

United Way of Northwest Florida

Assessment for the Community Impact Model

January 2008



**United Way of Northwest Florida
Needs Assessment Steering Committee Members**

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Executive Summary

Purpose

The Community Impact model uses a community-designed strategic plan for addressing a pressing community need. This community assessment was a first step in that process. Through engaging almost 1,000 members of the community, United Way asked the community what their agenda was for pressing community needs. By using volunteers, a community-wide survey, and focus groups, United Way gathered community-wide perspectives and identified connections. Community Impact is also about creating systems change in community conditions, and by looking at causes, solutions, and the cause/effect of the needs, this assessment lays the groundwork for that effort.

In 2006, the United Way of Northwest Florida initiated a community assessment to look at the issues of transportation, health, basic needs, crisis management, housing, education, employment, and safety. During Phase I, eight community task forces completed an initial review of the needs, generated questions for further probing, and reported initial findings on the gaps in services. During Phase II, an evaluation firm was commissioned to conduct surveys and focus groups in order to produce a replicable tool -- based on a combination of empirical data and qualitative findings -- to assess the human service needs in Bay County.

The final report will be used as follows:

- ***To assist the United Way in determining resource allocation***
- ***To form coalitions and partnerships to address community needs***
- ***To bring grant dollars to Bay County to assist in solving the underlying causes of human service needs within the County***
- ***To assist other funding organizations in determining where to best spend/apply their resources***

Methodology

Because Community Impact is a new way of looking at issues, this process used a new way to assess needs, blending both the traditional approach of identifying needs while also building a community agenda. This community assessment used four sources of data: Phase I findings, a review of secondary data (indicators), a community survey, and focus groups. As noted, during Phase I, a team of volunteers spent 18 months examining community issues to identify areas of concern and causes of those concerns. Phase II methodology was both quantitative and qualitative. Phase II began with a review of secondary data from sources such as the U.S. Census, Florida Department of Education, Florida Department of Health, and the Florida Statistical Abstract. Secondary sources

were chosen that were consistently and easily available. Bay County indicators were compared to the State of Florida to identify – along with the Phase I results – unmet needs in the county.

The next step in the project was to solicit community input regarding those needs – the community’s top concerns, contributing factors, and possible solutions – and to develop community buy-in. The survey was distributed online and in paper format through the area’s top employers and other targeted groups, as well as being available throughout the community. The final step was to solicit qualitative data through six geographically diverse focus groups. These were conducted to further explore the causes of areas of concern as well as to identify strategies for addressing those causes. Please see the Appendices for a complete description of the methodology.

There are two limitations to the study that deserve mention. First, the study was conducted in the fall of 2007, at a time when the entire state was feeling the impact of the burst of the housing bubble and higher gas prices. In addition, property tax reform and home owners’ insurance reform were often in the news. The economic situation may well have influenced the results of the community survey. Second, although widely distributed, the survey was not designed as a random sample since the purpose was to build the community agenda and not to identify incidence of need. Where differences existed in subgroup responses, those are noted within the body of the report.

Findings

Areas of concern were identified using three sources: Phase I work which included 40 community volunteers, a review of reliable and valid data from trusted sources, and through community input via a community survey (see page 16 for a matrix of needs and sources). These are unmet needs in that the secondary data and the community identified that needs were not being met. There are other needs in the community, of course, but these are being met at this time with the existing resources and partners. By reviewing the drivers of change and the vital statistics periodically, United Way will be able to determine if some needs that are currently being met need additional attention.

Needs identified by at least two of the three sources:

- Achievement gap in schools
- Adults using alcohol and other drugs
- Affordable housing
- Alcohol-related automobile accidents
- Births to teen mothers
- Child abuse
- Crime
- Employment issues

- Facilities for children who were abused and neglected
- Facilities to serve the elderly and the disabled
- Health insurance
- Living wage
- Teens using alcohol or other drugs
- Transportation
- Youth development/involving parents in education

The next list includes those indicators where only one of the sources – secondary data, Phase I volunteers, or the survey -- identified the issues as a concern.

Needs identified by one source:

- Abuse of adults over age 60
- Dental care
- Diabetes
- Domestic violence
- Heart disease
- Kindergarteners being ready for school
- Mothers not getting prenatal care
- Suicide

Those issues identified by the community as their top priorities are an opportunity to mobilize the community to make a meaningful difference. Those that are NOT identified as a top priority – but which statistics suggest are a concern – are an opportunity for greater public awareness and education.

Top priorities identified by the community

<p>Financial stress</p>	<p><i>Affordable housing</i></p> <p><i>Health care</i></p> <p><i>Living wage/cost of living</i></p> <p><i>Employment readiness</i></p>	<p>40% of renters and 34% of homeowners have housing costs that exceed 30% of their income (the federal guideline).</p> <p>18.3% of those under 65 do not have health insurance, compared to 20.5% for the state.</p> <p>Median household income is \$40,701, compared to \$42,433 for the state. Mean earnings of \$49,988, compared to \$59,336 for the state. Cost of living index is 96.6, compared to the state average of 100</p>
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<p>Substance abuse</p>	<p><i>Teens using alcohol and other drugs</i></p> <p><i>Adults using alcohol and other drugs</i></p> <p><i>Alcohol-related automobile accidents</i></p>	<p>37.1% of teens report using alcohol in the last 30 days, compared to 32.0% for the state.</p> <p>12.1% of adults engage in heavy or binge drinking, compared with 14.1% at the state level.</p> <p>Alcohol related accident rate is 265.2 per 100,000, compared to 131.9 for the state</p>
<p>Youth development</p>	<p><i>Births to teen mothers</i></p> <p><i>Parent information and involving parents in education</i></p> <p><i>Youth development</i></p>	<p>Teen birth rate is 57.6 per 100,000, compared to 42.0 for the state.</p> <p>No standardized data.</p> <p>Captured through other indicators: substance abuse, graduation, etc.</p>
<p>Infrastructure</p>	<p><i>Transportation</i></p> <p><i>Facilities for children who were abused and neglected</i></p> <p><i>Facilities to serve the elderly and the disabled</i></p>	<p>4.9% of households have no car, compared to 6.6% for the state; 37% have only one car, compared to 40% for the state.</p> <p>No standardized data for facilities.</p>

One component of Community Impact is to address causes of issues. Although additional study is needed, participants were asked the causes of problems for Bay County. As did the Steering Committee and focus group participants, respondents noted that many of the needs and causes were interrelated. There were several themes that emerged: parent information and involving parents in education, education, and employment (wages).

Recommendations

Recommendations were generated by focus group participants, through open-ended survey responses, and by identifying strategies of the Community Impact agenda. See page 21 for a complete description.

- 1. Create partnerships at the policy level around community-identified issues.***
- 2. Coordinate community action by bringing together organizations and residents around common needs.***
- 3. Generate new initiatives and innovative solutions.***
- 4. Focus on outreach and awareness.***
- 5. Mobilize the caring power of the community through civic organizations.***
- 6. Promote current programs and activities, particularly activities for youth.***
- 7. Learn how to engage and communicate across groups.***
- 8. Recognize that it will take new efforts and new ideas.***

Report Format

Population growth, age distribution, employment, and educational levels tend to drive changes in a community's needs. Section I provides background data on the demographic make up of the community. Section II presents secondary data on those items that are vital signs of an area: health, education, workforce, housing, and the well-being of families, youth, and elders. Indicators in this section were identified through the work of the volunteers who completed Phase I. These data should be monitored and used to identify any emerging needs or points of stress in the community system. Data are compared to the state of Florida averages. Section III presents a listing of identified needs and includes empirical data as well as qualitative findings. Section IV of this report presents strategies for United Way of Northwest Florida as they move toward implementing a Community Impact model. The Appendices include a review of Phase I, a complete survey report, a focus group summary, and sources.

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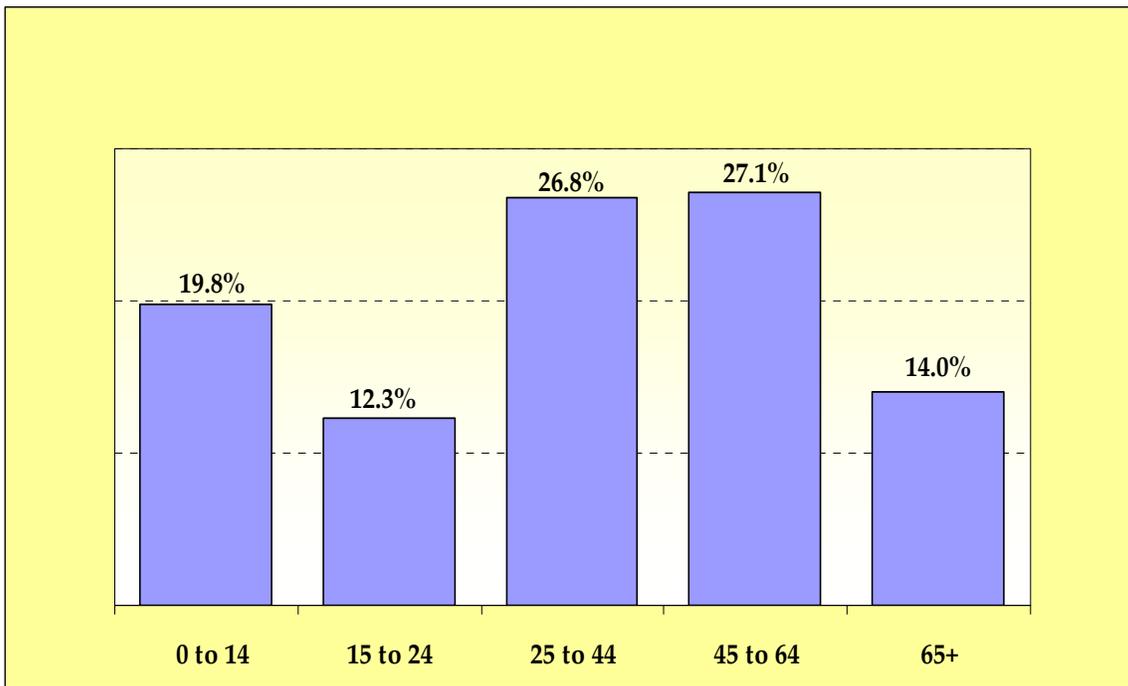
Section I: Drivers of Change

Population growth, age distribution, employment, and educational levels tend to drive changes in a community's needs. This section provides background data on the demographic make up of the community.

Age

The chart below presents Bay County's population by age range. The highest percentage of the population is in the 45 to 64 age group, followed by the 25 to 44 age group. Only 14 percent of Bay County's population is over age 65. Slightly less than 20 percent of the population is under 15, and the remaining 12 percent is 15 to 24, the smallest population range. As shown in Table 1, the total population in Bay County has grown by 9,924 individuals over the past five years, with the most growth in the 45 to 64 age range. While the 5 to 24 age range grew slightly, the under 5 population grew almost 17 percent.

Figure 1: Bay County population, by age range



Source: American Community Survey, 2005

Table 1: Change in population by age range, from 2000 to 2005

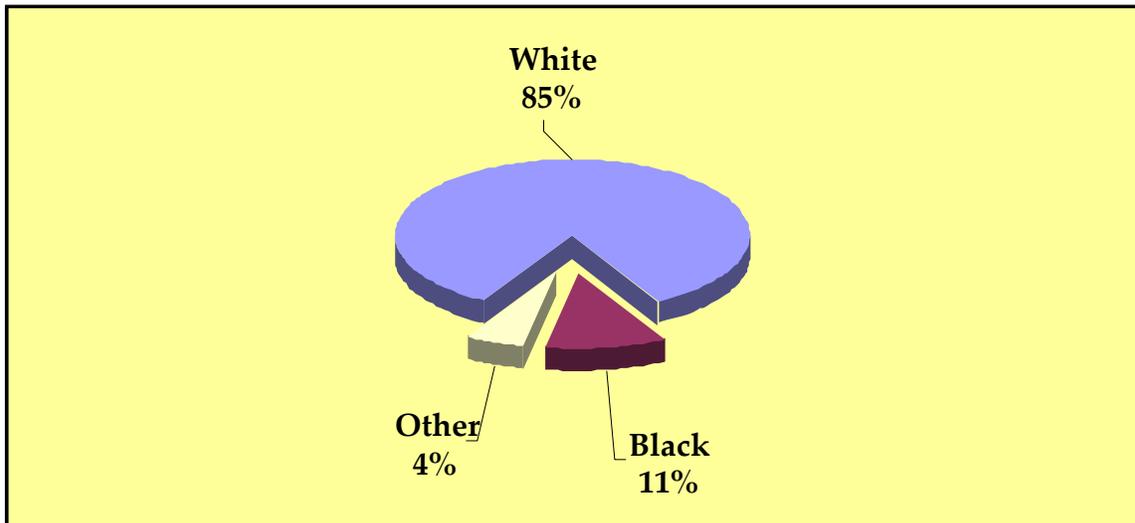
Age Range	2000	2005	Growth
Under 5	8,979	10,532	1,553
5 to 14	20,434	20,794	360
15 to 24	19,072	19,448	376
25 to 44	44,737	42,334	-2,403
45 to 64	35,178	42,908	7,730
65+	19,817	22,125	2,308
TOTAL	148,217	158,141	9,924

Source: American Community Survey, 2005

Race

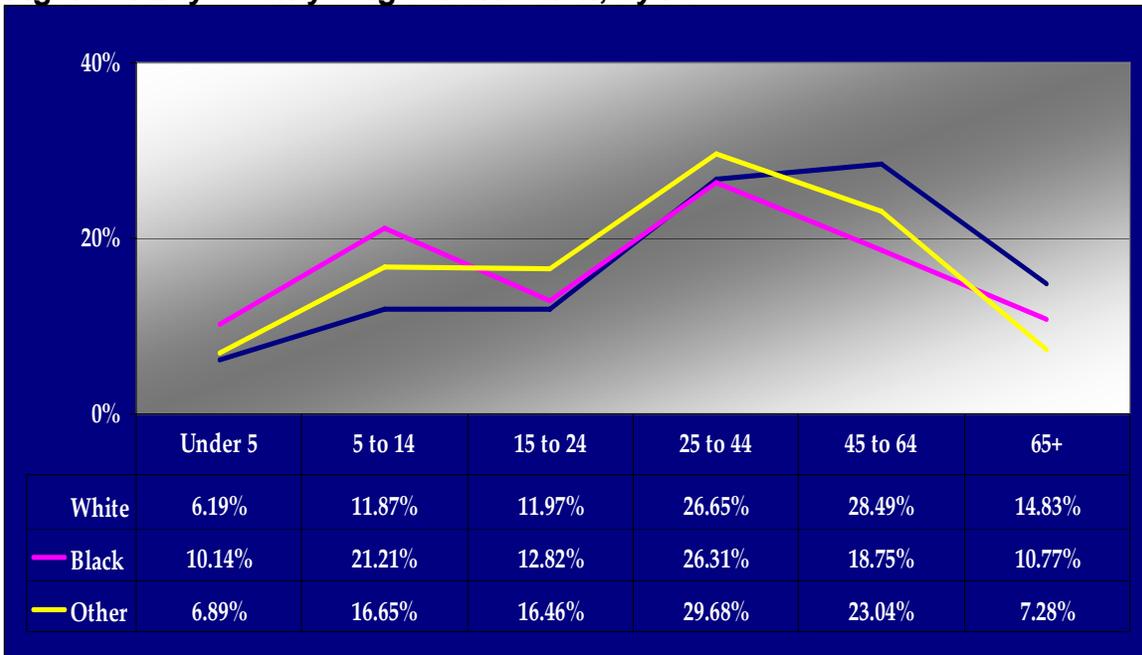
The next portion of Section I presents data on the racial distribution of Bay County's residents. As seen in Figure 2, the majority of Bay County's residents are white (85%), followed by black (11%). Only 3 percent of Bay County's population is Hispanic (Hispanics may be of any race). Figure 3 presents the Bay County's age distribution, by race. The age distribution across races is fairly consistent, with slightly fewer among whites in the under 24 age ranges, and slightly more in the older population. The black population shows two peaks: 5 to 14 and 25 to 44, which suggests young families. Among all races, there is a dip in the 15 to 24 population.

Figure 2: Bay County population, by race



Source: American Community Survey, 2005

Figure 3: Bay County’s age distribution, by race

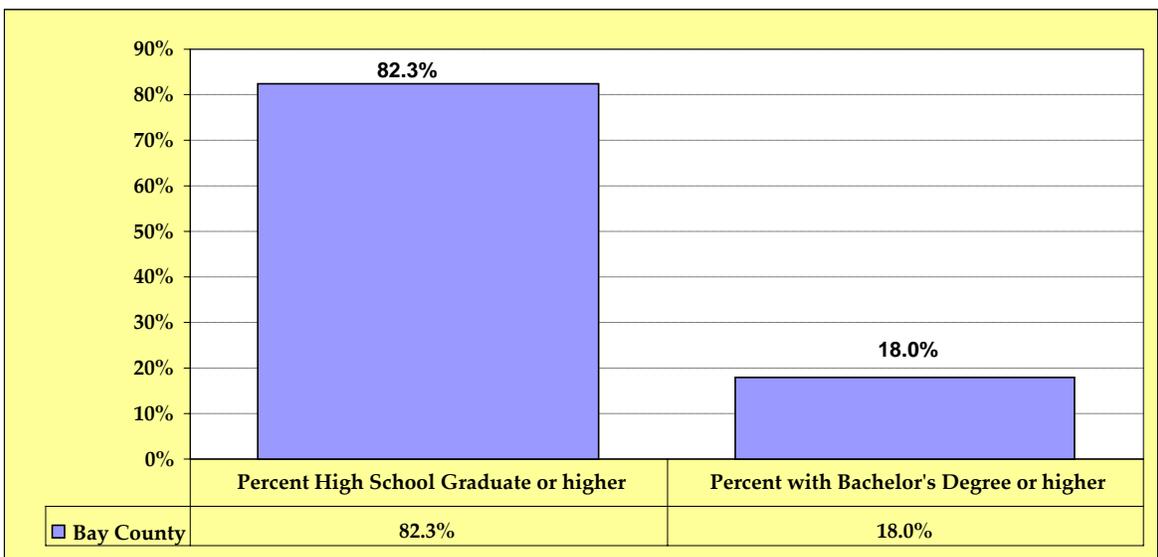


Source: American Community Survey, 2005

Education

In Bay County, 82 percent of the population are high school graduates or higher, and 18 percent of the population hold a Bachelor’s degree or higher. Additional educational data (from school readiness to graduation) is provided in Section II.

Figure 4: Bay County educational level



Source: American Community Survey, 2005

Income and Employment

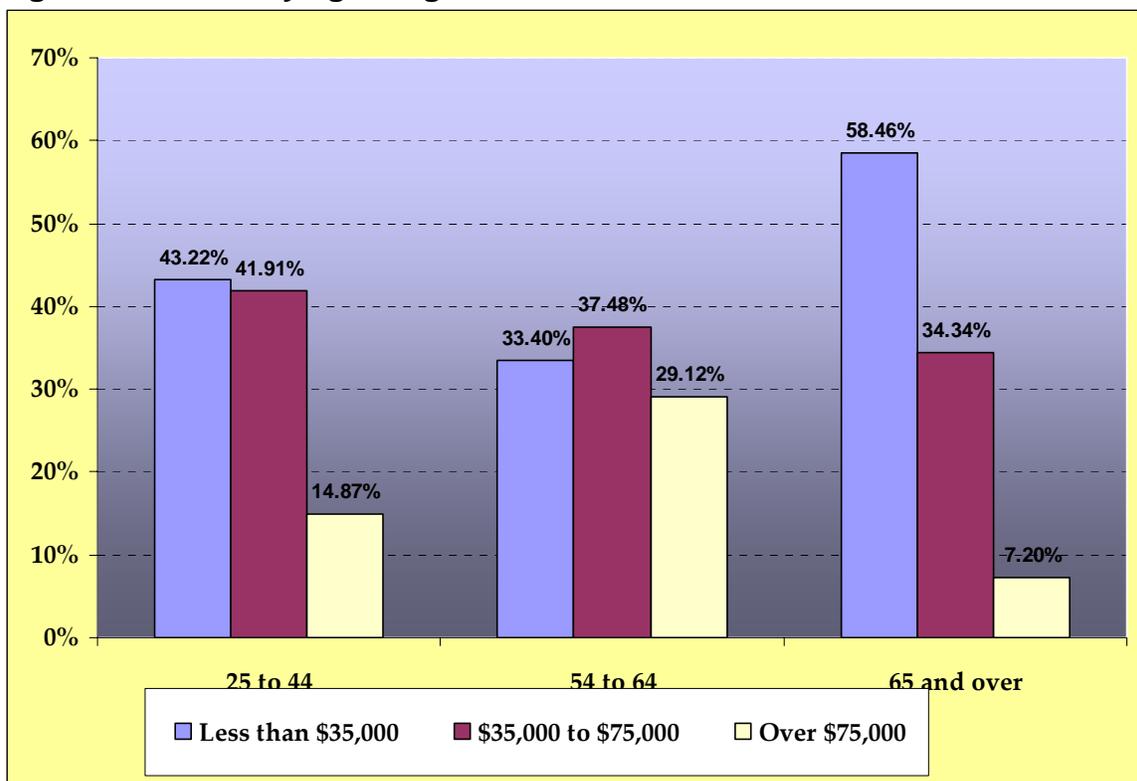
This part of Section presents data on income and employment. The median household income in Bay County in 2005 was \$40,701. Table 2 presents the change in income ranges among Bay County residents between 2000 and 2005. As shown in Table 2, the percentage of Bay County households with income less than \$35,000 dropped between 2000 and 2005, while the percentage of households with higher income levels grew. Figure 5 presents the income ranges by age range. Those residents 65 and older have the highest percentage of households with incomes under \$35,000 and most likely represents retirees on a fixed income. Finally, 22 percent of Bay County's population over age 5 has a disability.

Table 2: Income range changes, 2000 to 2005

Income Ranges	2000	2005
Less than \$35,000	48.45%	43.75%
\$35,000 to \$75,000	37.40%	38.44%
Over \$75,000	14.16%	17.81%

Source: American Community Survey, 2005

Figure 5: Income by age range

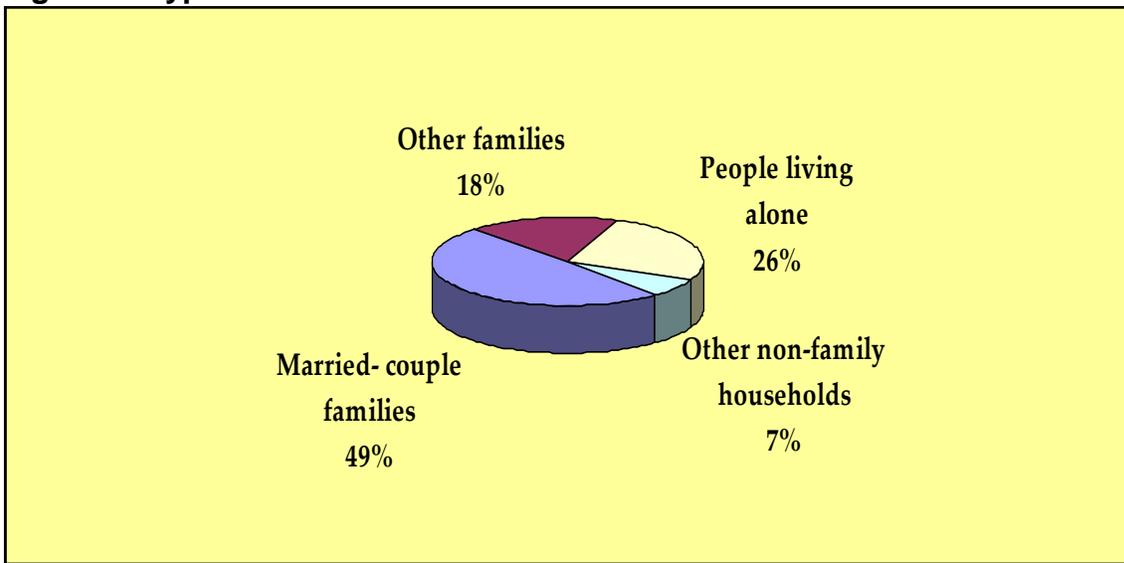


Source: American Community Survey, 2005

Households

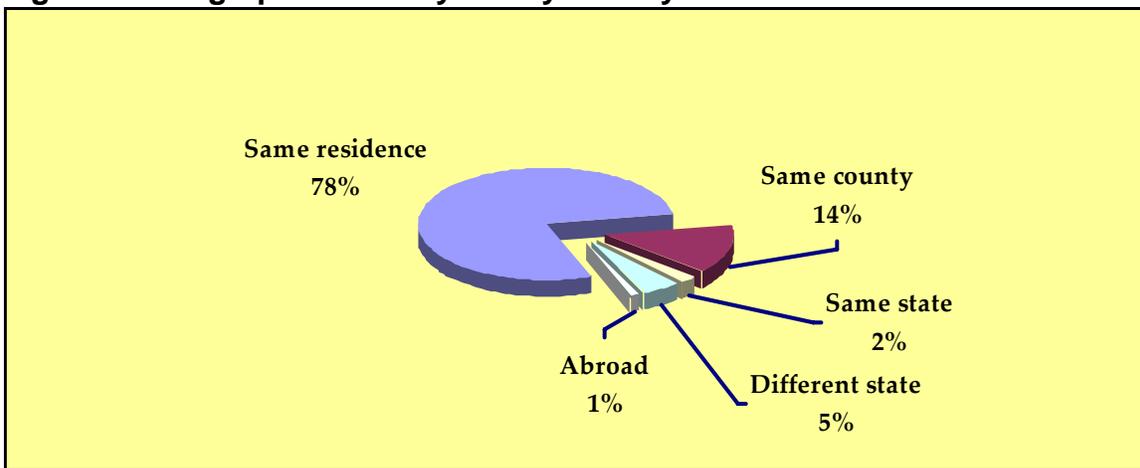
In 2005, the Census reported that there were 69,000 households in Bay County. Figure 6 presents the breakdown of those households: married-couple families (49%), people living alone (26%), other families (18%), and other non-family households (7%). Figure 7 presents the stability of those households. In 2005, 78 percent of households had been in the same residence for at least 5 years, while another 14 percent had been in Bay County, but at another residence.

Figure 6: Types of households



Source: American Community Survey, 2005

Figure 7: Geographic mobility of Bay County households



Source: American Community Survey, 2005

Section II: Vital Signs

This section presents secondary data on those items that are vital signs of an area: health, education, workforce, housing, and the well-being of families, youth, and elders. Indicators in this section were identified through the work of the volunteers who completed Phase I. These data should be monitored and used to identify any emerging needs or points of stress in the community system. Data are compared to the state of Florida averages.

Health

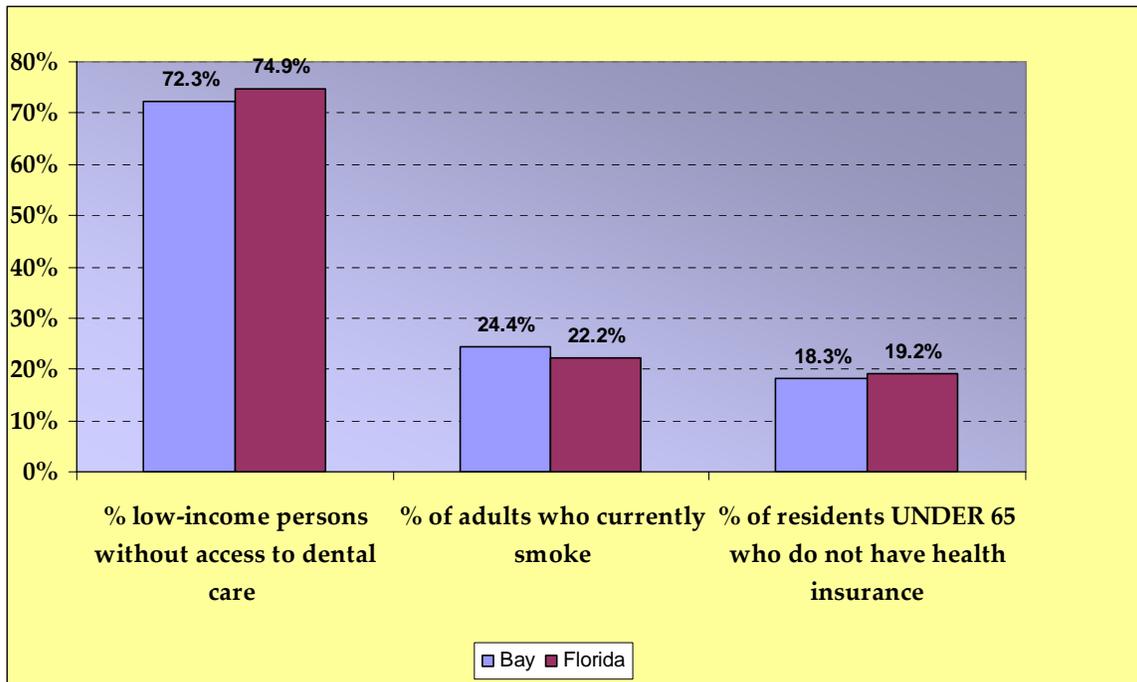
This section includes physical health indicators, risk factors, and mental health. Table 3 presents the rates of coronary heart disease, congestive heart failure, colorectal cancer, and breast cancer. The Bay County rate for heart disease and breast cancer is higher than the state of Florida average. Figure 8 presents selected health indicators: Bay County has a higher percentage of adults who currently smoke, and a lower percentage of adults under age 65 without health insurance; smoking is a risk factor for many chronic diseases and those without health care are unlikely to get the preventive treatment needed.

Table 3: Rates of heart disease and cancer

HEART DISEASE	Bay County	Florida
Coronary heart disease age-adjusted death rate (rolling three year average) per 100,000	166.8	146.2
Congestive heart failure age-adjusted death rate (rolling three year average) per 100,000	473.4	316.8
CANCER	Bay County	Florida
Colorectal cancer age-adjusted death rate (rolling three year average) per 100,000	15.4	16
Breast cancer age-adjusted death rate (rolling three year average) per 100,000	26.3	22.4
DIABETES	Bay County	Florida
Percent of adults told by a doctor that they have diabetes	9.2	8.2
Hospitalization with or from diabetes (rolling three year average) per 100,000	2,798.9	2,439.2

Source: Florida Department of Health

Figure 8: Selected health indicators



Source: Florida Department of Health

The following table presents the percentage of low birth weight babies and the percentage of births receiving first trimester prenatal care. The rate of low birth weight babies is higher in Bay County than the state of Florida, while the percentage of first trimester prenatal care is lower.

Table 4: Prenatal care and low birth weight babies

	Bay County	Florida
Percent low birth weight babies (rolling three year average 2003-2005)	9.2%	8.6%
Percentage of births receiving first trimester care (rolling three year rate 2003-2005)	76.6%	81.8%

Source: Florida Department of Health

As shown in the table below, Bay County compares unfavorably to the state of Florida in alcohol-related accidents and in the suicide age-adjusted death rate.

Table 5: Behavioral Health

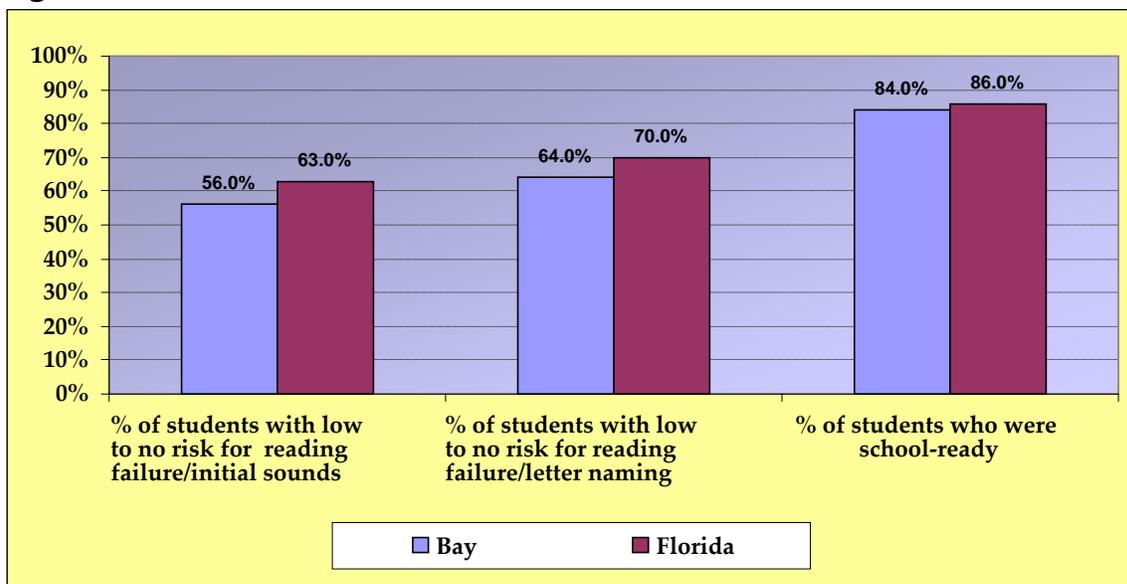
	Bay County	Florida
Alcohol related accidents (rolling three year rate 2003-2005) per 100,000	265.2	131.9
Suicide age-adjusted death rate (rolling three year 2003-2005) per 100,000	18.1	12.6
Percent of adults who engage in heavy or binge drinking	12.1	14.1

Source: Florida Department of Health

Education

This portion of Section II presents data on education, from school readiness through to graduation. A UCLA study established a link between quality child care and school readiness. It shows that young children receiving poor-quality child care were less prepared for school and tended to have less success in the early phases of school than students who received high-quality care in their preschool years. The quality child care gap was even wider for high-risk children whose mothers have little or no education. Figure 9 presents the percentage of kindergarten students who were school-ready (slightly less than the state of Florida average) as well as specific scores on measures of risk of reading failure.

Figure 9: School readiness scores

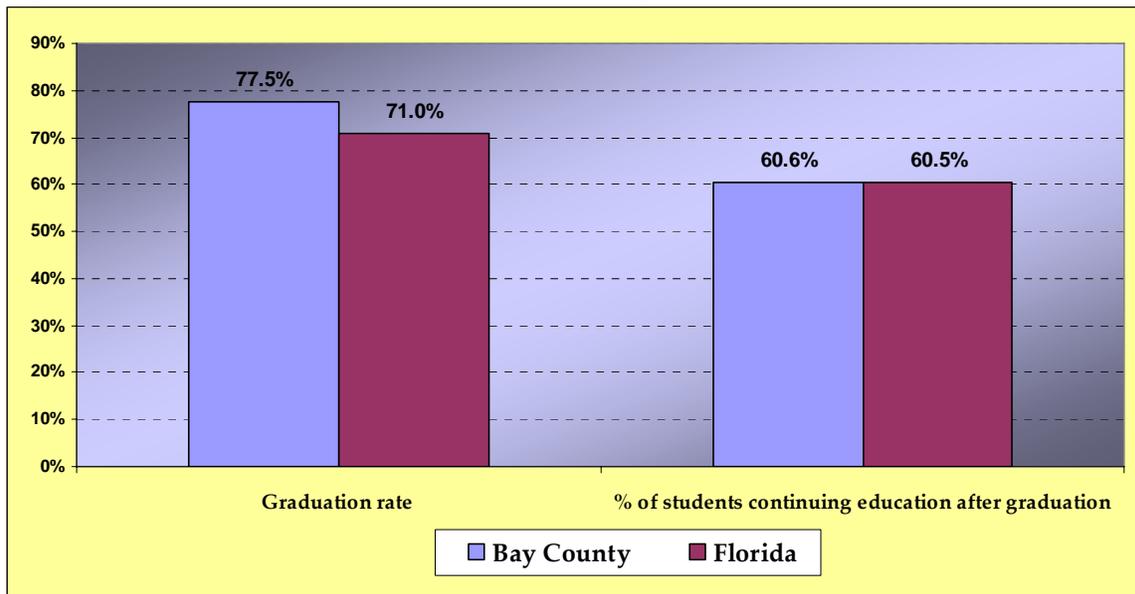


Source: Florida Department of Education

By fourth grade, achievement disparities are evident. Only 39 percent of black students are at or above grade level in math, compared to 70 percent of white students. “A proportion of America’s youth struggle to achieve...these youth are vulnerable to further failures, often resulting in lifelong economic and social hardship.” Vulnerable youth manifest as dropouts, suspensions, teen pregnancy, and juvenile justice involvement. They are more likely to fight, carry weapons, skip school, and use drugs.¹

The drop out rate in Bay County compares favorably to the state of Florida rate, with 2.0 percent of students dropping out (compared to 3.5%). Also, the graduation rate is slightly higher than the state average (Figure 10). Figure 10 also presents the percentage of students who report continuing their education after graduation.

Figure 10: Graduation rates and continuing education



Source: Florida Department of Education

Income and Employment

Table 6 presents data on the income and employment of Bay County residents, compared to the State of Florida. Bay County’s median household income is slightly lower than the state of Florida average, and the cost of living index is slightly lower as well. In the area of employment, Bay County has a higher percentage of those over 16 in the labor force and a similar rate of unemployment; the median earnings for these workers are slightly less than the state average.

¹ Zweig, 2003

Table 6: Income and employment status

	Bay County	Florida
Median household income	\$40,701	\$42,433
Cost of living index	96.8	
Percent over 16 in the labor force	64.1%	61.4%
Unemployment rates	3.2%	3.2%
Median earnings for workers	\$22,179	\$25,951
Mean commute time (in minutes)	21.0	26.0

Source: American Community Survey, 2005

Table 7 presents the sources of income for Bay County’s households: 79 percent of households receive earnings, while 30 percent of households receive Social Security, and 23 percent receive retirement other than Social Security. These categories are not mutually exclusive: a household may receive both retirement and Social Security or may receive both earnings and retirement.

Table 7: Sources of income

	Bay County
Households receiving earnings	79.0%
Households receiving Social Security	30.0%
Households receiving retirement other than Social Security	23.0%

Source: American Community Survey, 2005

The next item of interest is poverty. Fourteen percent of all Bay County residents are in poverty, although poverty rates are highest for single parent female-headed families, and lowest for those over 65.

Table 8: Poverty status, by resident category

	Bay County
Percent of all residents in poverty	14%
Percent of single parent female head of household families in poverty	35%
Percent of children under 18 in poverty	20%
Percent of residents over 65 in poverty	12%
Percent of all families in poverty	11%

Source: American Community Survey, 2005

Housing

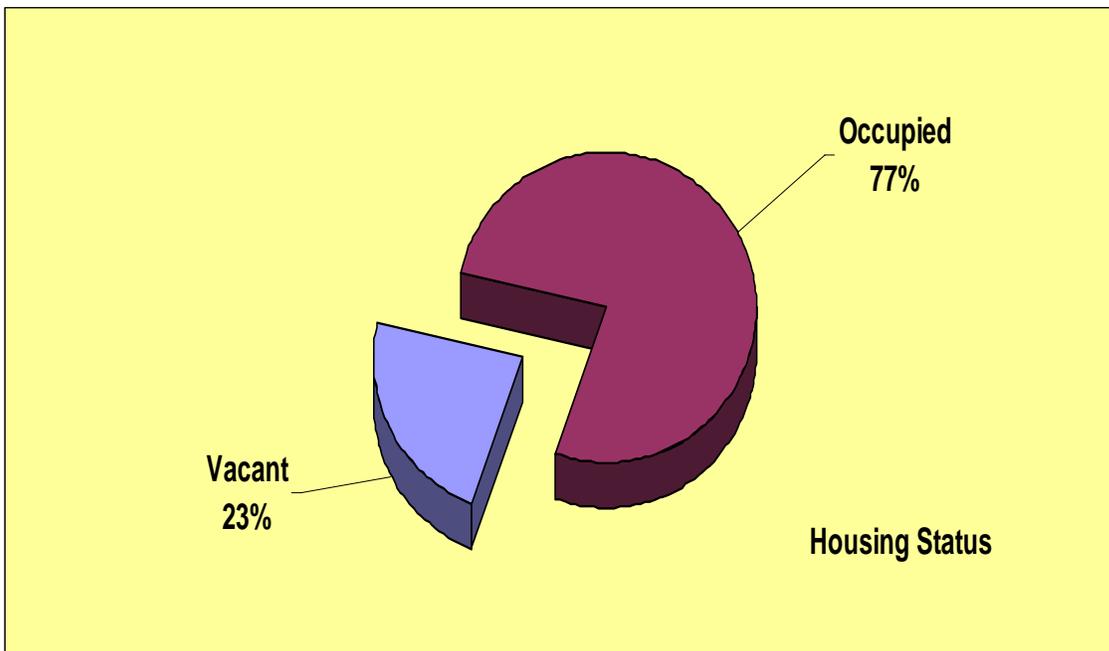
This part of Section II presents housing data. There are 90,000 housing units in Bay County. Table 9 presents the median value of those housing units, as well as the average rent; both figures are lower than the state of Florida average. Figure 11 presents the percentage of those housing units that are occupied. Of those units that are occupied, Figure 12 presents the percentage that are owner-occupied and those that are occupied by renters. Finally, Table 10 presents the monthly costs for occupants and Figure 13 presents the percentage of various groups who spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing; 30 percent is the federal guideline for affordability. Renters are most likely to find housing costs more than 30 percent of their income. These percentages are lower than the state average.

Table 9: Housing units, value, and average rent

Total Housing Units	90,000	
	Bay County	Florida
Median value of owner-occupied homes	\$155,400	\$189,500
Median apartment rent	\$699	\$809

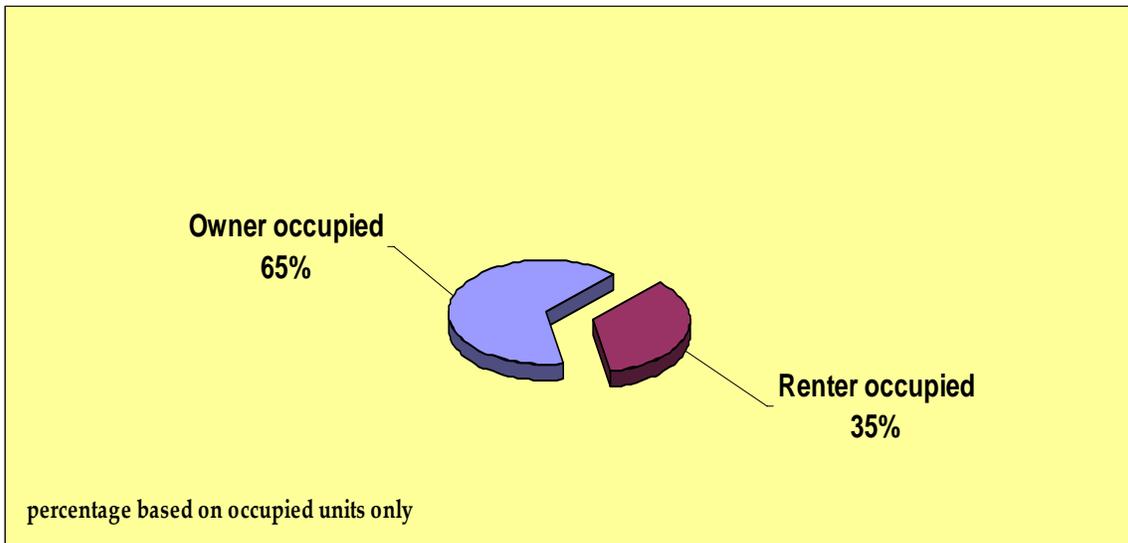
Source: American Community Survey, 2005

Figure 11: Status of housing units



Source: American Community Survey, 2005

Figure 12: Status of occupied units



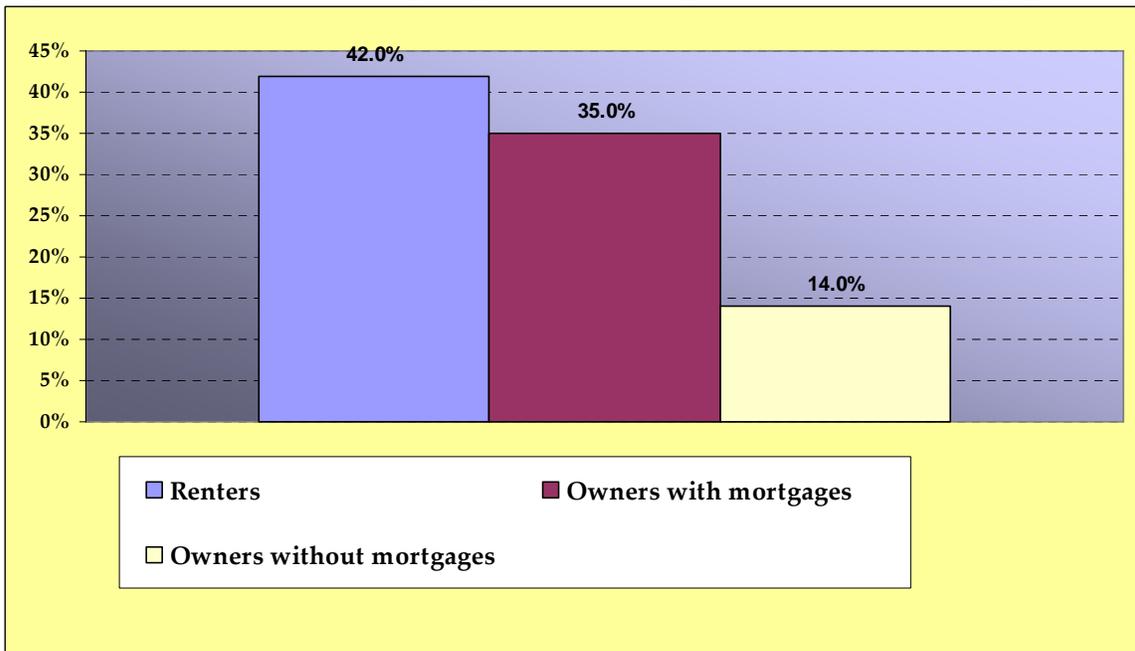
Source: American Community Survey, 2005

Table 10: Monthly housing costs, by group

	Bay County
Median monthly cost for mortgaged owners	\$ 997
Median monthly cost for non-mortgaged owners	\$ 314
Median monthly cost for renters	\$ 699

Source: American Community Survey, 2005

Figure 13: Percent of each group with housing outside affordability guidelines

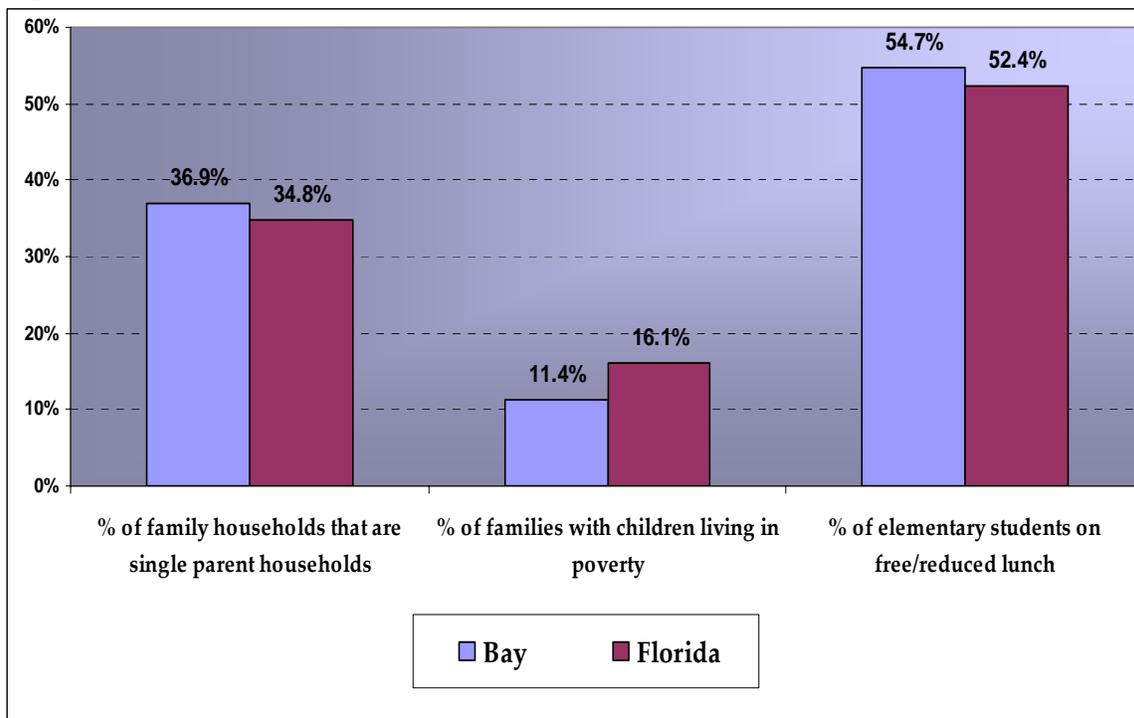


Source: American Community Survey, 2005

Families

This part of Section II presents data on family risk factors, including economic stress, crime, and teen parents. Figure 14 presents the percentage of young children on the free or reduced lunch program, the percentage of families with children that live in poverty, and the percentage of families with children that are single parent households. There are several common risk factors for families. These "...include problems dealing with relationship issues, finances, job performance, legal issues, substance abuse and mental health concerns and depression."² Unmarried parents are more likely to be in poverty and to not have supports such as work experience, education, and community support. Employment, education, and relationship quality all impact family stability.³ Teen mothers are less likely to obtain prenatal care: "Nationally, children of adolescent mothers have more developmental and other health problems. There are also more LBW and VLBW babies."⁴

Figure 14: Risk factors for families with children



Source: American Community Survey, 2005

² IDS program, US Military

³ Parke, 2004

⁴ Lachance, 1985

As shown below, Bay County compares unfavorably to the state of Florida in the areas of crime rate, domestic violence, births to teens, and child abuse. While births to teens are a risk factor, crime, domestic violence, and child abuse are all the end result of family stress.

Table 11: Crime, domestic violence, teen births and child abuse

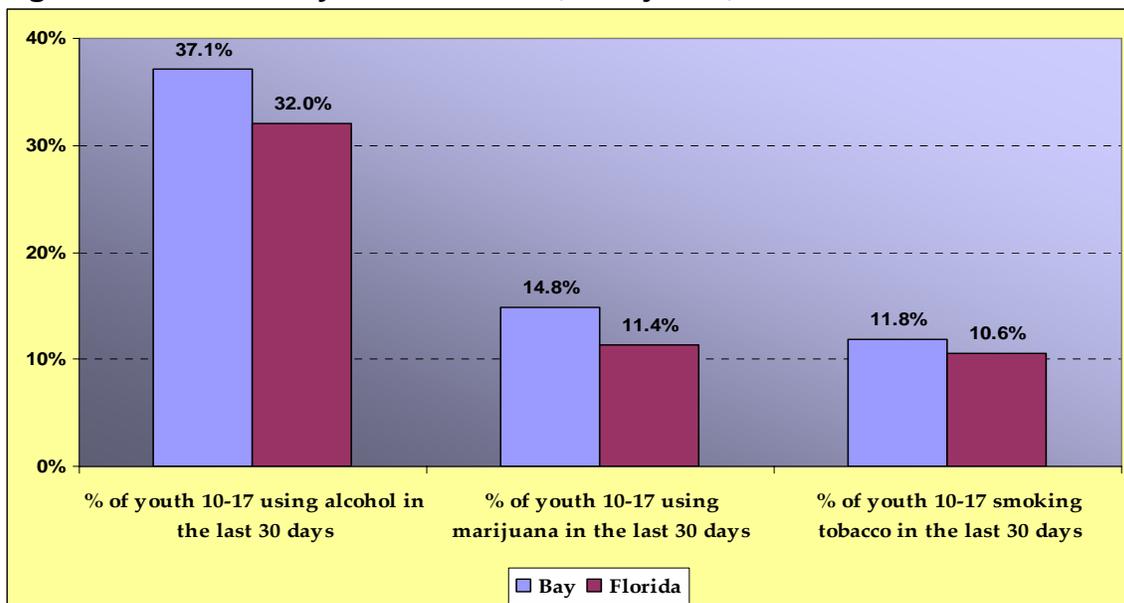
Indicator	Bay	Florida
Crime rate per 100,000	4,703.5	4,632.0
Domestic violence per 100,000	836.2	627.7
Births to teens 15-19 (rolling 3-yr rate 2003-2005) per 100,000	57.6	42.0
Child abuse cases rate per 100,000	4.9	3.6

Sources: Florida Department of Law Enforcement, CHARTS, and the Florida Statistical Abstract

Youth

Each year the Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey questions middle and high school students about the use of drugs, risk behaviors, and status on factors that research has shown decrease the likelihood of risky behaviors (protective factors such as community norms and family support) and those that increase the likelihood of risky behaviors, such as drug use. Figure 15 presents the incidence of drug use, while Table 12 highlights the risk and protective factors of Bay County's youth.

Figure 15: Past 30 day use of alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco



Source: FYSAS, 2006

Table 12: Risk and protective factors for middle school youth

	Protective		Risk	
	Bay County	Florida	Bay County	Florida
Community	48	41	56	54
Family	47	45	54	54
School	41	41	56	55
Peer and Individual	46	44	56	55
Average across domains	46	43	56	55

Source: Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey, 2006

Table 13: Truancy of Bay County youth

Percentage of students absent 21+ days	Bay County	Florida
Elementary school students	1.3	7.2
Middle school students	4.5	10.7
High school students	5.0	15.9

Source: Florida Department of Education

Elders

The final part of Section II presents a few indicators on adults over age 60. Fewer of Bay County's adults over age 65 have mobility or self-care limitations than the state of Florida average, and a higher percentage are also below the poverty level. In addition, the elder abuse and neglect rate is higher than the state average.

Table 14: Selected indicators, elder issues

	Bay County	Florida
Percentage of 65+ with mobility/self-care limitations	4.0%	8.0%
Percentage of elders (60+) who below the poverty level	10.8%	9.3%
Elder abuse and neglect rate per 100,000	2.1	1.6

Source: Florida Department of Elder Affairs

Section III: Areas of Concern

How were areas of concern identified?

Areas of concern were identified in three ways: Phase I work which included 40 community volunteers, a review of reliable and valid data from trusted sources, and through community input via a community survey. By accessing three sources of data, we can feel confident that these are the areas of concern. It is important to note that these are “unmet needs” as these are areas where the data and the community identified that needs were not being met. There are other needs in the community, of course, but these are being met at this time with the existing resources and partners. By reviewing the drivers of change and the vital statistics periodically, United Way will be able to determine if some needs that are currently being met need additional attention.

Areas of concern

The table below lists the need in the first column, quantifiable baseline data in the second column, the Phase I assessment in the third column, and input from the community in the final column. There are several issues where the baseline data suggests that there is a concern but the community does not rank it as a top priority. In the survey, participants mentioned that they “did not know about needs” and that there was not a great awareness of needs. In these cases, there is an opportunity for greater education and awareness.

Table 15: Areas of concern: baseline, Phase I, and community input

Concern	Baseline data	Identified as an issue in Phase I	Community Input
Abuse of adults over age 60	2.1 per 100,000 in Bay County, compared to 1.6 for the state.	No	Not one of the top three priorities or concerns
Achievement gap in schools	39% of black 4 th graders are at or above grade level in math, compared to 70% of white students.	Yes	Not one of the top three priorities or concerns identified, but both survey respondents and focus group participants noted that education was a cause of many needs.

Adults using alcohol and other drugs	12.1% of adults engage in heavy or binge drinking, compared with 14.1% at the state level. (BRFSS)	No	Identified as a top priority or concern.
Affordable housing	40% of renters and 34% of homeowners have housing costs that exceed 30% of their income (the federal guideline).	Yes, including elderly households	Identified as a top priority or concern. Survey respondents also noted the need to rehabilitate existing housing.
Alcohol-related automobile accidents	265.2 per 100,000, compared to 131.9 for the state.	No	Identified as a top priority or concern.
Births to teen mothers	57.6 per 100,000, compared to 42.0 for the state.	No	Identified as a secondary priority or concern, but noted by focus group participants and survey respondents as a cause of other needs.
Child abuse	4.9 per 100,000, compared to 3.6 for the state.	No	Identified as a secondary priority or concern
Crime	4,703.5 per 100,000, compared to 4,632.0 for the state.	No	Identified as a secondary priority or concern.
Dental care	72.3% of low income persons lack access to dental care, compared to 74.9% FL.	Yes	Not identified as a top priority or concern.

<p>Diabetes</p>	<p>Rate of hospitalization with or from diabetes is 2,798.9 per 100,000, compared to 2,439.2 for the state.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Not identified as a top priority or concern.</p>
<p>Domestic violence</p>	<p>836.2 per 100,000, compared to 627.7 for the state.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Not identified as a top priority or concern</p>
<p>Employment issues</p>	<p>Standardized data on employment readiness does not exist.</p>	<p>Yes: link between education and employment, career technical skills, and youth preparation for the workforce.</p>	<p>Identified as a top priority or concern.</p> <p>Both youth and employers cited this in focus groups: youth wanted internships that would help them get good jobs; employers said that employees (including youth) lack work ethic skills.</p> <p>Focus group and survey participants noted that youth do not value education because they do not think that there are jobs.</p>
<p>Facilities for children who were abused and neglected and facilities to serve the elderly and disabled</p>	<p>Standardized data does not exist.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Identified as a top priority or concern.</p>

Heart disease	Congestive heart failure AADR 473.4 per 100,000 compared to 316.8 for the state	No	Not identified as a top priority or concern.
Health Insurance	18.3% of those under 65 do not have health insurance, compared to 20.5% for the state. (FHIS, 2004)	Yes	Identified as a top priority or concern.
Kindergarteners being ready for school	44% are at risk of reading failure, compared to 37% for the state.	No	Not identified as a top priority or concern.
Living wage	Median household income is \$40,701, compared to \$42,433 for the state. Mean earnings of \$49,988, compared to \$59,336 for the state. Cost of living index is 96.6, compared to the state average of 100.	Yes	Identified as a top priority or concern. Focus group participants mentioned that for elders, fixed income was also an issue: 59% of those 65 and over live on less than \$35,000 per year. Job readiness was seen as relating to the issue of the living wage, as was economic development.
Mothers not getting prenatal care	76.6% receive first trimester care, compared to 81.8% at the state level.	No	Not identified as a top priority or concern.

Suicide	AADR is 18.1 per 100,000, compared to 12.6 for the state.	No	Not identified as a top priority or concern.
Teens using alcohol or other drugs	37.1% of teens report using alcohol in the last 30 days, compared to 32.0% for the state.	No	<p>Identified as a top priority or concern.</p> <p>Focus group participants felt that drinking was socially accepted – survey respondents also cited this concern. Parental involvement and greater youth activities were seen as effective strategies.</p>
Transportation	4.9% of households have no car, compared to 6.6% for the state; 37% have only one car, compared to 40% for the state.	Yes	<p>Identified as a top priority or concern.</p> <p>Focus group participants mentioned that one-car households and distances between activities and events were an issue; youth and parents noted that youth can't get to existing activities.</p>
Youth development/ involving parents in education	Baseline data captured through educational and behavioral data (graduation rates, drug use, etc.).	Yes	<p>Identified as a top priority or concern.</p> <p>Focus group participants felt that parents who work two jobs don't have time to parent; survey respondents noted that parents lack parenting skills.</p> <p>Both focus group participants and survey respondents noted that "there is nothing for kids to do."</p>

Section IV: What can U do?

Community Impact is a community-designed strategic plan for addressing a pressing community need. This community assessment was a first step in that process. Through engaging almost 1,000 members of the community, United Way asked the community what their agenda was for pressing community needs. By using volunteers, a community-wide survey, and focus groups, United Way gathered community-wide perspectives and identified connections. Community Impact is also about creating systems change in community conditions, and by looking at causes, solutions, and the cause/effect of the needs, this assessment lays the groundwork for that effort.

The community agenda

<p>Financial stress</p>	<p><i>Affordable housing</i></p> <p><i>Health care</i></p> <p><i>Living wage/cost of living</i></p> <p><i>Employment readiness</i></p>
<p>Substance abuse</p>	<p><i>Teens using alcohol and other drugs</i></p> <p><i>Adults using alcohol and other drugs</i></p> <p><i>Alcohol-related automobile accidents</i></p>
<p>Youth development</p>	<p><i>Births to teen mothers</i></p> <p><i>Parent information and involving parents in education</i></p> <p><i>Youth development</i></p>
<p>Infrastructure</p>	<p><i>Transportation</i></p> <p><i>Facilities for children who were abused and neglected</i></p> <p><i>Facilities to serve the elderly and the disabled</i></p>

Those issues identified by the community as their top priorities are an opportunity to mobilize the community for creating sustained change. Those that are NOT identified as a top priority – but which statistics suggest are a concern – are an opportunity for greater public awareness and education. In the survey, one respondent noted that “Many residents do not want to recognize there is a need or a problem mostly due to lack of awareness“ while others noted that they didn’t know if there were needs, or if there were problems in their neighborhoods. In addition, when asked about causes of problems, many respondents cited better education, although the achievement gap did not rank as a priority.

Part of the Community Impact Model is to address causes of issues. Although additional study is needed, survey participants were asked the causes of problems for Bay County. As did the Steering Committee and focus group participants, respondents noted that many of the needs and causes were interrelated. There were several themes that emerged that United Way can address as root causes: parent information and involving parents in education, education, and employment (wages). Verbatim comments included:

- ***“Younger parents with no parenting skills; obtaining a high school diploma is not considered a major goal.”***
- ***“While many of the issues regarding the needs of children feel more pressing and greater causes of concern, many of those issues all tie into increasing education of parents in the areas.”***
- ***“Wages verses cost of living. It has gotten out of hand.”***
- ***“Uneducated population. Transient people who come to work for the summer then get stuck in little hotels on the beach and have no home.”***
- ***“The lack of education of the problems of drug and alcohol abuse and the party lifestyle that is promoted in this area (the Beaches) and alternatives to that lifestyle.”***
- ***“The county relies too much on tourism instead of having plants come in that give people health insurance.”***
- ***“Teenagers have too much time on their hands. There are available activities and organizations, but the teenagers don't take advantage of them. They can't because of money or grades, or just don't because it is not 'cool'.”***
- ***“Partially the lack of suitable jobs; secondly the lack of suitable skills by individuals to obtain good jobs; and also the lack of desire by some individuals to do better.”***

What can United Way do?

The strategies below are aligned with the Community Impact Model, and modified for the unique findings in Bay County.

1. Create partnerships at the policy level around these issues. Depending on the issue, partnerships might include schools, government agencies, businesses, financial institutions, community development corporations, voluntary and neighborhood associations, the faith community, and others. Bring other funders to the table around issues. For example, Consumer Credit Counseling, local municipalities, and CDCs can collaboratively address housing issues.
2. Coordinate community action. Facilitating opportunities for groups to come together to determine targeted action strategies. Convene new partners and players. For example, parents in west Bay County explored bringing youth activities to the community. They could be connected with existing for-profit or not-for-profit organizations to make this happen. One Rotary President mentioned convening all Rotary and Kiwanis leadership to talk about working together on solutions. Support partnerships and collaboration by providing meeting space, facilitators, and data.
3. Generate new initiatives and innovative solutions by drawing on national resources and local leaders from business, academia, government, and nonprofits. During focus groups, participants identified local success stories (such as parent involvement at Bozeman HS), but they need assistance to implement them community-wide.
4. For those issues that are identified through statistics as being of concern – but were not a top priority for community residents – focus on outreach and awareness. Include the media as a partner in raising awareness of issues such as child abuse.
5. Mobilize the caring power of the community. This community has many civic organizations, which are an asset to mobilize. Bring together a broad range of people and organizations to identify and resolve pressing community issues. Identify and build on community strengths and assets, help individuals and groups with specific community interests find ways to contribute their time and talents. For example, the Rotary can start youth service clubs, businesses can provide internships, interest clubs can connect with youth and share skills and interests.
6. Promote current programs and activities, particularly activities for youth. Explore expanding youth development programs to targeted groups and areas. For example, existing nonprofits that provide youth activities can be

partnered with existing facilities in targeted areas. The Urban Institute has documented that geographic proximity increases use of services, which will address transportation issues.

7. Learn how to engage and communicate across groups. Parents that were engaged recognized the barriers – such as time and transportation – that other parents face. But throughout the focus groups, participants mentioned that they were frustrated: frustrated with stereotypes, frustrated with trying to connect to parents, frustrated with trying to connect to at-risk youth, frustrated with trying to get citizens engaged, and frustrated with having community leaders not hear their concerns.
8. Recognize that it will take new efforts and new ideas. Use success stories from other communities to determine what can work here in Bay County. Best practices exist in all the four priority areas (see next page).

Best Practices

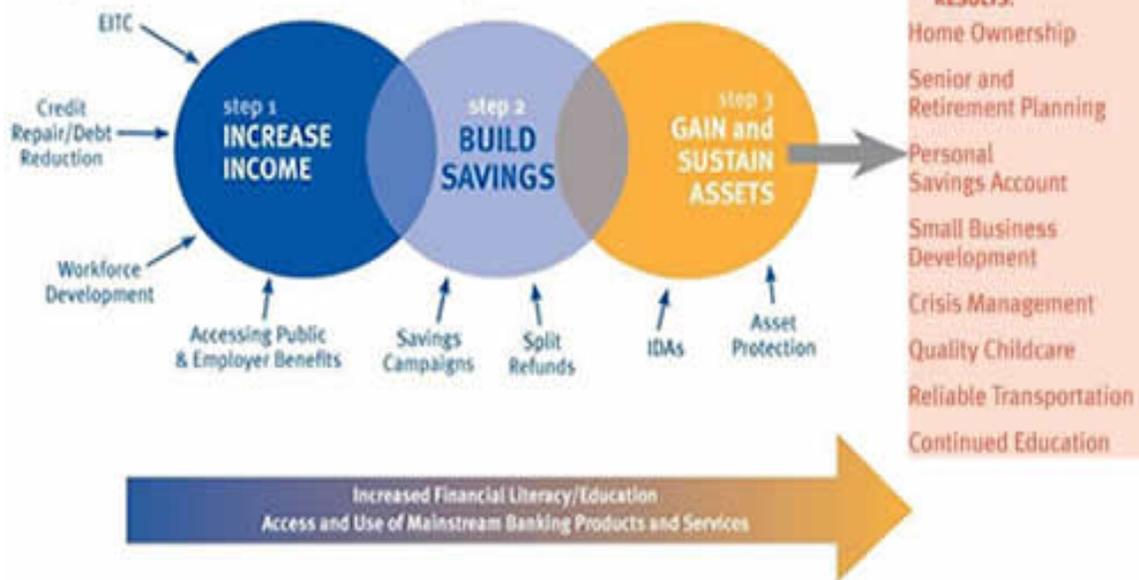
The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration of the U.S. government, as well as a nonprofit group (fastennet.org), have identified effective components of youth substance abuse prevention programs. Using these guidelines, parents, schools, and current programs could work together to address any gaps, expand effective programs, and provide education and support to groups who wish to provide these types of programs. One key strategy is a comprehensive approach – beyond education or treatment -- which would also address community concerns around youth activities.

United Way of America has begun a financial stability initiative.

The United Way movement seeks to identify and address root causes as an effective means of tackling issues and transforming communities. Yet community issues stemming from personal, economic, and environmental factors are growing increasingly more complex. The rising costs of housing, healthcare, utilities, and education, coupled with changes in the economy, have left many hardworking individuals struggling to support themselves and their families.

With input from national experts, United Way leaders, and community investors, United Way designed a stepped approach that helps low- to moderate-income individuals and families increase their personal income, build savings, and gain and benefit from productive assets, such as a home, post-secondary education, small business development, and/or retirement savings.

Steps in the Financial Stability Framework



See <http://www.unitedway.org/fsp/> for more information.

In the area of youth development, the Search Institute's 40 assets are a research-based framework.

The Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets® are concrete, common sense, positive experiences and qualities essential to raising successful young people. These assets have the power during critical adolescent years to influence choices young people make and help them become caring, responsible adults. Some examples are positive family communication, other adult relationships, parent involvement in schooling, empowerment, constructive use of time, religious community, a commitment to learning, honesty, interpersonal competence, and conflict resolution skills.

See <http://www.search-institute.org/assets/> for more information.

Finally, Success By 6 has resources for getting parents involved in education, such as Born Learning, a program already adopted by this United Way.

Appendix A: Phase I review

During the review, for each task force I documented the following:

1. ***What were the main issues?***
2. ***What information is provided? (listed above)***
3. ***What indicators can be tracked in this area?***
4. ***What questions remain?***

In response to question 1 above, the table below summarizes the main issues to determine consensus on the issues. Each of the eight task force areas is worthy of further consideration, but have been consolidated for ease of use. This summary will be used in two ways: first, to identify areas where there needs to be indicator data; second, to identify possible baseline areas for the final community report card.

Task Force	Issue Raised
Basic Needs	<p><i>Dental care</i></p> <p><i>Transportation</i></p> <p><i>Utilities assistance</i></p> <p><i>Coordination among agencies</i></p>
Crisis Management	<p><i>Roles and responsibilities in disaster response and recovery</i></p> <p><i>Strain on social service system</i></p> <p><i>Preparedness: business and nonprofit</i></p>
Education	<p><i>Assessment of early childhood system</i></p> <p><i>Involving parents (including non-traditional families) with the school</i></p> <p><i>Link education and employment</i></p> <p><i>Impact of career-technical skills (higher wage, qualified to work)</i></p> <p><i>Disparities in math achievement</i></p> <p><i>Community support for youth development</i></p>

<p>Health</p>	<p><i>Lack of health insurance providers (healthcare, dental, and specialty) accepting Medicaid</i></p> <p><i>Preventive screenings</i></p> <p><i>Mental health – need better data collection</i></p>
<p>Housing</p>	<p><i>Not identified by task force</i></p> <p><i>As identified by the Affordable Housing Task Force Report: availability for low-income households (many of whom are elderly) and moderate income households.</i></p> <p><i>Rehabilitation of unsafe housing.</i></p>
<p>Safety</p>	<p><i>Capacity of abuse and neglect facilities</i></p> <p><i>Residence facilities for drug abuse rehabilitation</i></p> <p><i>Children removed from the home, by reason and facilities to serve them</i></p> <p><i>Facilities to serve the elderly and the disabled</i></p>
<p>Transportation</p>	<p><i>Transportation infrastructure compared to population</i></p> <p><i>Transportation disadvantaged program meeting need</i></p> <p><i>Keeping up with growth? Plans for bike paths and sidewalks</i></p>
<p>Workforce</p>	<p><i>Youth preparation for the workforce</i></p> <p><i>Living wage (family of four)</i></p> <p><i>Impact of Baby Boomers on labor force</i></p>

Appendix B: Survey report

Purpose

The community survey had three objectives: to prioritize unmet needs identified in Phase I and through the data review; to identify met needs and find any needs not on radar; and to collect respondent characteristics. The survey was not designed to document – through a random sample – community needs; that data is collected reliably and consistently through existing sources. Rather, the survey was designed to solicit broad-based input about priorities. Distribution of the survey occurred in two ways: online and hard copy. Email invitations were sent through a trusted source, such as a human resources department or the Chamber of Commerce. Copies of surveys – along with a promotional flyer in a stand and a collection envelope – were provided at places such as area libraries, the health clinic, and the United Way office.

Methodology

Sample

The final survey count was 862 online and paper surveys. Results were cross-tabulated by geography, age, and by income in order to determine if there were differences among respondents. Those differences are noted within the body of the report. Although the geographic distribution appears to be over sampled for Panama City, an analysis of zip codes determined that some residents of unincorporated Bay County chose Panama City as their place of residence, therefore the geographic distribution is representative. Residents over age 65 are underrepresented, females exceeded males in greater proportion than the county population, as did African-Americans to Caucasians. In addition, adults without children were underrepresented. Income levels were consistent with the population distribution.

Table B1: Place of residence

Answer Options	Response Percent
Callaway	8.2%
Cedar Grove	2.6%
Lynn Haven	15.3%
Mexico Beach	0.3%
Panama City	39.6%
Panama City Beach	8.8%
Parker	2.1%
Springfield	7.7%
None- unincorporated Bay County	15.7%

Note: an analysis of zip codes found that some residents chose “Panama City” when they actually live in unincorporated Bay County

Table B2: Age distribution

Answer Options	Response Percent
Under 14	0.6%
15 to 24	23.4%
25 to 44	34.5%
45 to 64	38.2%
65+	3.4%

Table B3: Gender distribution of respondents

Answer Options	Response Percent
Female	62.3%
Male	37.8%

Table B4: Race/ethnicity, respondents and Bay County

Answer Options	Response Percent
African-American	21.2%
Caucasian/White	70.7%
Hispanic	2.5%
Other	5.7%

Table B5: Household income distribution of respondents

Answer Options	Response Percent
Under \$10,000	10.6%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	8.8%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	13.6%
\$30,000 to \$39,999	13.6%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	13.3%
\$50,000 or more	40.3%

Table B6: Household type of respondents

Answer Options	Response Percent
Two or more adults, no children	35.4%
Two or more adults and at least one child under 18	37.3%
One adult and at least one child under 18	12.9%
Adult living alone	14.6%

Table B7: Employment status of respondents

Answer Options	Response Percent
Attending school	17.1%
Disabled	2.7%
Employed full time	74.8%
Employed part time	7.9%
Homemaker	3.0%
Retired	3.7%
Unemployed	4.7%
Other (please specify)	1.9%

Note: respondents could choose more than one answer

Survey content was developed using three sources: Phase I findings, indicator review findings, and a review of similar tools. As the objective of the survey was to determine community priorities, participants were asked to rate and rank needs identified during Phase I and the indicator review. Steering Committee members pilot tested the survey and approved the final content.

The survey had several components. First, participants were asked to rate and rank two lists of identified needs to determine the perception of the identified need and to prioritize the identified community needs. Asking respondents to both rate and rank provided flexibility for those who did not wish to choose just one response. Respondents were also provided an opportunity for open-ended comments, and asked to identify causes of the needs that they identified. Second, participants were asked about needs in their neighborhoods. By asking about neighborhood needs, the survey captured needs not identified during Phase I or the indicator review without asking participants to self-identify as having problems. The final section of the survey asked participants for demographic information so that the sample could be compared to Bay County characteristics.

Distribution of the survey occurred in two ways: online and hard copy. Many participants were emailed an invitation to complete an online survey. This invitation came from a trusted source, such as a human resources department or the Chamber of Commerce. Participants were asked to click on a link that took them to the survey. Participants could also access the link through the United Way of Northwest Florida website. Surveys were completely anonymous and confidential: data was not captured on the source of the survey. Other surveys were distributed. Copies of surveys – along with a promotional flyer in a stand and a collection envelope – were provided at places such as area libraries, the health clinic, and the United Way office. In addition, one employer distributed paper surveys as many of their employees do not have easy access to a computer.

Findings

Tables B8 through B12 provide the responses from the survey. For each set of needs, data was solicited in three ways. First, respondents were asked to rate problems, then to rank them relative to each other, then offered an opportunity to comment. Residents rated *living wage and cost of living*, *teen drug use*, and *alcohol-related accidents* as their top concerns. The second tier of needs includes *births to teens*, *adult drug use*, and *child abuse*. As noted, differences in underrepresented subgroups were also analyzed. *Living wage and the cost of living* was the top concern of all groups; the second and third were either *alcohol-related accidents* or *teen drug use*. In rankings, those over 65 years of age included *crime*, while males included *births to teens*.

Table B8: Rating of needs

Answer Options	No problem	Very small problem	Small problem	Moderate problem	Big problem
Abuse of adults over age 60	13.4%	15.5%	28.4%	25.1%	17.6%
Adults over age 60 with mobility or self care issues	7.9%	6.8%	17.6%	40.3%	27.5%
Adults using alcohol and other drugs	4.4%	4.4%	10.3%	32.8%	48.0%
Alcohol-related automobile accidents	4.2%	2.5%	9.9%	33.0%	50.4%
Births to teen mothers	3.6%	3.1%	11.6%	33.3%	48.4%
Child abuse	4.4%	2.9%	12.2%	33.1%	47.4%
Crime	3.0%	2.6%	14.0%	38.6%	41.8%
Diabetes	4.7%	6.9%	24.0%	36.7%	27.7%
Domestic violence	4.8%	3.7%	15.0%	39.0%	37.4%
Education from school readiness to graduation, including the gap between white and minority students	7.6%	8.6%	23.1%	29.2%	31.4%
Heart disease	4.8%	7.5%	22.0%	37.3%	28.5%
Living wage and the cost of living	2.9%	2.2%	7.5%	17.8%	69.7%
Mothers not getting prenatal care	5.3%	11.0%	25.4%	34.2%	24.1%
Suicide	8.5%	18.8%	33.0%	22.8%	16.8%
Teens using alcohol and other drugs	3.4%	2.9%	10.0%	29.7%	54.1%
Traffic congestion	6.1%	8.8%	24.0%	31.7%	29.3%
Truancy	7.3%	8.8%	27.9%	31.2%	24.8%

Table B9: Relative ranking of needs

Which of these items do you believe is the BIGGEST problem in Bay County? Please choose only one.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Abuse of adults over age 60	0.5%
Adults over age 60 with mobility or self care issues	2.2%
Adults using alcohol and other drugs	11.2%
Alcohol-related automobile accidents	5.5%
Births to teen mothers	8.2%
Child abuse	5.1%
Crime	8.1%
Diabetes	1.1%
Domestic violence	2.5%
Education from school readiness to graduation, including the gap between white and minority students	6.1%
Heart disease	0.7%
Living wage and the cost of living	33.0%
Mothers not getting prenatal care	0.2%
Suicide	1.2%
Teens using alcohol and other drugs	10.7%
Traffic congestion	2.9%
Truancy	1.0%

Respondents were next asked to prioritize items. When asked to rate priorities, respondents chose *affordable housing*, *facilities for children who were abused or neglected*, and *parent information/involving parents in education*. Participants also rated *facilities for the elderly and disabled* as a priority. Among subgroups, *affordable housing* received the highest rating, followed by one of the other items mentioned (*facilities/children*, *facilities/elderly and disabled*, and *parent information*). Those over 65 years of age also rated *transportation* as an issue. When asked to rank priorities relative to each other, top rankings included *affordable housing*, *facilities for children who were abused or neglected*, and *parent information/involving parents in education*. Subgroups responses were similar, although three of the subgroups included *facilities for the elderly and disabled* as a priority and those over 65 years of age included *transportation*.

Table B10: Priority rating of action items

Answer Options	Not a priority	A low priority	Somewhat of a priority	More of a priority	A high priority
Assistance with paying utilities	8.2%	17.3%	38.3%	18.6%	17.6%
Affordable housing	2.7%	4.3%	15.7%	22.7%	54.6%
Dental care for low income residents	4.5%	14.0%	30.5%	23.4%	27.5%
Expand transportation programs for those with disadvantages	3.8%	9.5%	31.0%	29.3%	26.4%
More facilities for children who were abused or neglected	2.7%	6.3%	23.1%	33.4%	34.6%
More facilities to serve the elderly and the disabled	3.3%	6.8%	24.5%	35.5%	29.9%
More residential facilities for drug abuse rehabilitation	4.9%	13.0%	33.3%	25.2%	23.6%
Parent information and involving parents in education	3.4%	9.9%	28.8%	27.5%	30.4%
Preventive health screenings	3.5%	10.6%	31.1%	28.3%	26.4%
Promoting health (diet, exercise, not smoking)	4.7%	11.0%	28.8%	26.9%	28.6%
Rehabilitation of unsafe housing	4.9%	13.7%	28.3%	26.1%	26.9%

Table B11: Ranking of priorities

Which of these items do you believe is the BIGGEST problem in Bay County? Please choose only one.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Assistance with paying utilities	4.8%
Affordable housing	42.0%
Dental care for low income residents	5.2%
Expand transportation programs for those with disadvantages	3.9%
More facilities for children who were abused or neglected	14.8%
More facilities to serve the elderly and the disabled	6.2%
More residential facilities for drug abuse rehabilitation	4.9%
Parent information and involving parents in education	9.0%
Preventive health screenings	3.2%
Promoting health (diet, exercise, not smoking)	4.2%
Rehabilitation of unsafe housing	1.8%

Participants were asked the causes of problems for Bay County. As did the Steering Committee and focus group participants, respondents noted that many of the needs and causes were interrelated. There were several themes that emerged: parent information and involving parents in education, education, and employment (wages). Verbatim comments included:

- ***“Younger parents with no parenting skills; obtaining a high school diploma is not considered a major goal.”***
- ***“While many of the issues regarding the needs of children feel more pressing and greater causes of concern, many of those issues all tie into increasing education of parents in the areas.”***
- ***“Wages verses cost of living. It has gotten out of hand.”***
- ***“Uneducated population. Transient people who come to work for the summer then get stuck in little hotels on the beach and have no home.”***
- ***“The lack of education of the problems of drug and alcohol abuse and the party lifestyle that is promoted in this area (the Beaches) and alternatives to that lifestyle.”***

- ***“The county relies too much on tourism instead of having plants come in that give people health insurance.”***
- ***“Teenagers have too much time on their hands. There are available activities and organizations, but the teenagers don't take advantage of them. They can't because of money or grades, or just don't because it is not ‘cool’.”***
- ***“Partially the lack of suitable jobs; secondly the lack of suitable skills by individuals to obtain good jobs; and also the lack of desire by some individuals to do better.”***
- ***“Panama City/Bay County is not a resort community. There's too much blight. Our commissioners are doing a disservice if they think they can keep wages low as the high rises on the beach keep going up. Affluent people won't want to move to PC if the area outside of their condo is so blighted they won't want to venture outside. The commissioners should promote new industry here (including, but not limited to tax incentives for new manufacturing, investment in education, cultivation of local manufacturing jobs, etc), and the benefits will be two-fold. First, the community will require fewer social services (welfare, indigent care, etc). Secondly, it will help create an environment where more businesses want to compete (a healthy thing!) and our children will see more opportunities that would keep them here.”***

Participants were asked twice in the survey if there were any needs not listed that they thought were important. Respondents listed two: youth activities and support for the elderly. One person noted that the “Elderly are the forgotten population. They have difficulty with transportation, income, mobility and self care issues etc. The focus lies too much on children.” The last section of the survey asked about neighborhood needs as a way to identify needs not included in the first two sections of the survey without asking for confidential information. Again, *employment* issues were seen as the biggest problem, followed by *youth* issues, *health care*, and *support services*. These four areas were also ranked highest among the sub-groups, with the exception of *crime and violence*, which ranked higher among those 65 years of age or older.

Table B12: Neighborhood needs

Answer Options	No problem	Very small problem	Small problem	Moderate problem	Big problem
Basic needs, such as food, shelter, and transportation	34.3%	18.4%	19.1%	16.5%	11.7%
Crime and violence, including gangs and domestic abuse	26.5%	22.9%	16.6%	15.2%	18.9%
Education, including adult literacy and preschool	30.9%	20.9%	21.0%	16.8%	10.4%
Health care, including getting to see a doctor, mental health, and drug abuse rehabilitation	22.0%	17.3%	19.6%	20.2%	20.9%
Support services, including child care for working families, mentors for youth, and respite care	21.6%	15.8%	21.4%	20.9%	20.3%
Youth issues, such as risky behaviors	15.3%	17.9%	21.7%	24.8%	20.3%
Employment issues such as lack of job skills, not finding a job, or vocational training	19.0%	15.6%	16.0%	21.8%	27.6%

Appendix C: Focus group summary

Focus groups and forums were used for community buy-in, to validate findings, and to provide causes and solutions. Major themes are as follows:

- Participants concurred that the four issues identified in the surveys were of most concern to them, though with varying emphasis. These issues are: financial stress (living wage, affordable housing), substance abuse among teens and adults, at-risk families (teen births and child abuse), and youth development (parental involvement and education). Several participants also noted that they were concerned about adults over age 60.
- Participants noted that it would be difficult to prioritize one issue over another as they saw the issues as interrelated.
- Throughout the focus groups, participants mentioned success stories such as starting an interest club at the high school, long-term employment, affordable housing grants, and popular youth activities. There was not a perception, however, that these were widespread or well-known. There was not a theme of building on solutions.
- Throughout the focus groups, participants mentioned that they were frustrated: frustrated with stereotypes, frustrated with trying to connect to parents, frustrated with trying to connect to at-risk youth, frustrated with trying to get citizens engaged, and frustrated with having community leaders not hear their concerns.

	Comments and Themes
Financial stress	<p><i>“Kids don’t see the value of education because there are no good jobs.”</i></p> <p><i>Lack of education causes financial stress. Cost of living puts everything in a bind.</i></p> <p><i>Fixed incomes of elders is an issue.</i></p> <p><i>Job readiness and work ethic are issues. High school students wanted opportunities to prepare them for work (internships, etc.).</i></p>

Substance abuse	<p>Peer pressure and social acceptance of substance abuse was mentioned by youth, young adults, and older adults.</p> <p>Parental involvement and activities were seen as effective strategies to combat substance abuse.</p>
Families at risk	<p>Older adults felt there had been a breakdown of families.</p>
Youth development	<p>“If you are working two jobs, there is no time to parent.”</p> <p>Participants identified that there is “nothing for kids to do.” Others mentioned that there is, but there isn’t any transportation to activities as they are not available throughout the county.</p> <p>Youth development is a long-term problem that could alleviate financial stress.</p>

Methodology

The Steering Committee identified geographic areas and targeted sectors (civic and community groups, parents, etc.). Six focus groups with almost 100 participants were held. Focus group participants were asked to validate survey results, discuss what they thought caused issues, and possible solutions. At each session, there was a moderator and either a note taker or a digital recorder. If appropriate, participants were given a \$10 gift card to thank them or a donation was made to the organization. Upon completion of the focus groups, notes were transcribed using content analysis; representative quotes were also identified.

Table C1: Focus group participation

Site and/or host	Number participating N=97
Bayou George Fire Station	5
A.D. Harris High School	22
East Bay Rotary Club	21
Lynn Haven Publix Department Managers	6
City of Springfield City Commission meeting	25
Diane Bozeman School Advisory Committee	18