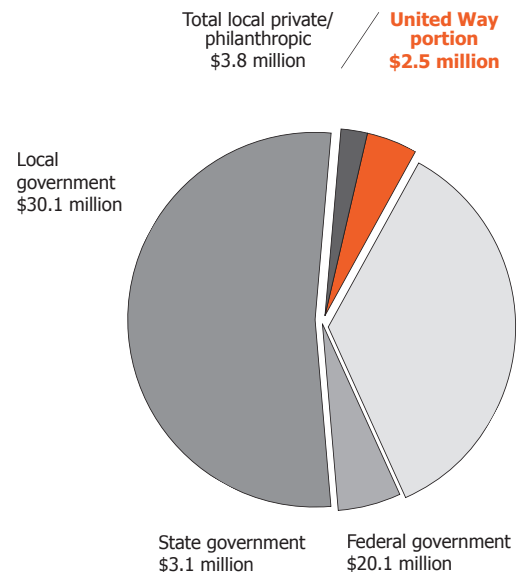
“The economic downturn—no employment, no health insurance, mental health problems—are reasons for increase in crime.”

—Focus group participant

How United Way resources for safety are used

Youth crime prevention/diversion	39.2%	Adult crime prevention/diversion	4.7%
Disaster relief/emergency response	28.3%	Child abuse/neglect	2.2%
Adult offender assistance	9.1%	Child foster care/group home	2.2%
Domestic/family violence	7.8%	Conflict resolution/mediation	1.1%
Legal services	5.4%		

*Figures include selected resources; for a listing of resources and a description of the inventory methodology, please refer to the full What Matters 2004 report and companion technical report.



Population Group Profiles

Trends, gaps and needs

This section of the report provides a profile of five population groups that were frequently cited by key informants and focus group participants as groups to which the community needs to pay particular attention in human services planning:

- Persons in poverty/working poor
- Children and teens
- Older adults
- Immigrants
- Ex-offenders

Persons in poverty and the working poor

In 1999, 11.6 percent of all Franklin County residents were living in poverty (defined as \$13,290 for a family of three). Research demonstrates that a minimum of 200 percent of poverty is required to avoid serious hardships in food, health care and housing; about 76,766 families in Franklin County were below this threshold in 1999. More than 60 percent of Web respondents to the community assessment survey indicated that low-income people and the working poor have significant unmet service needs.

"[The] inability of the working poor to access or afford housing, hunger, health care and child care is challenging the national policy direction to sustain one's employment [and reduce welfare rolls]."

—Key informant interview

Community conditions, both positive and negative, affecting this population include:

- Three years of job loss
- Increase in lower paying service occupations
- Mismatch between areas of job growth and low-income population location
- Barriers to college access
- Increases in housing wage costs
- Lack of health insurance coverage and low health status

"People who work on minimum wages have to work 50-60 hours a week to afford housing and transportation. Overtime affects quality of life, time with kids and coping time."

—Focus group participant

Children and teens

In 2000, children below the age of 18 made up 25.1 percent of the total Franklin County population. The needs of children were cited by 22 percent of 50 key informants and 11 out of the 18 focus groups as important community issues.

"We are going to need a more integrated approach to solving the needs of families and children."

—Key informant interview

Community conditions, both positive and negative, affecting this population include:

- Lower infant mortality rates
- More mothers receiving early prenatal care
- Unmet needs for subsidized child care
- More children eligible for free and reduced lunch program
- Low-income students change schools more frequently
- Decreases in alcohol, tobacco, and drug use by youth
- Increases in youth delinquent and unruly cases
- Decreases in juvenile detention

"We need preschool and after-school opportunities. There is a general unavailability of affordable child care for infants and toddlers."

—Key informant interview

"Violence is affecting kids' development."

—Key informant interview

Older adults

Franklin County's population of residents age 65 and older comprises 9.8 percent of the total population. Since 1990, there has been a 26.9 percent increase in residents age 75 or older. By 2020, the Franklin County population age 65 and over is projected to reach 152,060—a 45.7 percent increase over the 2000 figure.

"There is a clear demographic trend in the aging population. In the next 10 years, the baby boomers will have greater needs, at exactly the same time that government benefits will be in jeopardy."

—Key informant interview

Community conditions, both positive and negative, affecting this population include:

- More older adults in the labor force
- Grandparents as caregivers
- More older Ohio residents receiving support services in the home
- Older adults living alone
- Lack of money for prescriptions
- Disabled older adults

"A lot of resources are pulled and used by this population but they have expertise and we are not utilizing their strengths. More individuals in the aging population would love to be involved."

—Focus group participant

Population Group Profiles

Immigrants and new Americans

According to the Census 2000, there were 64,487 foreign-born residents in Franklin County, representing 6 percent of the total county population. Of these, 38,745 are new immigrants who entered the U.S. between 1990 and 2000. However, providers of services to new immigrants indicate that the numbers are much higher than those documented by the census.

Community conditions, both positive and negative, affecting this population include:

- Over 17,000 residents do not speak English well or at all
- 19.5 percent of foreign-born residents live below poverty level
- Refugees and immigrants represent 8.5 percent of Ohio Works First caseload

"Columbus's immigrant population is increasing, and this population brings special kinds of needs. At the same time, we need to understand that there may be impediments to human service delivery that are culturally specific."

—Key informant interview

"There is greater need for English as a Second Language services and for staff training for agencies to work with immigrants. We need greater community organization and outreach."

—Key informant interview

Ex-offenders

In 2001, 22,769 prisoners were released to Ohio counties. Of these, 10.5 percent (2,517) returned to Franklin County. The inmates released from Ohio prisons were predominantly male (89 percent) and were fairly equally divided between African Americans (53 percent) and whites (45 percent). Almost 75 percent were between the ages of 20 and 39, and more than 65 percent served one year or less in prison. Of all those released in 2001, 17 percent returned to an Ohio prison within one year.

Community conditions, both positive and negative, affecting this population include:

- History of drug abuse by 86 percent of males and 81 percent of females
- Returning ex-offenders have reduced attachments to jobs and families
- Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections working on post release reentry strategy to link prior inmates to community services

"Felons who have done their time and are back in the community face living and housing barriers and a lot of other issues, particularly if they don't have families."

—Key informant interview

"Services and policies are needed to reintegrate released prisoners into the community."

—Key informant interview

"Ex-offenders need health insurance, health care, and mental health services, especially for youth offenders."

—Focus group participant

Human Services System Challenges in Franklin County

Many comments by community members in interviews and focus groups touched on the current, multiple stresses affecting the human services system in Franklin County:

Declining funding

Declines in both public and private sector funding are alarming to the majority of participants. Many mentioned their perception that private sources are becoming more important as public sector funds are restricted but that private sources also have limitations in the current economic climate.

Increasing demand

At the same time as resources are decreasing, demand for services is increasing, according to participants, who mention shelter, food and health care as key areas of increase. United Way member agency executives say that demand continues to increase for their programs.

Changing demographics

A majority of interviewees identified immigration and changing demographics as trends affecting human services delivery. Programs must provide culturally competent services,

including interpretation and translation services, in a diverse environment.

Accountability

The increasing demand on human services funders and providers to provide measurement and demonstrate accountability is another challenge to the system. Some interviewees described the benefits of monitoring programs' outcomes; others pointed out the high administrative cost of such activities.

Collaboration

Competition and collaboration between agencies was also a theme

in interviews and focus groups. Many saw the new emphasis on partnerships and cooperation as a positive trend that may help eliminate duplication of services. Others saw the potential for collaboration among nonprofits, government and business.

Staffing challenges

Difficulties in hiring and keeping qualified staff in human services were identified as key issues by participants. Compensation and benefits, staff turnover and shortages in some sectors were all mentioned by interviewees.

For More Information

In addition to the volunteer leadership provided by the Community Assessment Advisory Committee, the United Way of Central Ohio gratefully acknowledges the assistance and support of the following Community Impact Department staff members.

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United Way of Central Ohio is committed to measurably improving the lives of the men, women and children who live in central Ohio. Through collaborations with other nonprofits, neighborhood groups, businesses, government and organized labor, United Way efficiently and effectively reaches people in need and helps fund programs, services and initiatives that address the short and long term issues facing central Ohio. This is called getting to "what matters" by creating community impact.



United Way
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