



## Community Needs Assessment August 2017

### *BRIEF SUMMARY*

#### **Background**

In the fall of 2015, the United Way of York County partnered with Winthrop University's Department of Social Work to conduct a community needs assessment. The objectives of the needs assessment were:

1. To examine the areas of need in York County.
2. To explore the existence of social problems in York County.
3. To solicit recommendations from study participants on how to address the identified needs and problems.

This *Brief Summary* presents the methods and findings from the United Way of York County's *2015 Community Needs Assessment*.

#### **Methods**

The community needs assessment collected primary data on the needs of York County residents. Data was collected through the dissemination of surveys and focus groups with identified population groups.

##### *Surveys*

Surveys were distributed electronically via email and hard copies were sent to community partners from September 1<sup>st</sup> to November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Additionally, surveys were translated into Spanish to encourage greater participation from the Hispanic community. A total of 548 residents of York County completed surveys.

### *Focus Groups*

Seven focus groups were conducted between August and November 2015. A total of 73 individuals attended the focus groups. Participants included service users, service providers, educators and parents, members of the Hispanic community, and community leaders. During the sessions participants were asked to discuss what they saw as the main issues related to the delivery of social services, poverty, unemployment, transportation, housing, and healthcare.

## **Findings**

### *Survey Results*

The following issues were identified as “*high need*” by respondents:

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. Good Paying Jobs (70%)       | 4. Mental Health Care/Affordable Housing (52%) |
| 2. Affordable Child Care (59%)  | 5. Public Transportation (50%)                 |
| 3. Affordable Senior Care (56%) |  |

Respondents identified the following as “*high need*” for healthcare related services:

- |                                     |                                    |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Mental Health Care (70%)         | 4. Primary Health Care (52%)       |
| 2. Teen Crisis Interventions (59%)  | 5. Substance Abuse Treatment (52%) |
| 3. Health & Wellness Programs (56%) |                                    |

In terms of problems in York County, respondents “*strongly agreed*” that the following issues represented a problem in their community:

- |  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. Lack of Public Transportation (43%) | 4. Lack of Jobs (31%)     |
| 2. Lack of Affordable Housing (34%)    | 5. Illicit Drug Use (30%) |
| 3. Poverty (34%)                       |                           |

### *Focus Groups*

Lack of transportation. The lack of transportation was consistently echoed across focus group sessions, in particular, with service users and providers, educators, and the Hispanic community. Each focus group identified the lack of transportation as the central problem related to accessing health care and social services, employment, education, and housing.

Lack of cultural and economic sensitivity. Participants across all focus groups reported that individuals seeking social services and public assistance were treated with disrespect and stigmatized. Individuals from the Hispanic community were especially vocal in expressing the lack of cultural sensitivity among social service providers.

Lack of affordable housing. Focus group participants reported a lack of affordable housing. They noted that although many houses are being built in the Fort Mill and Rock Hill areas, these houses were off limit due to the high cost to many low-income families. Similarly, participants recognized the high costs of rentals.

Barriers to health care. Participants reported that rising costs, the lack of transportation, and language difficulty presented major barriers to accessing quality health care.

Lack of job opportunities. Individuals noted a scarcity of jobs in the area. Furthermore, jobs that are available do not pay a living wage.

Disparities in education resources. Participants expressed concern that educational resources were not universally available across York County.

### **Conclusion**

This community needs assessment has provided a better understanding of the issues and areas of need in York County. The issues are varied and complex, impacting all residents of York County. Fortunately, participants offered thoughtful recommendations for improving the conditions which have guided the United Way of York County in tailoring its funding procedures and implementing programmatic changes in order to meet the most pressing issues and needs in York County.

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