United Way
of Davidson County

11 Court Square Suite 100

Lexington, North Carolina 27292

2015 Community Needs Assessment

GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.
LIVE UNITED® United Way

A letter from the United Way of Davidson County Board Chair and Needs Assessment Committee

Dear Friends,

The United Way of Davidson County, like every other United Way chapter across the country, has witnessed cataclysmic changes in economic conditions over the past fifteen years. We are evolving from being an organization that funds certain agencies into an organization that funds programs and services that have a measurable impact on issues affecting Davidson County.

The 2015 Community Needs Assessment is designed to identify current issues within our community. Over 30 community leaders were interviewed, hundreds of surveys were distributed and returned, and focus groups were conducted that enabled donors and citizens to discuss what was discovered during the interviews and in survey results.

This assessment tool will be used by the United Way of Davidson County to determine the best way to use resources to advance the common good and improve the quality of life among our citizens.

The United Way of Davidson County is also evolving into an organization that convenes and mobilizes volunteers, human service agencies, governmental groups, school systems, and others around critical community issues and needs.

It is hoped by the Needs Assessment Committee and by the Board of Directors of The United Way of Davidson County that this document will not only be useful to us, but to other individuals and organizations throughout Davidson County.

Kelly Craver, United Way Board Chair
Christy Grabus, Chair of the United Way Needs Assessment Committee
Committee Members: Lynnette Anderson, Ken Crews, George Miller, Chuck Taylor, Ray Widener

Outline of Materials

United Way of Davidson County 2015 Community Needs Assessment

Methodology

How the Community Needs Assessment

Was Conducted

Phase I: A demographic study was made of Davidson County relative to population, income, diversity, and economic realities.

Phase II: Interviews were conducted with 35 Davidson County Leaders from the fields of education, business, health care, government, social services, law enforcement, and donors.

Phase III: A community-wide public survey instrument was created online and in print form, and distributed among donors, agency clients, and through the United Way's Constant Contact Account.

Phase IV: Two Focus Groups were held, one in Lexington, and one in Thomasville, comprised of Davidson County leaders who were asked to respond to problems and opportunities that were identified and mentioned the most during Phase I and Phase II.

Phase I: Demographic Study of Who We Are As Davidson County

The Needs Assessment Committee has gathered statistics and charts that offer a summary picture of Davidson County using 2010 U.S. Census Data. The Committee has collected information related to:

Location and Geography of Davidson County
Population Trends
Population Characteristics
2010 Davidson County Population by Zip Code
Population Age, Gender, and Race Distribution

Older Adults
Percentage of Population 65 and Older
Non-English-Speaking Population
Non-English-Speaking Households in Davidson County (2010)

Children in Poverty in Davidson County
Education: High School Graduation Rates
SAT Scores – Davidson County
School Dropout Rates
Per Pupil Expenditure in Davidson County

Economy: Employment and Unemployment
Employment Shift

One person can
change **one** life

Be the ONE
SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN

United
Way

Location and Geography of Davidson County

Davidson County lies just to the west of central North Carolina in the Piedmont region of the state. The county is approximately 220 miles west of the Atlantic Ocean. The nearest metropolitan area is Winston-Salem, located 20 miles north of Davidson County. Raleigh is approximately 100 miles to the northeast, and Charlotte approximately 50 miles to the south.

Davidson County shares its western border with Davie and Rowan Counties.

Forsyth County borders Davidson County to the north, Randolph County and a small portion of Guilford County to the east, and Montgomery County to the south. There are 18 townships and municipalities, with Thomasville the most populated city and Lexington the county seat (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

Davidson County is easily accessible by major highways. Interstate 85 is the main artery connecting the county to Greensboro and Raleigh in the east and Charlotte in the south. U.S. Highway 52/N.C. Route 8 runs north–south through the center of the county, connecting Davidson County to Winston-Salem in the north and surrounding counties in the south. The main east–west artery across the county is U.S. Highway 64.

The nearest airport offering commercial passenger service is Piedmont Triad International Airport, located 30 miles north in Greensboro. Interstate 85 provides access to the Charlotte International Airport, a regional hub for US Airways, located 50 miles to the south. The Davidson County Airport serves commuter and recreational fliers.

Winston-Salem and High Point are the closest major stops on any passenger railway system; the nearest Greyhound Lines stops are in High Point and Salisbury (Office of State Budget and Management, 2012; North Carolina Division of Medical Assistance, 2010). The county land area is 552 square miles with 205 miles of paved roads. Approximately 95% of residents live within 10 miles of a four-lane highway.

With an elevation between 760 and 810 feet above sea level, Davidson County enjoys a moderate year-round climate with an average annual temperature of around 60 degrees. Average annual precipitation is around 45 inches (North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics, 2012).

Population Trends

In 2010, Davidson County had an overall population of 162,878. This was larger than the average population of peer counties and an increase of 15,632 (10.6%) people since 2000.

Davidson County experienced less growth than the state and peer counties but saw a larger increase in the median age, 40.3 years, several years older than the North Carolina and peer county median ages.

Population density was higher than the state and peer county averages and saw an increase similar to the overall population growth.

	2010			2000		
	Population	Population Density	Median Age	Population	Population Density	Median Age
Davidson County	162,878	293.8	40.3	147,246	266.7	37.1
Peer County Average	132,203	180.7	36.4	108,745	150.5	34.3
North Carolina	9,535,483	191.9	37.4	8,046,813	165.2	35.3
Source	a	b	a	a	b	a

Source: a: U.S. Census b: State Agency Data: Office of the Governor

Population Characteristics

	Age		Gender		Race and Ethnicity		
Davidson County	Percent Under 5	Percent Over 65	Percent Female	Percent Male	Percent White	Percent Non-White	Percent Hispanic Or Latino Any Race
	6.1	14.4	51.0	49.0	84.3	15.7	6.4
Peer County Average	7.4	12.5	50.7	49.3	74.5	25.5	10.1
North Carolina	6.6	12.9	51.3	50.7	68.5	31.5	8.4

2010 Davidson County Population by Zipcode

27284
(50,548)

27127
(32,631)

27107
(45,367)

27265
(44,670)

27012
(27,577)

27295
(37,107)

27360
(44,293)

27299
(5,034)

27292
(40,834)

27239
(9,478)

28127
(7,703)

0   5   10
Miles

2010 Population by Zip Code

- 5034 - 9478
- 9479 - 27577
- 27578 - 37107
- 37108 - 45367
- 45368 - 50548
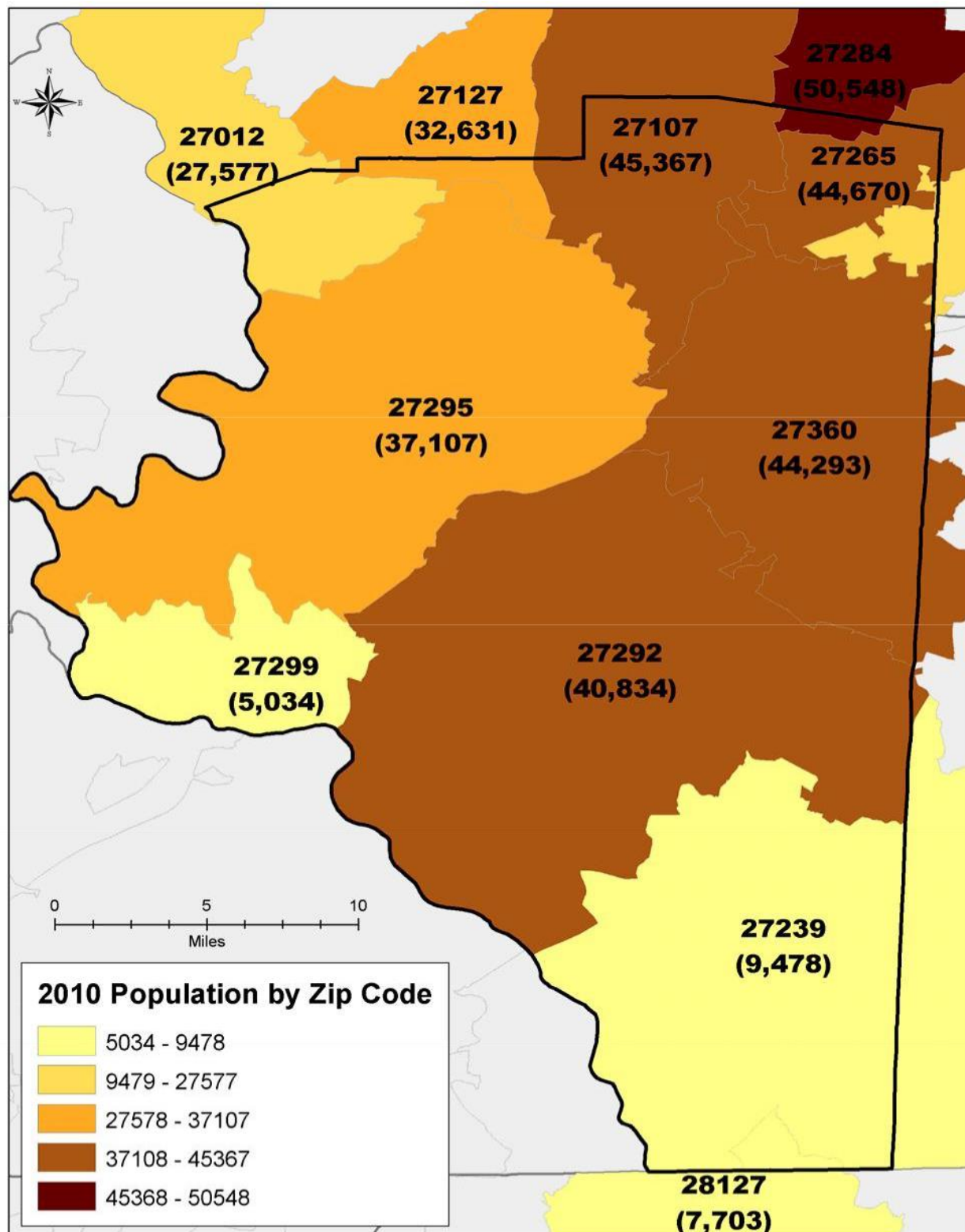
Population Age, Gender, and Race Distribution

The proportion of children under age 5 (6.1%) in Davidson County in 2010 was similar to but slightly lower than peer counties and North Carolina. Davidson County as a whole was older than the peer counties and the state—almost 15% of the population was over age 65. Gender distribution was similar across all comparable areas.

Davidson County was predominately white: Only 15.7% of people identified as any other race, significantly lower than the minority population in peer counties and North Carolina. Similarly, Davidson County had a smaller proportion of Hispanic or Latino individuals: Only 6.4% of individuals identified as Hispanic or Latino. Note that Davidson had a similar racial and ethnic profile to Randolph County, the only peer county to border Davidson. Nonetheless, these numbers were not visible in the average.

Older Adults

The median age in Davidson County is 40 years old, three years older than the state as a whole. Davidson County has an overall older population than peer counties and the state. This will have significant consequences for needs and services in the future.

Health systems and services will face increased demand as older adults comprise a large portion of individuals with chronic disease. By 2030, almost 1 in 5 Davidson County residents will be over the age of 65, a 34% increase in the age group. This projection and current proportion of older adults is significantly higher than peer counties.

Older adults play multiple roles in the community but often have limited resources to meet these demands.

Over 1,800 grandparents in Davidson County are raising grandchildren while just under half of individuals 74 and older are living at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line.

More than 1 out of 3 adults aged 65–74 are living below this threshold, which equals about $30,000 for two people.

Percentage of Population 65 and Older

	Davidson County	Peer County Average	North Carolina
2010	14.4	12.5	12.9
2030	19.3	15.95	17.6
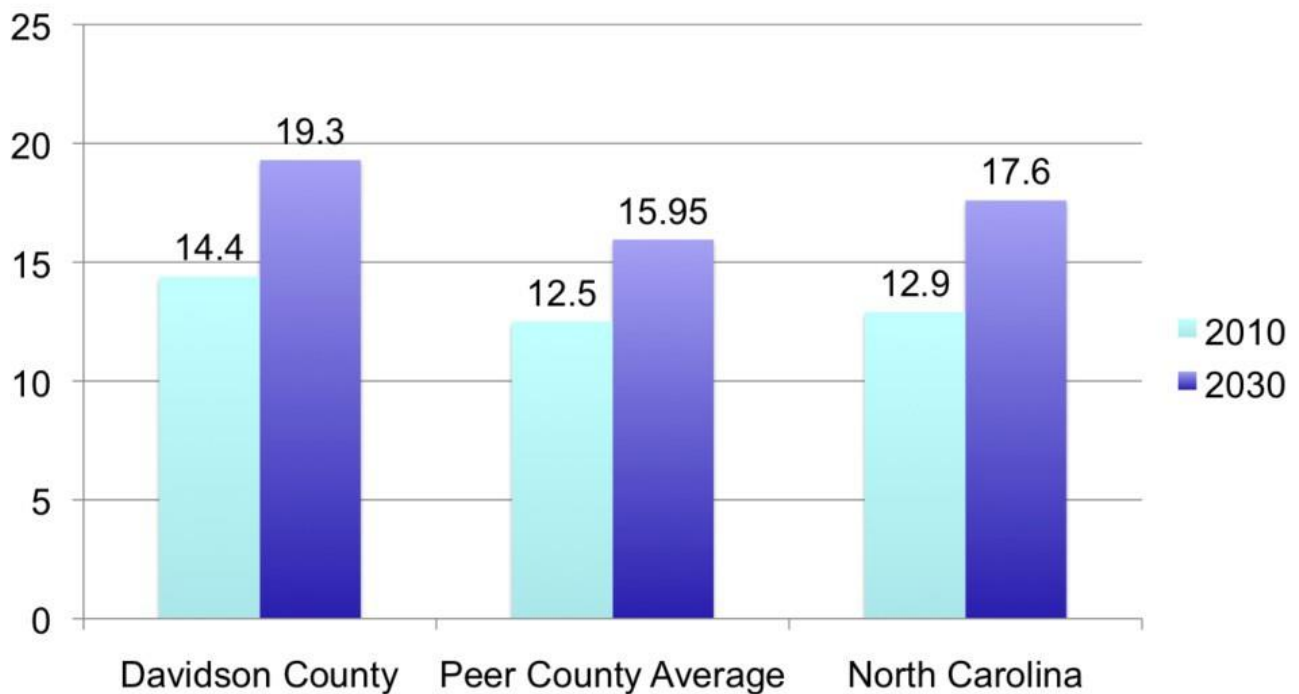
Percentage of Older Adults Living Below 200% of Poverty

	Davidson County 2010	Peer County Average	North Carolina
65-74	35.3	30.4	30
74+	49.3	47.6	42.7
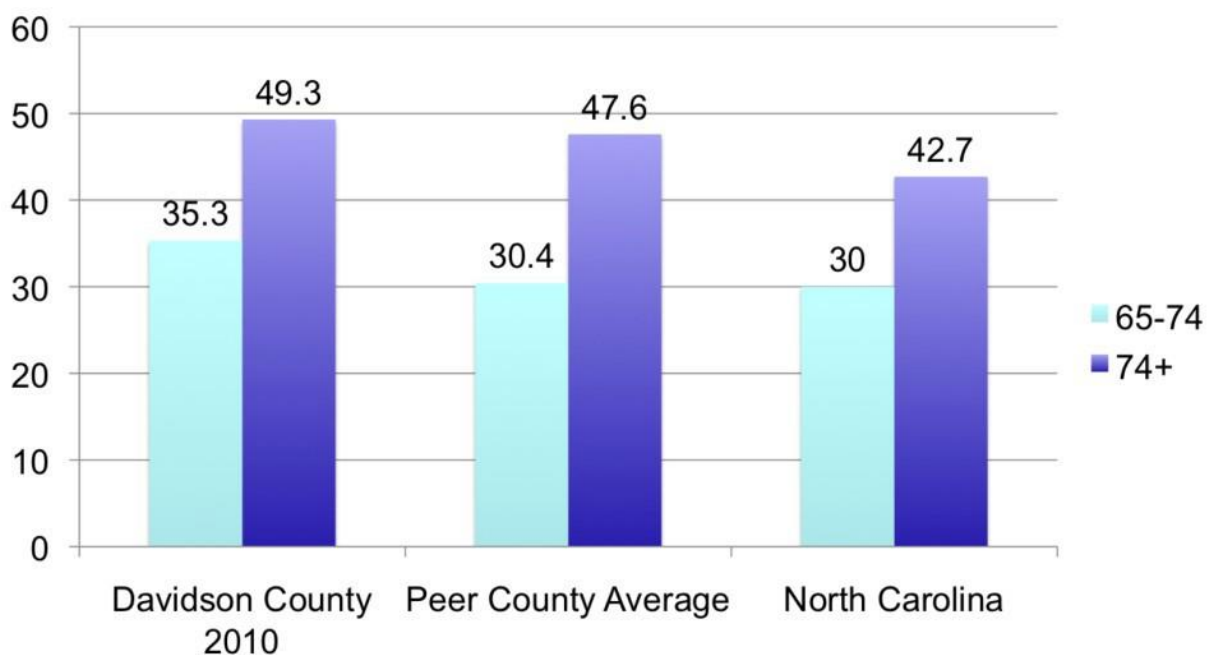
Percentage of Population Medicaid Eligible

	Davidson County	Peer County Average	North Carolina
Value	17	17	17
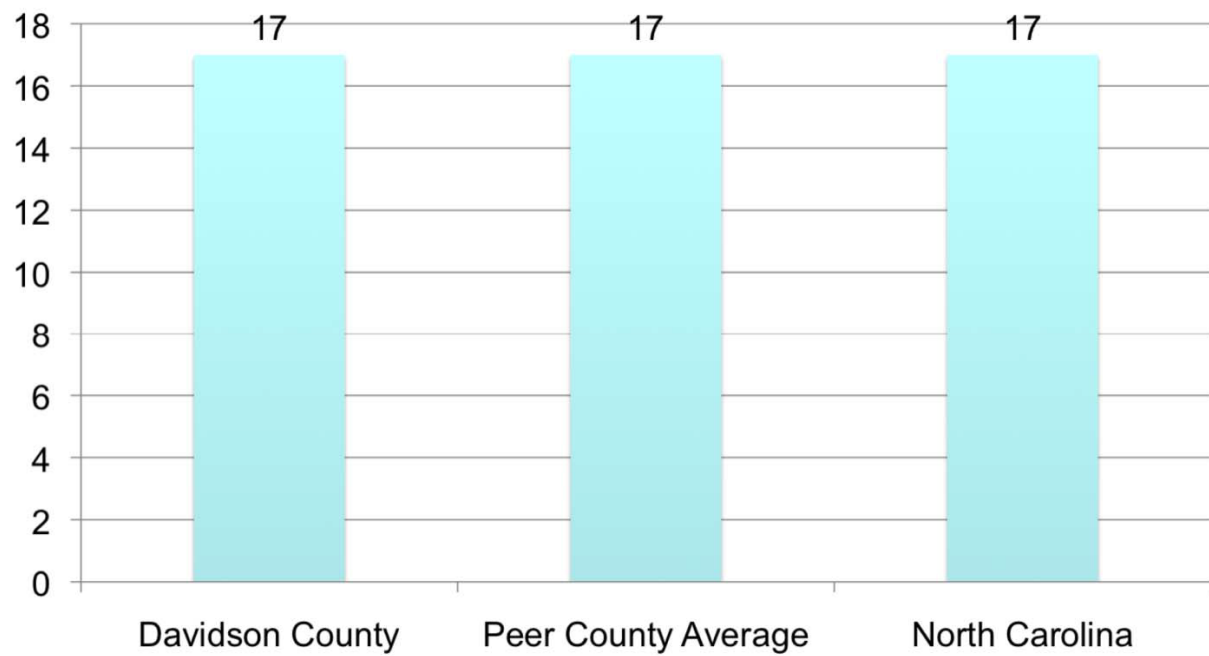
Non-English-Speaking Population

As of the 2010 Census, there were 7,349 foreign-born residents in Davidson County, making up 4.6% of the total county population. This represents a slight increase in the percentage of foreign-born Davidson county residents from the 2000 Census, when 3.5% of the population was reported as foreign-born. However, the proportion of county residents who are foreign born is still significantly less than that of the state as a whole, which reported 7.4% of North Carolina residents as foreign born in 2010.

In 2010, an estimated 7.3% of Davidson county residents five years or older spoke a language other than English at home. At the state level, 10.4% of North Carolina residents spoke a language other than English at home. Over the past decade, there has been little change in the proportion of Davidson County residents who are English speaking. In 2000, 93.2% of Davidson County households were English speaking (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census). In 2010, 92.7% of individuals in Davidson County spoke only English in their households.

The most common language spoken in the home aside from English in Davidson County is Spanish. Approximately 5.4% of Davidson County residents (8,171 persons) speak Spanish in their household, with a little more than half of these (4,189 persons) reporting that they speak English less than very well. The proportion of individuals speaking languages other than English at home in Davidson County is less than that of the state for all non-English-speaking languages.

Non-English-Speaking Households
in Davidson County (2010)

	Population > 5 Years of Age	English- Speaking Only (%)	Language other than English (%)	Speak English less than "very well" (%)
Davidson County	150,546	139,601 (92.7)	10,945 (7.3)	5,001 (3.3)
State	8,649,307	7,750,904 (89.6)	898,403 (10.4)	424,998 (4.9)
County Average	86,493	77,509	8,984	4,245

Language Spoken at Home, Davidson County

LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME	State of North Carolina	Davidson County
Spanish	601,101 (6.9%)	8,171 (5.4%)
Speak English less than "very well"	327,958 (3.8%)	4,189 (2.8%)
Other Indo-European languages	140,867 (1.6%)	979 (0.7%)
Speak English less than "very well"	34,716 (0.4%)	132 (0.1%)
Asian and Pacific Islander languages	119,684 (1.4%)	1,441 (1.0%)
Speak English less than "very well"	51,677 (0.6%)	571 (0.4%)
Other languages	36,751 (0.4%)	354 (0.2%)
Speak English less than "very well"	10,647 (0.1%)	109 (0.1%)

Children in Poverty in Davidson County

The number of children living in poverty in Davidson County has markedly increased since 2008, when 7,256 children (19.9%) lived at or below the poverty line. In 2010, 10,015 children were living in poverty or 26.3% of all children living in the county.

The percentage of children living in poverty has also increased statewide during the same time period, though Davidson County had a slightly higher percentage of children living in poverty than the state in 2010.
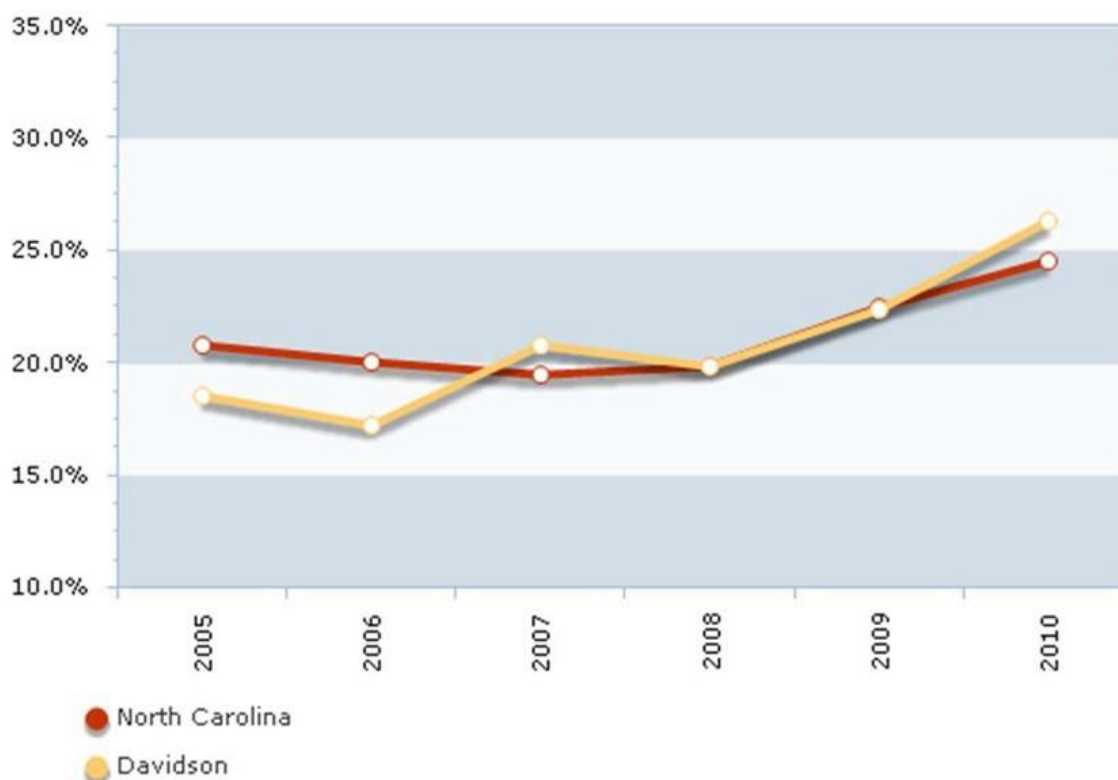
Children in Poverty (Percent) – 2005 to 2010

KIDS COUNT Data Center, www.kidscount.org/datacenter
A Project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation

Education

The three school systems in the county include Davidson County Schools (18 elementary, 7 high, 7 middle, 1 extended day school, and 1 ungraded special school), Lexington City Schools (7 schools), and Thomasville City Schools (4 schools) for a total of 45 schools in the county.

High School Graduation Rates

The four-year high school graduation rate captures the percentage of high school students who graduate from high school four years after starting ninth grade. For 2010– 2011, 78.7% of Davidson County students graduated high school in four years. This rate is consistent with peer counties and the state, all of which are significantly lower than the Healthy NC 2020 target of 94.6%.

	Davidson County 2010-2011	Peer County Average	North Carolina
Graduation Rate	78.7	78.8	77.9
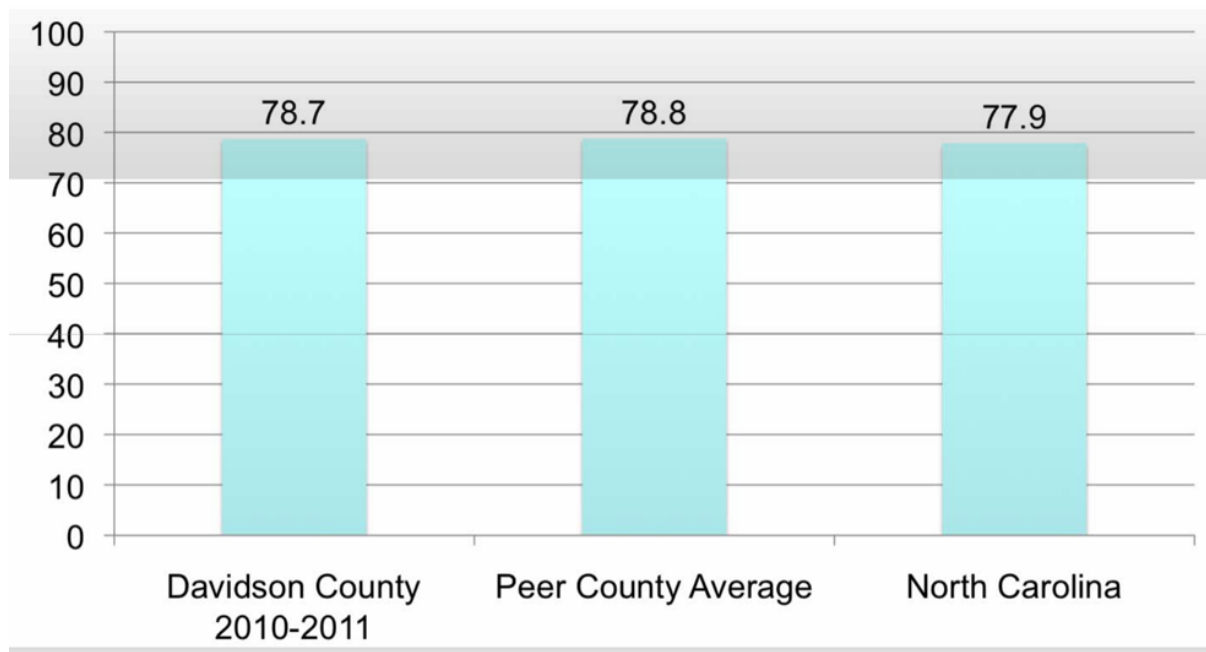
SAT Scores - Davidson County

The mean SAT scores (math plus critical reading score) of students in the Davidson County school district have closely tracked the statewide mean between 2008 and 2011.

The mean score in the Davidson County school district in 2011 dropped below 1,000 but the statewide mean dropped by a similar amount that year. Mean SAT scores in the Lexington and Thomasville City school districts were significantly lower than the statewide mean between 2008 and 2011. While Thomasville City schools reported a steady decline in mean SAT scores over the period, Lexington City schools saw an increase in their mean score from 873 in 2010 to 899 in 2011.

SAT Trends, Davidson County (2008-2011)
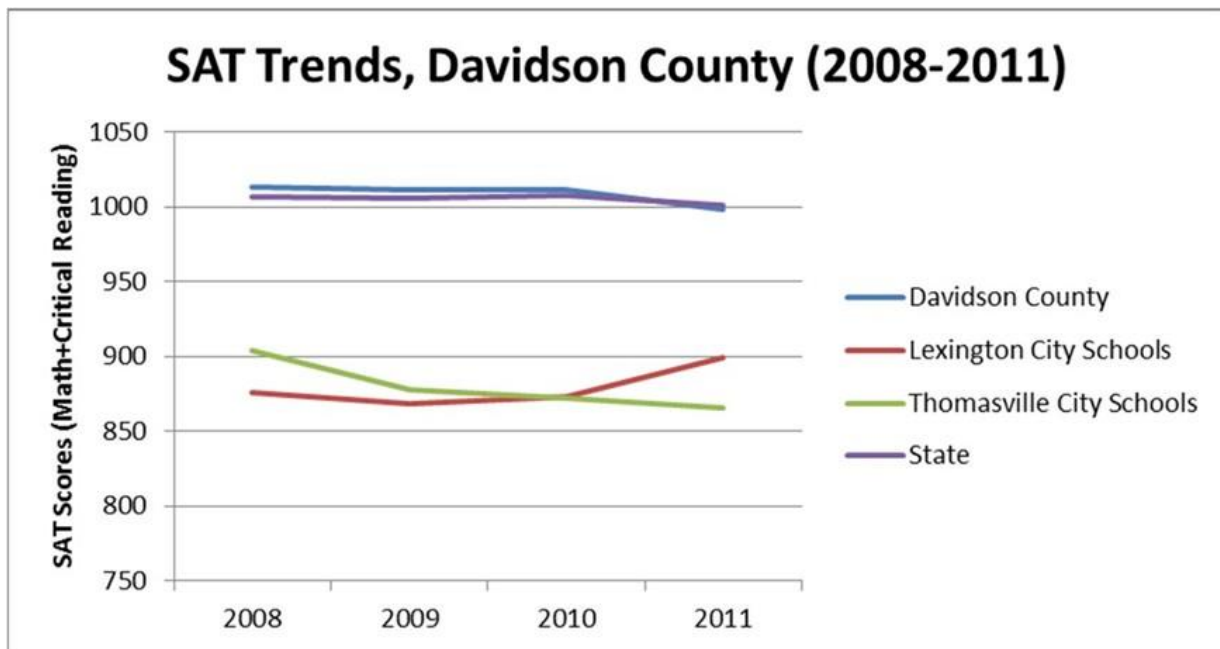
School Dropout Rates

The number of Davidson County School district dropouts in 7th to 13th grades has steadily declined over the past several years.

The much smaller Thomasville and Lexington City school districts have hovered around 40 dropouts per year. Thomasville City schools have seen a slight uptick in the number of dropouts from 29 in 2005 to 42 in 2010.

School Dropout Trends (7th-13th Grades), Davidson County
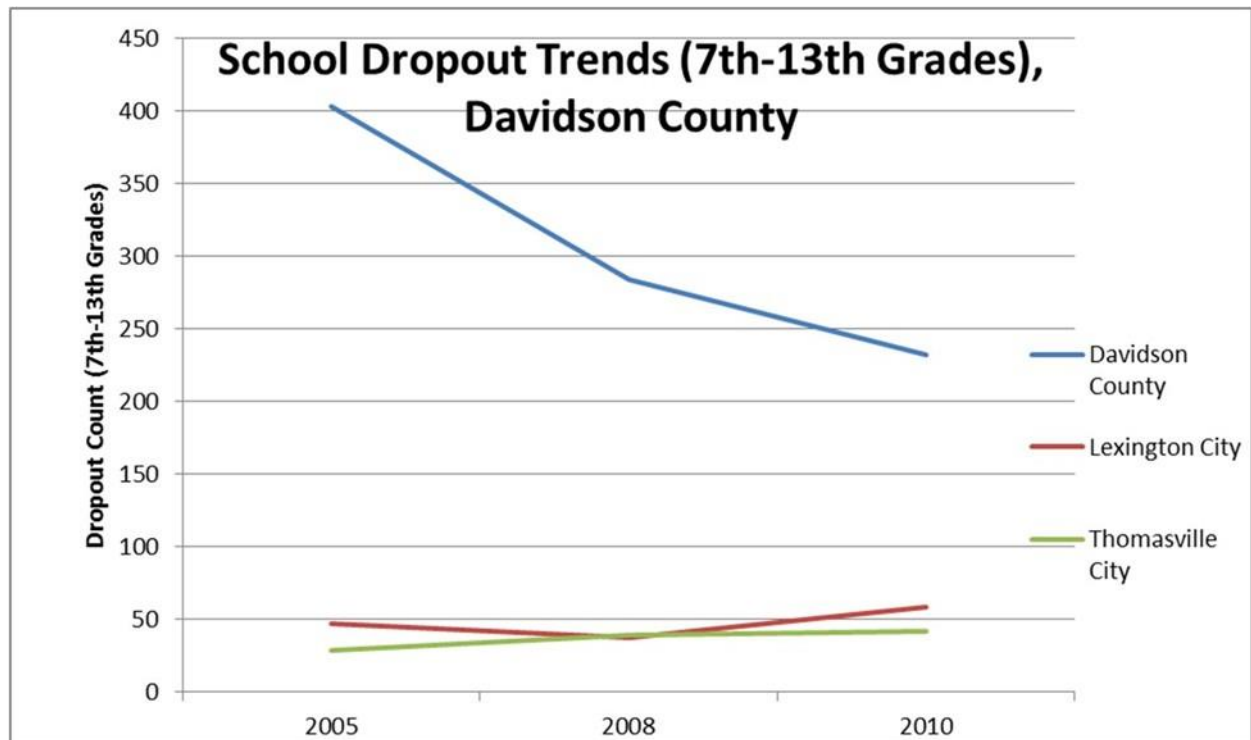
Per Pupil Expenditure in Davidson County

The per pupil expenditure for Davidson County public schools in 2010 and 2011 was $4,928 as compared to the statewide expenditure of $5,156 per pupil.

This ranks the Davidson County schools as 100 out of 116 local education authorities in per pupil expenditures that year.

Per Pupil Expenditure (PPE), Davidson County,(2010-2011)
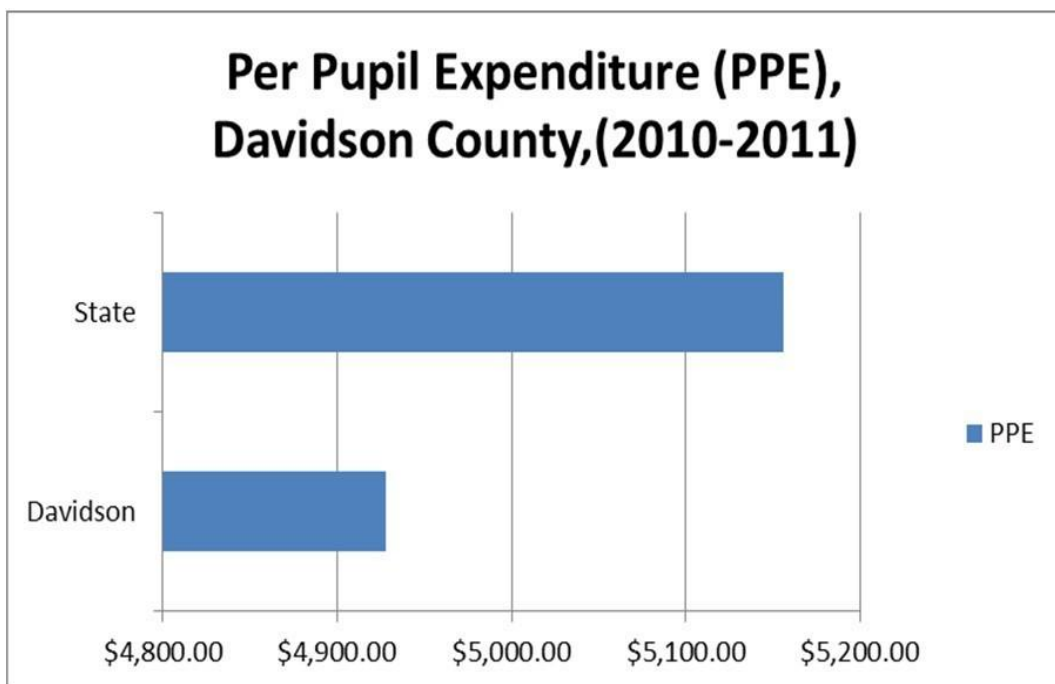
Economy

In 2010, Davidson County per capita income was less than the state average and this gap has not significantly changed since 2000. However, Davidson County's median household income exceeded the state median in 2010.

	2000		2010	
	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income
Davidson	$38,692	$18,703	$44,249	22,268
State of North Carolina	$39,190	$20,307	$42,941 (2011)	23,955 (2011– projected)

Employment and Unemployment

Davidson County experienced negative employment growth (i.e., job losses) in 2008 and 2009, which exceeded State totals. These job losses were reversed in the 2010– 2011 period and were consistent with a trend of slow positive job growth seen statewide.

Davidson County Annual Employment Growth (2008-2010)

Percent Change from the Previous Year

County	2008	2009	2010	2011
Davidson	-3.2	-6.4	0.5	1.4
State Total	0.0	-4.6	0.6	1.3

Employment Shift

Davidson County is in the process of an employment shift from primarily manufacturing to education and health services industries. The decline of the furniture industry in particular has resulted in a significant drop in manufacturing jobs within the county. Davidson County Schools are the largest county employer and are the only employer in the county to employ more than 1,000 workers. Notably, manufacturers such as Thomasville Furniture and Ellison Windows and Doors employed more than 1,000 workers in the middle part of the last decade but no longer are within the top 10 places of employment within the county.

Annual unemployment rates in Davidson County rose sharply during the period reaching a peak of 13% in 2009. While the rates of unemployment in the county have exceeded state rates every year in the 2006–2011 time periods, the gap between the rates has been on a downward trend since 2009. In April 2012, the unemployment rate in the county dipped into single digits (9.8%) for the first time since 2008.

Davidson County Annual Unemployment Rate (2006-2011)

County	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Davidson	5.8	5.6	7.2	13.0	12.9	11.6
State Total	4.8	4.8	6.3	10.5	10.9	10.5

Phase II: The Leadership Interviews

Interviews were conducted with 35 Davidson County Leader from the fields of education, business, health care, government, social services, law enforcement, and donors.

The Leadership Interviews were conducted by the members of the United Way of Davidson County's Needs Assessment Committee from February-October 2014.

Those leaders who were interviewed were asked, from their   work perspective, to list and discuss 2-3 major problems/opportunities that were being dealt with on a regular basis.

The leaders were also asked, using their perspective as Davidson County citizens, to list and discuss 1-2 other problems that Davidson County will be dealing with for the next 5-10 years.

United Way of Davidson County
Davidson County Leaders Interviewed

Susan Craig, Davidson County DSS
Jen Hames, Davidson County Health Department
Dale Moorefield, Davidson County DSS
Monecia Thomas, Davidson County Health Department

Joe Bennett, Thomasville City Mayor
Newell Clark, Lexington City Mayor
Larry Potts, Davidson County Commissioners Chair

Alan Carson, Lexington City Manager
Kelly Craver, Thomasville City Manager
Robery Hyatt, Davidson County Manager
Ray Widener, Thomasville Police Department
Tad Kepley, Lexington Police Chief
Jim Tysinger, HR Director for Davidson County

Tammy Bush, Southmont School Principal
Rick Kriesky, Lexington City Schools Superintendent
Maria Pitre-Martin, Thomasville City Schools Superintendent
Lory Morgan, Davidson County Schools Superintendent
Mary Rittling, DCCC President
Fred Mock, Former DC Schools Superintendent

Bill James, President, Lexington Medical Center WFBH
Kathie Johnson, Thomasville Medical Center Novant

Christy and Tim Grabus
Darrell and Deborah McNeill
Robin and Katherine Team
Paula and Mike Turlington

Doug Croft, Thomasville Chamber of Commerce CEO
Burr Sullivan, Lexington Chamber of Commerce CEO

Captain Les and Mary Ashby, Salvation Army of DC
Ryan Jones, Executive Director, CIS Lexington/Davidson County
Teresa McKeon, Executive Director, The ARC of Davidson County
Beth Rummage, Executive Director, The Life Center of Davidson County
Julia Toone, Executive Director, Family Services of Davidson County
Judy Younts, Executive Director, CIS Thomasville

Jack Davis, Student
Dr. Katherine Clark, Primary Care Physician
Bill Mills, Attorney
Dr. Karrie Stansfield, Pediatrician
Rev. Sarah Snell, Chaplain
Rev. Tommy Wilson, Pastor

Interviews with Davidson County Leaders
Top Ten Problems Mentioned Most Often

1. Issues related to the economy: poverty, job loss, job growth.

2. Access to affordable health care, mental health services, and access to affordable medications.

3. Upgrading education: concern about drop-out rates, making sure children are fed in preparation for learning, negative forces that make learning difficult.

4. Providing for the basic necessities of life for children and adults: food, clothing, rent assistance, assistance with utilities.

5. The misuse of prescription and other drugs: the concern is that people are not taking medications they are supposed to take, and others are taking medications they are not supposed to take.

6. Issues around multi-culturalism including an increase in the Hispanic population and racial injustice.

7. Families in crisis: issues related to violence, spousal and child abuse, delinquency, etc.

8. Transportation Issues: Not enough options for people who do not have transportation to doctor's offices, grocery/drug stores, etc. The current county transportation system is wonderful, but needs to be expanded.

9. Problems related to an aging population including transportation, health care, medications related to the elderly, Medicare and Medicaid issues.

10. Other issues mentioned a number of times include obesity in schools and within the community, homelessness, and the offering of more activities for children and young people after school and in the summer.

Phase III: The Survey Instrument

A community-wide public Survey Instrument was created online and in print form, and distributed among donors, agency clients, and through the United Way's Constant Contact Account.

The Survey Instrument was publicized within the Davidson County community during July and August of 2014 using Media, Board, and Agency contacts.

The Survey Instrument was "live" online during September of 2014. It was also printed and distributed to agencies so any and all clients could have input relative to the most critical problems/opportunities that will be affecting Davidson County over the next 5-10 years.

UNDERNEATH EVERYTHING WE ARE, UNDERNEATH EVERYTHING WE DO, WE ARE ALL PEOPLE. CONNECTED, INTERDEPENDENT, UNITED. AND WHEN WE REACH OUT A HAND TO ONE, WE INFLUENCE THE CONDITION OF ALL. THAT'S WHAT IT MEANS TO LIVE UNITED.

LIVE UNITED

The Survey Instrument
Introductory Page Online

Our United Way is trying to determine how United Way dollars will be spent over the next 5-8 years. We need your input and response.

This Community Needs Assessment Survey will enable us to determine what areas of concern we need to fund, how partnerships might help with these problems and opportunities, and how our United Way Board of Directors can enable us all to make a positive impact in the life of Davidson County citizens with special needs.

The Survey Instrument

Page 2
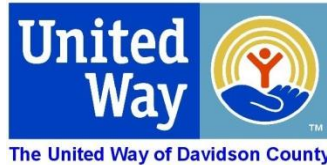
United Way of Davidson County Needs Assessment Survey

* Required Question

Please list five of the wonderful things about living in Davidson County. What are our strengths?

2. Please list five things you would like to see the United Way fund over the next five years.

Assist people with food, clothing, utilities, rental assistance, etc. during times of need.

Help prevent juvenile delinquency and other youth problems by using adult role models, tutoring, and counseling for at-risk youth.

Provide accessible and affordable day care for older adults.

Provide for those in special populations – the deaf and hard of hearing – those with physical and intellectual challenges and those with developmental difficulties.

Provide prescription drug medications, medical and dental services to those with low incomes, and who are un/under insured.

Provide for disaster preparedness and relief, including blood services.

Help prevent and treat domestic violence, including spouse, child and elderly abuse.

Provide emergency medical assistance and rescue services during medical/rescue emergencies.

Provide care for & support people with AIDS & who are HIV-positive.

Provide treatment programs for substance abuse and drug dependency problems.

Provide financial assistance, emotional support, equipment, etc. for cancer patients and their families.

Programs that provide safe, affordable housing or home repairs for low-income people.

Programs that provide medical, emotional, social, and spiritual support for those with a terminal illness and their families.

Programs that deliver well-balanced meals to older adults, those who are convalescing, and to those with physical disabilities who live at home.

The Survey Instrument

Page 3

Deal with the problem of prescription drug abuse by children and adults.

Work on the problem of obesity in our schools and in the community.

Provide affordable and accessible childcare at times needed.

Provide interpretive services and encourage access to other programs and employment for those who do not speak English.

Make sure children are prepared socially and academically before they start school.

Making sure children in school are prepared to meet each day, they have enough heat, food at home, living in a healthy environment, etc.

Assist people and re-train people who have been affected by massive furniture and other job loss in Davidson County.

Help foster tolerance and deal with the rich variety of cultures, backgrounds, races, and languages in Davidson County.

Help foster cooperation with the business community to provide more than "service" jobs in Davidson County, i.e., technical and other higher-paying jobs.

Provide for those in our community who are aging – issues related to Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, food needs for the elderly, etc.

Provide services and assistance to those in Davidson County who are homeless.

Provide after-school recreation and tutoring programs for youth who need adult supervision and guidance.

Programs that provide scouting opportunities for at-risk youth in Davidson County.

Comments:

3. Are there issues or concerns we have not included in the above list?

The Survey Instrument

Page 4

4. Please feel free to share comments or suggestions here.

5. This information is optional.

First Name _____

Last Name _____

Company Name _____

Work Phone _____

Email Address _____

Address 1 _____

City _____

State _____

Postal Code _____

Finish

Top 10 Problems Listed - Online Responses

Top 10 Problems Listed in the 2014 Public Survey – 341 Online Responses

1. Basic necessities, food, clothing, rent, utilities.

2. Preventing and treating domestic violence.

3. Mentoring and tutoring at-risk youth to prevent problems.

4. Meals-on-wheels programs.

5. Assist and train people who have been affected by job loss in Davidson County.

6. Provide services to those who are homeless.

7. Provide services to those who are aging, food needs, etc.

8. Provide prescription medication, medical/dental services to the un/under-insured.

9. Provide financial and emotional support for cancer patients.

10. Provide affordable day care for older adults.

Least Mentioned Six (6) in the 2014 Public Survey – 341 Online Responses

Support for HIV/Aids Patients	(11)
Disaster Relief and Preparedness	(36)
Scouting programs for at-risk youth	(38)
Prescription drug abuse	(42)
Obesity in schools and community	(51)
Providing rescue services/emergencies	(54)

Top 10 Problems Listed - Paper Responses

Top 10 Problems Listed in the 2014 Public Survey – 124 PAPER Responses

1.   Basic necessities, food, clothing, rent, utilities.

2.   Provide prescription medication, medical/dental services to the un/under-insured.

3.   Mentoring and tutoring at-risk youth to prevent problems.

4.   Provide safe, affordable housing and home repairs for low-income people.

5.   Preventing and treating domestic violence.

6.   Provide affordable day care for older adults.

7.   Provide for those in special populations/deaf, physical/developmental difficulties.

8.   Treatment for substance abuse and drug dependency problems.

9.   Provide emergency medical assistance and rescue services during emergencies.

10.   Treatment for prescription drug abuse by children and adults.

Least Mentioned Six (6) in the 2014 Public Survey – 124 PAPER Responses

Scouting programs for at-risk youth   (2)

Provide programs for those who are aging   (6)

Provide services for those who are homeless   (10)

Assist and retrain those affected by job loss   (11)

Support for HIV/Aids Patients   (15)

Disaster Relief and Preparedness   (17)

Top 10 Problems Identified When Combining Leadership Interviews and the Public Survey Results

1. Providing for the basic necessities – food, clothing, rent, and utilities assistance.

2. Issues related to the Davidson County economy for the past 10 years; poverty, school children coming to school hungry, families in a crisis and/or survival mode.

3. Upgrading education; including mentoring, tutoring, drop-out rate concerns, and alleviating negative forces that make learning difficult.

4. Providing prescription medication, medical/dental care, and mental health services to the un/under-insured.

5. Preventing and treating domestic violence.

6. Assisting/training people who've been affected by job loss in Davidson County.

7. Providing services to the aging, adult day care, meals-on-wheels, other food needs.

8. Treatment for substance abuse, misuse of prescription medications, and drug dependency problems.

9. Providing safe, affordable housing and home repairs for those with low incomes.

10. Concern for those in special populations; those who are deaf or hard of hearing, the homeless, those with physical or developmental difficulties.

Phase IV: The Focus Groups

Two Focus Groups were held in November of 2014, one in Lexington, and one in Thomasville, comprised of Davidson County leaders who were asked to respond to problems/opportunities that were identified and mentioned the most during Phase II (Leadership Interviews), and Phase III (The Survey Instrument).

The Focus Groups were facilitated by taylortrain—Taylor Training and Development, Inc., of Lexington, North Carolina. Findings and results were shared with United Way staff in December of 2014.

Needs Assessment Focus Groups
Methodology

The United Way of Davidson County created and conducted a Community Needs Assessment through surveys and personal interviews of Davidson County leaders in 2014. These interviews and surveys sought to identify the most critical human service needs in Davidson County.

The data was tabulated by the staff of the United Way. As part of the discovery process, TaylorTrain of Lexington, North Carolina, was engaged to conduct two Focus Groups from around the county to review and respond to the survey data.

Focus Groups of approximately 1.5 hours in length were conducted in Lexington and Thomasville, at the respective Chambers of Commerce.

On November 3, 2014, ten participants met in Lexington. On November 10, 2014 seven participants gathered in Thomasville. All participants were given the same information. The information packets included: Background, Purpose, Rules of Engagement, Copies of Data Collection Instruments, Data Tabulations and Stated Questions.

Meetings were begun with an icebreaker that encouraged participants to share what they saw as the most human service critical needs for United Way to fund over the next five years. Answers, as recorded in the meeting summaries, varied widely reflecting the inherent difficulty in identifying this county's most urgent needs.

After the Focus Groups were held, TaylorTrain presented documents to the United Way of Davidson County that reported on the findings of the two Focus Groups. The documents included:

1. Summary Report from the November 3, 2014 Lexington Focus Group

2. Summary Report from the November 10, 2014 Thomasville Focus Group

3. An Executive Summary Report from the two Focus Groups

4. Accompanying data relative to the conducting of the Focus Groups

UNITED WAY OF DAVIDSON COUNTY
FOCUS GROUP AGENDA
NOVEMBER 3, 2014
7:00pm-8:30pm
Lexington Chamber of Commerce/Thomasville Chamber of Commerce

Greeting and Welcome

"What's in Your Wallet?"

Our Background, Purpose and Rules of Engagement

Data Collection Instruments

Survey (online, paper)

Face-To-Face Interview Questions

Looking at the Data

Tabulation of raw data

Tabulation of compiled data

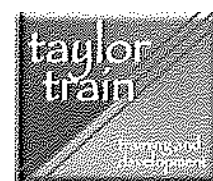Tabulation of comparative data

Focus Group Question:

"How do leader Responses inform the Comparative Survey Bar Chart?"

Review "Top 10 Problems Identified When Combining Leadership Interviews and the Public Survey Results"

Discussion of 'Big 4' Questions

Wrap-Up

Adjournment

Focus Groups Background, Purpose, and Rules of Engagement

Background

The United Way of Davidson County is currently working on an internal Community Needs Assessment. The Assessment is composed of 4 parts:

1. Interviews with Davidson County Leaders.

2. A Public Survey instrument completed online (341 responses) and paper (124 responses).

3. A Demographic study of Davidson County, relative to income, health, and education.

4. Two Focus Groups, both of which will affirm, add to, or make suggested edits to information discovered during the leadership Interviews and the Public Survey.

D. Lee Jessup, Jr.,TaylorTrain Meeting - October 27, 2014

PURPOSE

*"*The purpose of these Focus Group meetings will be to discuss the "key findings document" in a public forum. Focus group members will discuss and respond to the document, reacting to what problems have been names thus far, and recording any additional problems named during focus group discussions."

Community Needs Assessment Meeting - July 28, 2014

ROE (Rules of Engagement)

The Nature of a Focus Group:

Used to discuss a specific issue with help of a moderator.

Does not simply aim to reach consensus on discussed issues.

Rather, is utilized to encourage a range of responses which provide a greater understanding of attitudes, behaviors, opinions or perceptions of participants on the research issues.

Offers a permissive, non-threatening environment where participants can feel comfortable to discuss their opinions and experiences without fear that they will be judged or ridiculed by others in the group.

Provides an environment where everyone's voice and opinions are considered valid and valuable.

Strives for a balance of time allotted to all participants.

Other:

Information is confidential; no names will be used without permission. This session will be recorded for moderator's recording purposes only; this will not be shared with anyone side of this room.

Focus Groups Questions
Concerning Davidson County Leadership Interviews

Section I: Interviews with Key Leadership in Davidson County

Face-to-face Interviews were conducted with Davidson County Leaders who because of their position in the community have their finger on the pulse of human service needs in Davidson County.

Interviews were conducted with school superintendents, hospital leadership, governmental leadership, social services leadership, donors, and agency leaders. From these interviews, a list of issues and concerns was generated.

Leaders were asked the following questions:

1. From your perspective in terms of what you do professionally, what are two or three social or "human need" problems that Davidson County will be facing over the next 5-10 years?

2. As a citizen, are there other issues/problems that need to be addressed by the United Way, governments, hospitals, non-profits, school systems, etc. over the next 5-10 years?
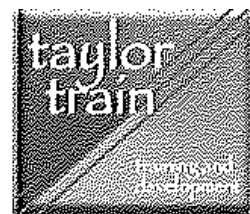
Focus Groups
Questions for Small Group Discussion

1.　Did the Leadership Interviews and/or Survey name ALL the human service problems we have here in Davidson County?　　　YES, NO

2.　Are there problems not identified by the Interviews or the Survey?　YES, NO
　　If so, please name:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3.　Are the Top 10 (Combined) Problems stated clearly enough?　　YES, NO

4.　Are there edits or changes you would make in the Top 10 listing? (i.e. - are only six indicated? Is twelve what we need?)

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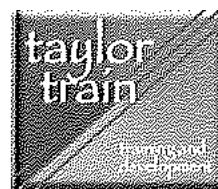
UNITED WAY FOCUS GROUP - LEXINGTON

NOVEMBER 3, 2014 SUMMARY

We began our Focus Group session by asking participants to list one to three critical needs they see facing Davidson County in the next 5 years. These were written on a post-it note which was then placed on a poster. The lady who led off the discussion prefaced her list by saying [what I believe would become the overall theme and outcome of the evening], "We need **collaboration, shared resources and shared ideas**. I think this [Focus Group] is leading to that, and I'm happy to see the path that it's taking."

With the exception of two, *each of the 15 critical needs* that ranked in the Top 10 on the On-line Survey and Paper Survey were mentioned at least once. The Focus Group distribution is listed below.

Access to affordable health care, mental health services and affordable medications	7
Providing for basic necessities: food, clothing, rent/utilities assistance	5
Mentoring and tutoring at-risk youth/addressing drop-out rates	2
Meals-on-wheels programs/hunger among seniors	2
Issues related to the economy: poverty, job loss, job growth	2
Provide services to the homeless	2
Problems related to the aging population incl. health care, medications, etc.	2
Provide treatment programs for substance abuse and drug dependency problems	2
Families in crisis: issues related to violence, spousal and child abuse, delinquency	1
Programs that provide safe, affordable housing or home repairs for low-income people	1
Special populations – deaf, physical & intellectual challenges & developmental difficulties	1
Problem of prescription drug abuse	1
Other:	
Education – esp. better early childhood	5
Recreation facility for our youth	1

The two needs that were listed in the surveys but **not** among the Focus Group are:

-- Provide financial and emotional support for cancer patients

-- Provide emergency medical assistance and rescue services during medical/rescue emergencies

Also note that "education" was mentioned by *5 participants (50% of the group),* but we discovered and uncovered as the night went on, they did not mean education in the traditional "readin' writin' & 'rithmatic" sense of the word!

Participants were then given a comparison summary of Top 10 list from each of the Surveys (On-line and Paper) and the Leaders' Responses. Some interesting comments around this include:

"Transportation always comes up as an issue among service providers but it doesn't come up as an issue with the public. I wonder if we're barking up the wrong tree."

"I'm surprised they didn't line up better – I don't mean the order. On the paper survey version, there are 5 things that are in the Top 10 that are not in the on-line version. I wouldn't think there'd be that much of a miss-match."

 "I am very surprised that the Community Leaders' comments didn't mention substance abuse. They did mention prescription meds, but that's a whole different issue than drug/heroin abuse."

"I'm surprised that the Paper Surveys don't mention jobs and the economy at all."

"Well, they're not looking at the big picture; they're just looking at 'are my lights going to be turned off tonight?'"

Marilyn introduces a diagram of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, indicating this could explain some of the differences in the lists and the priorities.

One of the participants sighed, perhaps feeling a little discouraged, "As a leader working with an agency, I'm not sure we're on the right track. What WE think the public needs, the public's not agreeing.

The participants began seeing the scope and magnitude of the critical needs facing our county and the daunting tasks facing the United Way. Before allowing them to go too far, Marilyn shared a few comments from a recent meeting with United Way's Lee Jessup; "There are a lot of worthy, needed, even critical things out there that people need to pay attention to and support – **THAT DOESN'T NECESSARILY MAKE THEM A UNITED WAY CANDIDATE**. We're not judging any critical needs' worthiness, but rather what are the best areas to focus our time and money on in the next 5 years?"

I believe this comment gave the group a different perspective and renewed energy to continue pondering the task before them.

Next, participants were given a bar graph to show the _percentage of responses_ from the survey to each critical need. This allowed more of an "apples-to-apples" comparison. The following comments were noted:

"The red (Paper Survey responses) feel more strongly about things – the blue are scattered across more needs." Note that 80% of the Paper Survey Responders listed "Providing for the basic necessities of life for children and adults: food, clothing, rent assistance, assistance with utilities" as a critical need. A second critical need, "Access to affordable health care, mental health services and access to affordable medications" also received more than 50% (53.2%).

It was noted that **all blue bars** (On-line Survey responses) **were below the 50% mark**. i.e. There was not one critical need that received votes from more than half the respondents. One gentleman noted, "This just shows that there are a lot of problems and everyone rates them in their own way. There will certainly be more diverse answers because the responses are from a more diverse group. It would be interesting to see how the needs ranked if you combined the survey numbers."

(This was done following the meeting, and the results are listed below. Note that there seems to be a more clearly defined "Top 3" or maybe "Top 4" that received votes from more than 35% of the respondents. The 16 other "critical needs" received votes by less than 30% of respondents.)

SCHEDULE OF COMBINED ON-LINE AND PAPER SURVEY RESPONSES RANKED IN ORDER

A. Providing for the basic necessities of life: food, clothing, rent assistance, assistance with utilities	268	57.5%	1
B. Mentoring and tutoring at-risk youth to prevent problems	199	42.7%	2
G. Families in crisis; issues related to violence, spousal and child abuse, 195 delinquency, etc.	41.8%		3
E. Access to affordable health care, mental health services, and access to affordable medications	163	35.0%	4
C. Provide affordable day care for older adults	138	29.6%	5
N. Meals-on-wheels programs	133	28.5%	6
Q. Issues related to the economy: poverty, job loss, job growth	120	25.8%	7
L. Programs that provide safe, affordable housing or home repairs for	120	25.8%	8
D. Provide for those in special populations – deaf, physical & intellectual challenges and those with developmental difficulties	119	25.5%	9
S. Provide services to those who are homeless	118	25.3%	10

Marilyn then asked how this could be reconciled with what the Leaders are saying.

The #1 critical need identified by the Community Leaders was "Issues related to the economy: poverty, job loss and job growth. While these are critical needs of our County, they should be addressed by organizations in the city and county that are in place for the purpose of attracting and retaining businesses to our area. This is not an area that the United Way should focus their energy and efforts."

One female commented: "I'm not sure they can be reconciled other than maybe #2 (health care). I tend to put more emphasis on what the public says than what the agencies say because they have a better indication of their real needs. I think more weight needs to go to the paper responses."

Then, someone made another comment that I believe best stated the problem everyone was grappling with: "I have a little different view than what she just said about the importance of the clients' needs. If you focus only on what the public says, well, they're talking about their issues here and now and how to cope with those issues. Leaders would like to see the next generation avoid those problems, so they would naturally say that education would solve many of these issues: poverty, substance abuse, homelessness, crime, etc. So I would say that United Way should spend time and money around education, starting with pre-school. I think you need to listen to the public – you have to address the people's needs, but you also have to listen to the Leaders who say, 'We can do better with the next generation.'"

"It's a Catch-22 – you're not going to get them educated until you take care of their homelessness and poverty (hunger), but without education, you can't get out of poverty, so you really need to address both."

I believe from these two comments comes a 2-pronged approach to addressing the needs facing Davidson County and the United Way: Yes, we need to throw them a life line (meet/fund their immediate needs for food, shelter and safety), but we also need to teach them how to swim (educate).

In the final third of the session, participants broke into small groups to discuss the following questions:

1. Did the Leadership Interviews and/or Survey name ALL the human service problems we have here in Davidson County?

2. Are there problems not identified by the Interviews or the Survey? If so, please name.

3. Are the Top 10 (Combined) Problems stated clearly enough?

4. Are there edits or changes you would make in the Top 10 listing? (i.e. – are only six indicated? Is twelve what we need?)

Responses:

Overall, the groups felt that all major areas were reasonable identified and represented in some way, although it was mentioned that the problems are more significant than those addressed. Some problems that were not identified by the Interviews or Survey include:

a. Single parents/teen pregnancy

b. Injury prevention

c. Communicable diseases

d. Homeless – unidentified who are living with parents or grandparents

Other items mentioned centered around the "**education prong**":

e. Skills-based work opportunities

f. Re-training people for jobs available here

g. There is a lack of understanding of how to budget/use money (on an individual/household level)

h. Education re: access to services (i.e. how do people know what assistance is available and if they qualify; also assisting parents and HS students on how to apply for college/grants/scholarships)

i. Education around home-ownership; is it feasible? Is it practical? How to go about it?

j. There are a lot of rental properties – educate or provide services for better upkeep

One of the last items mentioned was around **grant-writing**. One participant asked if United Way had a grant-writing position and wondered if all grant-writing should be under the UW umbrella rather than at the individual agencies (an "economy of scale" so to speak). Another participant, who had served with UW, said that had been looked at before, and UW felt that by keeping the grant-writing at the individual agency level, there was more autonomy and they were better able to stand on their own. Everyone agreed that this might be a good time, as the United Way is looking at changes for the future, to re-address this process.

Summary: Everyone seemed to applaud the United Way for stepping back, asking questions of the Community, and looking at this in a broad way, trying to talk about solving **ISSUES** rather than just **FUNDING NEEDS.** There was consensus that this effort would take **TEAMWORK** and **COLLABORATION**.

"We need to address the '**systemic problem'** so that we can **create a different culture** so the same problems aren't manifesting themselves over and over again in different ways, shapes and forms."

One young man, who had remained relatively quiet throughout the evening, gave us a positive note on which to end, "This goes back to the first page [list of 'positive characteristics of DC'] – although there's a lot of issues, this approach breaks the mold of how you go about trying to fix them: by just throwing money at them – that doesn't solve anything anymore. There's still one aspect you don't want to lose in a community even though times are tough – **THAT IS HOPE**. There's still this feeling of **rallying behind the TEAM** – the issue of **TEAMWORK**. That's one aspect that you always have to have to be successful."

Amy Leonard, TaylorTrain

Marilyn Taylor, TaylorTrain

Footnote: All participants agreed, if called upon, to meet again to address UW choices going forward.

UNITED WAY FOCUS GROUP - THOMASVILLE

NOVEMBER 10, 2014

Once again, we began our session by allowing participants to list 1-3 critical needs that *they* think United Way should fund over the next 5 years. Their top 2 needs (receiving 3 votes each) were "**providing for the basic necessities of life for children and adults: food, clothing, rent and utilities assistance**" and "**provide services to those who are homeless.**" The next 2 needs (receiving 2 votes each) were "**issues related to the economy: poverty, job loss, job growth**" and "**provide treatment programs for substance abuse and drug dependency problems.**"

As they pondered the post-it notes on the board, a feeling of despondency seemed to settle on the group. One participant sighed, "Well, you think about the drop-out rate and the lack of jobs, poverty, homelessness – it's just a vicious cycle." Marilyn didn't mind letting them wrestle with that dilemma for the moment as she began to unwrap the agenda for the evening.

Before long, participants began sifting through the results and rankings of the On-line and Paper Surveys. Marilyn explained that the Paper Surveys were mostly completed by "clients" or those receiving services from United Way agencies. "Well, that would explain some of the differences," one noted. No other remarkable comments were made.

Then, they were shown a Top 10 list compiled from the Leaders' Responses and asked to compare and contrast the results. One participant said he thought it was interesting that the **prescription drug issue** on the Leaders' list seemed to rate quite a bit higher than in any of the surveys. This led to the first of what I consider the two major issues from tonight's discussion: **substance abuse**. While the conversation began about prescription drug issues, as one lady noted when she completed the survey, she considered prescription drug issues to be covered under "provide treatment programs for substance abuse". Other comments around this topic include:

  * "Perhaps there's more awareness among the Leaders (of prescription drug abuse issues)"

  * "Well, a lot of people who misuse prescription drugs don't want to *stop* misusing them."

  * "Or you don't realize you have a problem when you're involved in it."

  * "Teen-agers don't think they have a "drug problem" because the drugs they're using are 'legal'."

One woman made a connection between the two: "One reason the heroin problem is so bad is because the government has cracked down on the number of prescriptions that can be written for OxyContin and they've changed the consistency so it can't be dissolved to liquid form and injected. Basically, that's why you have heroin – it's 'cheap OxyContin'." (Marilyn noted to the group that the Lexington Focus Group had also mentioned the growing heroin problem in Davidson County.)

She went on to say that she thought the Leaders' #2 was interesting (Access to affordable health care, mental health services, and access to affordable medications), because "mental health services is HUGE. I didn't really pay attention to it on the Survey responses, but I'd have to agree with the Leaders, because they go hand-in-hand with substance abuse."

Then, a rather lengthy conversation ensued about the topic of "**mental health**," which was the second major issue of the evening. There was some discussion around the definition of mental health because, as one lady remarked, "the state of mental health is so different than it used to be." She commented that she didn't think there was a specific response on the survey about mental health and mental illness. She has served on the boards of several non-profit organizations, and she went on to say that there are a number of agencies that are trying to figure out how to deal with the problem because there is no centralized way to deal with it.

A comment was made that often people (with mental health issues) stay for weeks in the hospitals because there is no place for them to go.

Another gentleman stated that he has the same issues in the Foster Care program: there are not many, if any, homes in Davidson County that can handle our kids with mental health issues. "Our kids, and kids from other states as well, travel all over the country to find a place to be seen, because they have to be seen once a month."

Marilyn suggested that perhaps "mental health needs" was not explicit and therefore did not rise to the level it may have if it had been more clearly defined and stated. "That's the problem." said one female. "There's no defined mental health platform; no one really understands what it is, so it's very hard to get a definition or an interpretation."

Another said that she wished something had been mentioned about anxiety and depression especially with the huge suicide rate in Davidson County. "If you have geriatric behavioral health problems, then insurance with pay, but if you are under the age of 55, there are very few facilities or counseling programs available to you." Another recalled a county-wide assessment about 10 years ago which showed that suicide rates in Davidson County were among the highest in the state.

One participant stated that he did not believe, even if the mental health issue were laid out in as good a detail as it could have been, that it would be among the top 10 issues in Davidson County for all responders. One or two others agreed, but not the majority. Again, below are additional comments:

"I don't think most people see it."

"Well, they wouldn't admit it – it has a stigma to it."

"Yea, it's kept kind of quiet – it doesn't show up as a group."

And finally a lady summarized by saying, "Well, I think a number of the non-profits are having to deal with it. I'm on a human services board, and that is an underlying, underlying need. And it's dealing with the same kids in the emergency rooms because there's nowhere for them to go. It's because of the major changes that have happened in mental health – or lack of changes – that have occurred over the past 10-15 years. That agency doesn't exist as it did in the past – I don't know how you deal with it."

This Focus Group spent over 10-15% of the time discussing "mental health issues." Although they did not have any solutions or suggestions as to how United Way might address the issue, it did seem to be a major concern of the group here tonight.

Marilyn then turned the group's attention to a bar graph of the response ratios for both the On-line and Paper Surveys. One of the most prominent bars on the graph is the Paper Survey response ratio to the very first critical need listed: "Providing for the basic necessities of life for children and adults: food, clothing, assistance for rent and utilities." Eighty percent of the Paper Survey responders chose this as one of their Top 5. (Surprisingly, less than 50% of the On-line Survey responders chose this as their Top 5, and the Leaders ranked it as #4.) The group then began discussing which United Way-funded agencies addressed these needs, since they were so basic and important.

Then, the overall emphasis began to shift when one female participant, who had been relatively quiet thus far, said, "**Is the future to continue what they've always funded and the ones that have always come asking for funding or is the future of the United Way to identify problems in the community and find those agencies to help solve those problems, whether that's the current mission of the agency or not.** You know, for health care, we used to take care of sick patients; now, we want to keep you OUT of the hospital. It's looking at this holistically and saying, '**I'm not trying to fund agencies, I'm trying to solve problems**.'"

Another gentleman quickly jumped on this idea: "So, I think what you're saying is once United Way says, 'these are what we're going to fund,' that's where everyone's going to focus their request for money on because United Way does not fund agencies, they really fund programs. … But there's going to be some losers in this process, because the United Way cannot continue to fund everybody they're funding now and then really hit whatever priorities are here – it's just not possible. If you look at this list, you can probably pick 2 or 3 or 4 agencies that are going to be losers in this. I'm not saying that's good or bad…."

"…. But the citizens are making the choices," another lady finished his sentence.

One female tried to step back, "Well, how objective are the survey results? I know I selected things I've been involved in, and the paper surveys have got to be slanted. Additional research is needed to make sure these really are the priorities, and it changes all the time. It may depend on what Federal and State money is out there to help provide for some of these services."

Marilyn then suggested they look at what the Leaders thought were important – could this help discriminate?

One participant spoke up: "The Leaders listed as #1 'Issues related to economy, poverty and job loss' – If you don't solve the issue of the economy in Davidson County, especially in Thomasville, the rest of it …. well, you're done." Others chimed in: "You're just fighting battles" and "If you don't do something about jobs and the economy, none of this is going away."

Marilyn then asked a critical question, **"Is that a *UNITED WAY* issue?"** Most agreed with one man's summation: "It (the economy) is the #1 issue in Davidson County, but it is not the #1 issue for United Way".

[A sidebar: The second question that was asked of Leaders was: "As a citizen, are there other issues/problems that need to be addressed by the United Way, *governments*, *hospitals*, *non-profits*, *school systems*, etc. over the next 5-10 years?" (italics added by me). This was a very open-ended question, and since United Way was not listed singularly, the Leaders' responses included many needs that could or should be met by other organizations. Eg. #1: job loss/job growth à government or other; #2: affordable health care/medications à government and/or as a result of job growth; #6: issues around multi-culturalism; #8: transportation à government.]

Participants were then asked to review the "Combined Top 10 Critical Needs" which was a blending of the On-line and Paper Surveys with the Leaders' Responses. Marilyn asked point-blank: **"Can we do all 10 of these?"** The consensus was a definite "NO". "They picked too many." "I don't know what the number is, but it's not 10!"

Then, one lady who has served on numerous non-profit boards made another insightful statement, "There are either agencies or government agencies trying to deal with all of those. Perhaps one of the real issues for me is the **resource knowledge – who's doing what, and are we working together to do that, or are we each doing our own little thing?"**

Marilyn kept the ball rolling, "**Can United Way do that? Can they have a role in that**?"

"They should."

"They can with their agencies, yes."

"They're the only ones who can."

Someone then mentioned the "**2-1-1 System**," and very few people had heard of it or knew what it was. She explained the System but said there had been problems initiating it in Davidson County. Everyone thought it was a great idea and should be part of United Way's resource information. A conversation then followed about the size and diversity of Davidson County, including a brief history of the feud behind a lot of it. "We used to have 2 area codes, we have 2 hospitals, 2 YMCA's, three school systems – we'd have 2 community colleges if the State hadn't made us build a common one."

This led one man to recall a common complaint he often heard in his years in education: **"It's 5 miles wide and 2 inches deep."** He went on to say, "Some of these things on here are 5 miles wide and 2 inches deep, and until United Way gets a better handle and is more specific about what it means – for example #3. We have some agencies that do some of that now; it's somewhat effective, but until that's narrowed down enough to where people know exactly what the expectations are, it's going to be all over the board again and we're not going to be any better off than we were before."

The final third of the class was spent answering the following questions:

1. Did the Leadership Interviews and/or Survey name ALL the human service problems we have here in Davidson County?

The general consensus was that the Survey did not. They felt that "mental health issues" was not clearly defined and stated to the extent that the problem exists in the County.

2. Are there problems not identified by the Interviews or the Survey?

Again, the mental health issue was mentioned. Also, the increasing diversity of the County was mentioned by the group as being a growing problem, but probably not enough to make the "Top 10" list.

3. Are the Top 10 (Combined) Problems stated clearly enough? and **Are there edits/changes you would make to the top 10 listing?**

Many in the group thought the items listed on the Combined Top 10 List were too vague and too broad (i.e. "5 miles wide and 2 inches deep"). They also felt that some could be combined into others (eg. #9 "providing safe, affordable housing and home repairs" could be combined into #1: "providing for the basic necessities"). The group thought it would be a good idea if United Way chose 3-5 and focused more in-depth on those issues. Someone suggested that their initial post-it notes pretty-well stated what those 3-5 might be:

#1 (tie w/ 3 mentions) – Providing for the basic necessities: food, clothing, rent & utility assistance

#1 (tie w/ 3 mentions) – Provide services to those who are homeless (although it was mentioned that there is an agency that is currently doing that who chooses not to be a UW agency)

#2 (tie w/ 2 mentions) – Issues related to the economy: poverty, job loss, job growth (it was agreed that this was *not* a United Way issue)

#2 (tie w/ 2 mentions) – Provide treatment for substance abuse and drug dependency (including prescription drug abuse)

Other issues receiving 1 mention: Mentoring and tutoring at-risk youth; Access to affordable health care/ mental health services and affordable medications; Issues related to violence/spousal and child abuse; Problems related to eh elderly/aging population

Someone suggested that the focus could adjust as the needs changed since it is an annual funding cycle. "I think that's the long-term direction United Way should go," offered one. It was also suggested that United Way should do an assessment more often to make sure it is addressing the needs of the community.

I believe they would rather see the United Way spread 2 miles wide but go 5 inches deep. J

Amy Leonard, TaylorTrain

Marilyn Taylor, TaylorTrain

Footnote: This group also agreed to serve again, if needed.

United Way of Davidson County
Needs Assessment Focus Groups – November 2014
Executive Summary

The United Way of Davidson County is faced with a huge challenge: **Meeting the unmet human needs of this county.** As the struggle with poverty, hunger, and joblessness continues or even deepens, the United Way sought to step back and evaluate how it could best serve in the present climate.

Through surveys and personal interviews approximately 500 citizens of Davidson County were polled concerning our most critical needs. The data was tabulated by the staff of the United Way. As a part of the discovery process, TaylorTrain was engaged to conduct two Focus Groups from around the county to review and respond to the survey data.

Focus Groups of 1.5 hours in length were conducted in Lexington and Thomasville, at the respective Chambers of Commerce. On Nov. 03, 2014 ten participants met in Lexington. On Nov. 10, 2014 seven participants gathered in Thomasville. All participants were given the same information. The information packets included: Background, Purpose, and Rules of Engagement, Copies of Data Collection Instruments, Data Tabulations and Stated Questions.

Meetings were begun with an icebreaker that encouraged participants to share what they saw as the most critical needs for United Way to fund over the next five years. Answers, as recorded in the meeting summaries, varied widely reflecting the inherent difficulty in identifying this county's most urgent needs.

A footnote to the work of the first focus group came in the question of assistance from United Way for grant writing – across all funded areas. This comment gathered support through discussion, perhaps as an example of how the United Way can break away from funding agencies and offer collaborative support in key areas.

Focus Group #1, smaller by 3 participants, focused on fewer needs which included providing for the basic necessities of life and providing services for the homeless. Other top discussion items were issues related to the economy, and substance abuse/drug dependency problems. This led to a theme from group #2 around **Mental Health** – what it means, how it showed up in the data, and what we do about this growing need. Families, children, adults and seniors all were cited as sinking into wells of depression, mental illness and/or substance abuse. There was wide agreement that Mental Health needs to move up the list of priorities. Although JOBS were apart of the conversation, there seemed to be consensus around the idea that job creation is not the purpose of the United Way.

What did arise as a job for the United Way was to provide vital **Resource Knowledge.** This idea became a theme, as comments stretched all the way to asserting that [the United Way] "They're the only ones who can."

More constructively critical of the "Top 10 Problems" list, Focus Group #2 saw the items listed as too broad and too vague. All agreed that 10 were too many issues to effectively address, and suggested 3-5 would be more workable. The idea of annual funding cycles, based on ongoing needs assessment found wide support with this group.

Reviewing the Lexington and Thomasville groups independently, there were some differences, although these differences should be noted as Group 1and 2 differences, rather than interpreted as geographical differences. (Participants were present at each from various parts of the county, as planned.)

Focus Group #1 discussed a wide range of needs. Thirteen of the fifteen needs identified on the United Way Survey form were mentioned by different individuals. A larger group, many independent views were expressed, often followed by polite silence. Group consensus did come in however, around the importance of **teamwork, collaboration** and **shared resources,** one of this group's major themes. A suggestion to consider the paper/online survey responses concurrently, rather than competitively, isone example.

The discussion led to another emergent theme, the **prevention vs. meeting immediate needs conundrum.**

This focus group really wrestled with the idea that "critical human

service needs must be met – and at the same time – we must educate

And lay out a path for a bettertomorrow". This last statement reflects

two additional themes from this group: **education** (in every sense) and

Hope.

This group again came together around the "Top 10 Problems Identified When Combining Leadership Interviews and the Public Survey Results" document, and generally endorsed it more heartily than did Group #2. The primary suggestion was to combine certain areas, thereby reducing the total number and eliminating overlapping.

Where did the two groups converge? All appreciated the United Way direction of asking the public where it needs to serve. All saw meeting basic, human day-by-day needs as essential.

All seemed to see value in prevention (primarily through education) as essential, as well. And all questioned, to some extent, the UW's capability to fund ALL the needs listed on the Top 10 Problems List.

Recommendations

How do we fund our present-day needs? The United Way has already begun to answer that important question by seeking clarity as to what the public sees as our needs right NOW. On the TT 'averaged' survey responses, the top four items contained both immediate needs and preventive measures. Going forward, one UW strategy may be to recognize the "Polarity" at work – and work to ensure a BOTH/AND approach in its' funding process.

What is a POLARITY? The Center for Creative Leadership states: "Polarity thinking is about supplementing one point of view with its interdependent pair". Examples of Polarities include: Centralization to Decentralization; Individual to Team; Rigid Schedules to Flexible Arrangements; Co-location to Geographic Dispersion.

Can we benefit from Polarity thinking *(based on the work of Barry Johnson)* at the United Way of Davidson County, as we consider our Needs Assessment results??

Meeting Current Needs   Prevention

Fund: Immediate
Human Service
Needs

and

Fund: Educate, Lay
out a path for a
better
tomorrow
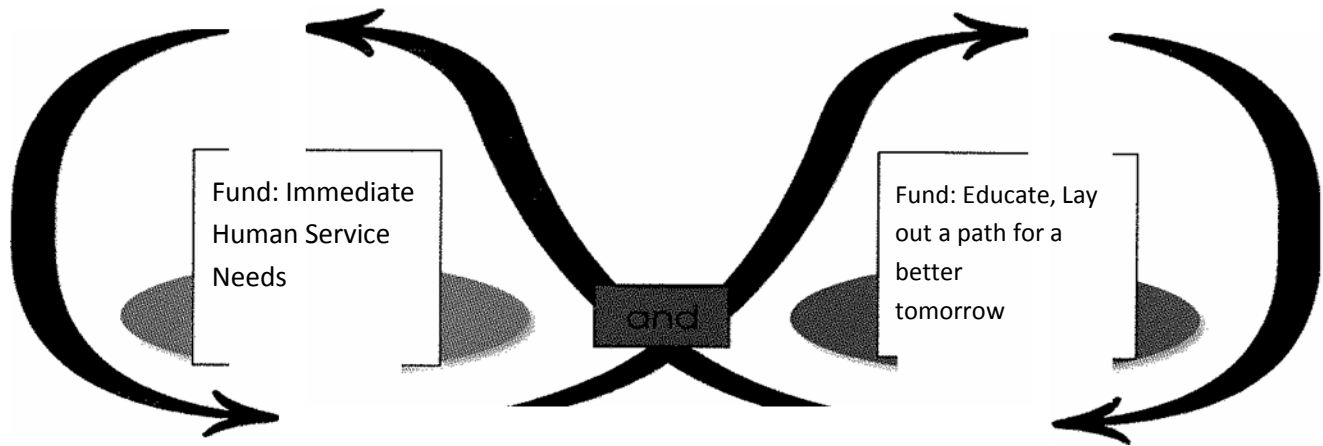
Both/And Thinking

Interdependent Pair

Two Poles and the Infinity Loop

Adapted from Leveraging Polarities,
Center for Creative Leadership, 2014

Four questions might help us reach an answer:

1. Is the difficulty ongoing?
2. Is it necessary, over time, for you to have both identified upsides?
3. Are the two alternatives interdependent?
4. Will focusing on one upside to the neglect of the other eventually undermine your efforts to move toward your higher purpose?

Considering these four questions from the Focus Group perspective, YES, it would appear that a Polarity is at work around the question of United Way funding. Potential strategies could be:

To allocate a portion or percentage of dollars specifically to prevention.

To award grants to programs who recognize this polarity, and set goals of meeting immediate needs and <u>prevention.</u>

The question that remains, however, is WHICH needs? Focus Group participants spoke of needs newer to our community such as prescription drug abuse, and the growing presence of heroin our county. Needs for food for folks of all ages, may be greater than ever.

Much of our Focus Group time was spent in reviewing the data and voicing some initial reaction to it. While some definitive statements arose, it could be worthwhile to convene a follow-on Focus Group *(drawn randomly from the original two)* to refine the "Top 10 Problems" list with two goals in mind:

1. Identifying 3-4 most critical immediate needs to address/impact/MEET

2. Recognize the Polarity of immediate and preventive needs and

    include a BOTH/AND approach

The bright and prosperous future of our county includes a high quality of life. The United Way works every day to ensure and raise the standard, so that every citizen might live the day and see a better tomorrow.

The current Community Needs Assessment is an important step in reaching that goal. We appreciate the opportunity to participate in it.

Marilyn L. Taylor, M.S. TaylorTrain
21 Sunrise Avenue
Lexington, NC 27292

Focus Group Participants

November 3, 2014 Lexington Focus Group

Staley Nance	Director, Project Potential
Jen Hames	DC Health Department
Burr Sullivan	Exec. Director, Lexington Area Chamber of Commerce
Dale Moorefield	Director of Davidson County DSS
Debbie Fanary	Thomasville business owner
Susan Craig	Davidson County DSS, Child Services Department
Tyler Beck	NewBridge Bank
Myra Thompson	Executive Assistant, First Reformed UCC Church
Tad Kepley	Chief of Police, Lexington
Michelle Hill	Davidson County Schools

November 10, 2014 Thomasville Focus Group

Doug Croft	Exec. Director, Thomasville Area Chamber of Commerce
Paula Turlington	Lexington business owner
Amber Kirkman	Lexington/WakeMed Medical Center
Monecia Thomas	Director, Davidson County Health Department
James Carmichael	Former Asst. Superintendent, Thomasville City Schools
Bill Gilliland	Davidson County DSS
Kay Fuson	Nurse Manager, Emergency Department, Novant
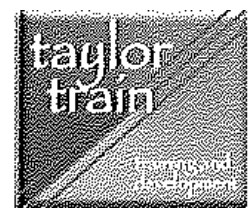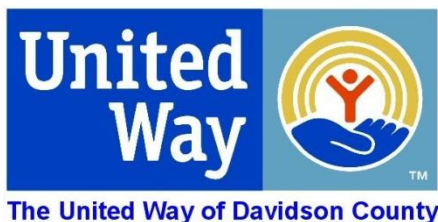
Conclusions

The nearly year-long Community Needs Assessment completed by the United Way of Davidson County included interviews with Community Leaders, an online and paper survey, and two Focus Groups that helped narrow, edit, and clarify findings. After this process was completed, three things became clear to the United Way's Needs Assessment Committee:

Conclusion #1

The most-identified human service problems in Davidson County, when combined, all center around the three themes being lifted up nationally by United Way Worldwide, and these are EDUCATION, INCOME, AND HEALTH (see next page).

Conclusion #2

Many Community Leaders and Focus Group members believe the United Way is trying to deal with too many of the community's problems at one time, funding too many agencies with increasingly limited resources.

Conclusion #3

The United Way needs to narrow its mission, and concentrate on doing two things well:

A. Funding programs that provide Basic Needs Services to citizens who are hurting; food, clothing, medical/mental care, and assistance with utilities and rent.

AND

B. Focusing on 3-5 major problems confronting citizens in Davidson County, and funding solutions that have a measurable impact on Davidson County citizens.

The Most Critical Problems Identified by
The Needs Assessment When Aligned With
Education, Income, and Health

Education

Funding programs and services that provide mentoring**, tutoring, and after-school care** for students in Davidson County. Programs that effectively encourage school success and the lowering of the high school drop-out rate.

Income

Funding programs and services that provide **basic essentials** of life to distressed individuals and families **(food, clothing, rent, and utilities),** programs that help **elderly citizens and children** especially, and programs that help with **home repair/improvement**, and assistance/ training for those affected by job loss.

Health

Funding programs that provide **medical/dental services, mental health services, and prescription medications** to those can't afford them. Funding programs that treat and prevent **domestic violence, substance abuse, and abuse of prescription medications**. Funding programs that provide services for those in **special populations like the deaf and hard of hearing and those with physical or developmental difficulties.** Funding programs that provide respite and quality end of life care.

EDUCATION
- Prevention strategies
- Outreach/advocacy services
- Access to building blocks for academic success

INCOME
- Basic/emergency needs met
- Movement toward self-sufficiency

HEALTH
- Affordable/accessible essential services for healthy lives

Next Steps in the Process

1. The United Way Board of Directors will receive, accept, and approve the Community Needs Assessment by the end of 2015.

2. The United Way of Davidson County, in its transition to a Community Impact United Way, will spend 2016 exploring the Community Needs Assessment and creating a Strategic Plan for United Way of Davidson County. United Way will also communicate the results of the Community Needs Assessment to Agencies, Donors, and Citizens in Davidson County. The document will also be available online for others to study and use.

3. During 2016 and beyond, the United Way of Davidson County will begin using the 2015 Community Needs Assessment as funding decisions are made relative to United Way resources.

BASIC NEEDS PLATFORM	**EDUCATION** PLATFORM	**INCOME** PLATFORM	**HEALTH** PLATFORM
People meet their basic needs for food, shelter and safety.	Children and youth have the foundation for success from cradle to career.	People are financially secure and self-reliant.	Individuals are physically, socially and emotionally healthy.