

Introduction

What is the Community Assessment?

Background

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, 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. Much has been accomplished:

- *Measurable community-level goals and objectives* have been developed in each critical need area;
- *Comprehensive strategies* have been designed to address each objective;
- *Community partners* have been brought together to devise research-based responses to community issues, leverage resources, and measure and report progress; and
- *Vision councils* were created as a new and holistic way of aligning staff and volunteer resources in support of creating community change.

Though the community goals and objectives have been reaffirmed and fine-tuned in recent years, they have not been fully reexamined 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 (What Matters 2004) is the first step in this process. It describes community conditions and community responses to those conditions. Over the coming months, United Way volunteers and staff will use 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.

The Charge to Community Research Partners

Community Research Partners (CRP) was asked by United Way to undertake research and work with the Community Assessment Advisory Committee to prepare *What Matters 2004*. CRP's work included conducting key informant interviews and focus groups; analyzing survey data; collecting and analyzing demographic and social indicator data; conducting a literature review; reviewing local planning documents; compiling an inventory of funding resources; and preparing *What Matters 2004*. These are further described in the methodology section of the introduction. CRP is a non-profit research and evaluation center formed by United Way of Central Ohio, the City of Columbus and the John Glenn Institute at The Ohio State University.

Community Assessment Advisory Committee

A Community Assessment Advisory Committee (CAAC) was formed to provide UWCO volunteer and staff leadership in the development of *What Matters 2004*. The 29-member committee (see next page), chaired by Columbus Compact President and CEO Jonathan C. Beard, met four times from October 2003 to February 2004 to do the following:

1. Provide input into the research methodology;
2. Review and analyze community assessment data; and,
3. Advise UWCO on additional data collection that may be needed or desired.

This report includes data and other information provided by advisory committee members, and reflects comments on the first draft of the report.

Advisory Committee Perspective

On February 11, 2004, the advisory committee met for the final time to review the first draft report prepared by Community Research Partners. The CAAC voted unanimously to validate the report and pass it on to the United Way board and vision councils. In addition to providing many specific comments on the data and analysis in the report, the advisory committee had the following general comments:

- 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. References in the report to source documents will be helpful if United Way and other organizations want to delve further into specific areas.
- It is important to look at the data in the report at multiple levels. Data may present a positive picture for Franklin County, but at the same time indicate underlying areas of concern for specific population groups or geographic areas.
- The report brings together a great deal of information, but also illustrates data gaps. This suggests that the community should come together to identify ways to fill these gaps.
- Trends in the report indicate the need to look more broadly than Franklin County and begin to have a regional focus.
- The process of getting out of our “silos” and learning about other issue areas has been valuable. There is currently no other overarching planning going on in Franklin County. The community could benefit from such a process if it were dynamic and sustained, and United Way could be a valuable planning partner.

Community Assessment Advisory Committee Members

Committee Chair

Jonathan C. Beard

President and CEO
Columbus Compact Corporation

Shelly Anderson, Ph.D.

Research and Development Manager
Columbus Workforce Alliance

Jack Brown

Operations Specialist
HUD Columbus Field Office

Duane Casares

Clinical Director
Directions for Youth & Families

Linda Donnelly

Housing Administrator
Columbus Department of Development

Anthony F. Forte

Director, Franklin County Department of
Community & Economic Development

Humberto Gonzales

Commissioner
Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs

Nadia Kasvin

Director, Immigrant Community Services
Jewish Family Services

Dina Lopez

Associate Planner
Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission

Marcus Molea

Chief, Planning, Development & Evaluation Div.
Ohio Department on Aging

Ernest Perry

V.P. of Research & Development
Columbus Urban League

Nancy Reger

Manager of Transportation Data
Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission

Ms. Melissa Shade

Program Evaluator
Franklin County Justice Programs Unit

Tim Widman

Main Street Business Association

Ex-Officio

Rick Carrick

V.P. of Community Impact
United Way of Central Ohio

UWCO Staff

Michelle Vander Stouw

Director of Health

Tom Albanese

Program Director
Community Shelter Board

Matthew S. Baldwin, Ph.D.

Director of Planning
CMACAO

Cheryl Boyce

Executive Director
Ohio Commission on Minority Health

Robert "Bo" Chilton

Legislative Aide
Councilmember Charleta Tavares

David Ferriman

Director of Planning
Franklin County Children Services

Mike Greene

Director of Planning
COTA

Hazel A. Morrow-Jones, Ph.D.

Associate Professor
OSU City and Regional Planning

Bill LaFayette, Ph.D.

V.P. Economic Analysis
Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce

Joan Malarkey (UW PAC rep.)

Executive Director
Community Connection for Ohio Offenders

Reverend Nelson Meyer (UW PAC rep.)

President
Lutheran Social Services

Mike Puckett

Program Coordinator
Columbus Department of Development

Julie Robbins

Director of Health Planning
Columbus Health Department

Dona Lyn Watterson

Associate V.P. for Community Research &
Grants Management
The Columbus Foundation

Ex-Officio

Roberta Garber

Executive Director
Community Research Partners

CRP Staff

Michael Banish

Director of Community Data Services

Research Methodology

What Matters 2004 is comprehensive, incorporating data from multiple original and secondary sources (see Appendices B and F). The following provides an overview of the project components and the data collection and analysis methodologies.

Demographic and Social Indicators

The profile of current community trends and conditions includes demographic and social indicator data from a variety of sources (see Appendix B) These included CRP's Community Indicators Database and the United Way of Central Ohio 2003 Racial Disparities Report. For many of the indicators, the data includes trends over time and comparisons of Franklin County data with data for Ohio and the U.S.

The Franklin County indicator topics include general population trends, education, employment and income, health, housing, neighborhood development, safety, and race relations/diversity. In addition, data are included at the census tract and zip code level to provide indicators of variations in neighborhood conditions throughout the county. The profiles of population groups include indicator data that describe: people in poverty/working poor; children and teens; older adults; immigrants/new Americans and ex-offenders.

Community Input

United Way placed a priority on seeking the perspective of community members in *What Matters 2004*. Three methods were used for community input: key informant interviews, focus groups and a donor and agency web survey.

Key informant interviews and focus groups

CRP conducted 50 key informant telephone interviews and held 18 facilitated focus groups, with a total of 196 participants, to capture community perspectives to be included in *What Matters 2004*. The persons invited by United Way to participate in the interviews and focus groups were selected to represent a broad and diverse cross-section of stakeholders, interest groups and points of view.

Interviewees and focus group participants were asked the following questions, which were provided to them ahead of time:

1. What are the most important needs in the community that affect human services? (For example, needs of specific populations or geographic areas.)
2. What are you basing your observations on? (For example, news reports, information at work, etc.)
3. What trends that might affect human services delivery, both positive and negative, should the United Way be aware of as they undertake their planning process? (For example, demographic, economic and social trends; programming trends, funding trends, etc.)
4. What gaps exist in services, programs and funding to address the needs?
5. Over the last seven years, United Way has focused on seven critical need areas: Education, Employment, Health, Housing, Neighborhood Development, Safety and Race Relations/ Diversity. Based on your understanding of the community role of United Way and what you have described in terms of the needs, trends, and gaps in services, are these the right areas or are there any that you think need to be changed or added?
6. Is there anything else you would like to share to help United Way through its community assessment process?

Interview and focus groups comments were captured in full-text notes. Keyword analysis of these notes was used to identify themes and areas of emphasis. The names of interview and focus group participants and summaries of the interview and focus group responses are found in Appendices C and D.

Donor and agency web survey

In order to gauge broader community perceptions of important needs and issues, United Way posted a survey on its website and invited donors and agency staff to complete the survey. The survey included three types of questions: 1) the extent of problems (*major, moderate, minor*) for specific health and human service issues; 2) the extent of needs (significant, some, few, none) of population groups; and 3) demographics of the survey respondent. Respondents could also provide additional feedback to United Way by including text comments. Each section of the assessment includes a summary of major community problems or needs for that issue area identified by survey respondents.

A total of 566 survey responses were received. Of these, 123 identified themselves as UW agency direct service staff; 121 as UW agency administrative staff; 48 as an UW vision council member; and 312 as an UW donor (respondents could choose multiple categories). Seventy-four percent of the respondents were female. When asked to identify their race or ethnicity, 76 percent identified themselves as white; 17 percent as black/African American; one percent as Hispanic/Latino and five percent more than one race or “other”.

Resource Inventory

What Matters 2004 includes an inventory of annual human services and community development resources in Franklin County. The focus of the resource inventory is funding for programs and services for: 1) low- and moderate-income people; 2) low- and moderate-income geographic areas; 3) special needs populations; and 4) crisis and emergency needs.

Included in the inventory is \$2.3 billion in funds from federal, state and local government public sources, and major local philanthropic/private sources. Inventory data was generally collected from the original funding source, then traced to Franklin County funding recipients. Data came from websites, budget documents, 1099 forms and other information provided by both funders and funding recipients. The inventory describes the sources of funding and the uses of funding for one year—generally 2002 or 2003—although the time period varies from program to program depending on their fiscal and program year and data availability. Appendix E includes a summary of the inventory and a description of the inventory methodology and definitions.

Assembling an inventory of this type from multiple data sources is a complex and ongoing process. CRP is aware of other funding sources for which data could not be obtained within the timeframe of the United Way Community Assessment process. In addition, a number of judgment calls were required, particularly with regard to assigning funding sources to specific use categories. The resource inventory in *What Matters 2004* is a good picture of human services and community development funding in Franklin County, but it is a “work in progress,” and CRP welcomes feedback and additional data from both funding sources and recipients.

Planning Documents

In order to identify the key community organizations involved in the policy areas examined in *What Matters 2004*, CRP reviewed over 35 planning documents or goal/strategy statements of local organizations (see Appendix F). These documents were used to prepare a policy matrix in each section of the report and as a source of data on community conditions, trends and needs.

Literature Review

A limited literature review was conducted by CRP to collect information for two purposes. First, the literature was used to develop the framework for organizing community impact strategies in the Impact Structure section of the report. In addition, excerpts from national literature were used throughout the report to provide a context for the profile of current Franklin County conditions.

Format of the Assessment Report

What Matters 2004 begins with an overview of population data to provide a context for the individual topical sections. The overview provides data on the type and location of population growth; racial and ethnic diversity; age, gender and household characteristics; ancestry, foreign born residents and languages spoken. In addition, the report includes the following:




Assessment of Critical Need Areas

The report includes a section for each of the following United Way critical need areas: education, employment, health, housing, safety, neighborhood development, and race relations and diversity. In addition, the report has an assessment of basic and emergency needs in the community. Each of these sections is organized in the following way:

- **Snapshot:** A summary overview of the data in the section.
- **Current conditions and trends:** Franklin County demographic and social indicator data, compared with state and national data, and citations from the literature on the topics addressed in the section.
- **Racial disparities:** An overview of key racial disparities in the issue area, based on the *United Way of Central Ohio 2003 Racial Disparities Report*. For that report, a disparity was defined as a situation where persons of color were doing worse than the majority population of Franklin County based on available social and demographic indicators.
- **Community perceptions of trends, needs and gaps:** Summary of key informant interview, focus group and donor and agency web survey data describing community perceptions of trends, needs and gaps in the issue area.
- **Current efforts:** A matrix describing the role of key community organizations in the issue area based on the review of planning documents and strategy statements.
- **Resources:** A summary of the annual sources and uses of funding in Franklin County to address the issue area.

The Indicator Key

It can be quite a challenge to make meaning out of the array of data in a report such as *What Matters 2004*. To assist in this, most of the sections of the report include an indicator key to provide an initial frame of reference for understanding and prioritizing the social and demographic indicator data. The determination of which symbol to assign to an indicator was made by CRP, on an indicator-by-indicator basis. However, this is intended only as a starting point for United Way and community discussion of trends and conditions. Others reviewing the data, or those with additional data on a topic, might reach a different conclusion about whether a trend is positive, negative or mixed/neutral. The following is the indicator key:

The Indicator Key			
 Positive trend/ asset	 Negative trend/ concern	 Mixed trend/ neutral/NA	 Racial/ethnic disparity

Population Profile

The report includes a profile of five population groups that were frequently cited by key informants and focus group participants as groups that the community needs to pay particular attention to in human services planning: persons in poverty/working poor; children and teens; older adults; immigrants and ex-offenders. These profiles include information from the other sections of the report along with additional data that describe the trends, needs and service gaps of each group.

Human Service System

This section includes comments from key informants and focus group participants describing the status of the human service system in Franklin County, including the current multiple stresses on the system.

Community Impact Structure

As part of the community input process, key informants and focus group participants were asked if United Way's current community impact structure, which is organized around seven critical need areas, is the right structure for going forward. The report includes a section that summarizes responses to this question, as well as an overview of a literature review of alternative models for organizing community impact strategies.

Appendices

The report includes the following appendices: United Way Community Goals and Objectives; references; key informant interview summary; focus group summary; resource inventory methodology, glossary and summary; and planning documents list. When the final *What Matters 2004* is published by United Way, a separate technical document will also be made available on both United Way and CRP websites (and in other electronic formats) with detailed data from the original research.

Caveats about Accuracy

CRP has been very careful in collecting, analyzing and presenting data from a variety of sources to prepare *What Matters 2004*. Although CRP has judged its data sources to be reliable, it was not possible to authenticate all data. If careful readers of the report discover data errors or typographical errors, CRP welcomes this feedback and will incorporate corrections into future updates of the report.

What Matters

United Way of Central Ohio Community Assessment

Final Draft

April 2004

In addition to the volunteer leadership provided by the Community Assessment Advisory Council, the United Way of Central Ohio gratefully acknowledges the assistance and support of the following Community Impact Department staff members. For additional information related to specific critical need areas please use the contact information provided below:

Rick Carrick, MSW, MA, Senior Vice President, Community Impact – rcarrick@uwcentralohio.org

Nancy Case, MPPM, Director of Employment – ncase@uwcentralohio.org

Lynnette Cook, PhD, Director of Evaluation – lcook@uwcentralohio.org

Shayne Downton, Director of Safety – sdownton@uwcentralohio.org

Steve Farrell, MPP, Assistant Director of Education – sfarrell@uwcentralohio.org

Joe McKinley, Assistant Vice President and Director of Housing – jmckinley@uwcentralohio.org

Vacant – Director of Race Relations and Diversity – www.uwcentralohio.org

Patrick Powell, MA, Director of Agency Support Services – ppowell@uwcentralohio.org

Janet Ravneberg, MSW, Assistant Vice President and Director of Education – jravneberg@uwcentralohio.org

Michelle Vander Stouw, MPH, Director of Health – mvanderstouw@uwcentralohio.org

Vacant – Director of Neighborhood Development – www.uwcentralohio.org

Kelly McLennan, Administrative Assistant – kmclennan@uwcentralohio.org

Community Research Partners

Roberta F. Garber, Executive Director

Michael Banish, Director of Community Data Services

Deborah Wasserman, PhD, Director of Evaluation Services

Marcus Mattson, Project Coordinator

Andre Dailey, Evaluation and Research Associate

J.B. Lawton III PhD, Evaluation and Research Associate

Angela Moore, Office Manager

David Lee, Research Assistant

Reena Uppal, Research Assistant

Kerry Kennedy, Research Assistant

Consultants to CRP

Fred Bartenstein & Associates • Michael London Associates

Keith McCormish, Public Service Consulting • Allison Brown, ALMEC International



341 S. Third St., Suite 10 ▲ Columbus, OH 43215

Phone: 614.224.5917 ▲ Fax: 614.224.8132

www.communityresearchpartners.org

A partnership of United Way of Central Ohio, the City of Columbus and the John Glenn Institute at The Ohio State University

