

Diversity & Demographics

Focus Group Discussion Notes

February 12, 2009

The United Way of Monmouth County (UWMC) Diversity & Demographics Focus Group Discussion was held on February 12, 2009 from 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM at the New Jersey Natural Gas Building, Conference Rooms C, D & E, 1415 Wyckoff Road, Wall, New Jersey.

Facilitator

Brian Massey, Vice Chairperson, UWMC Board of Directors

Participants

Sue Chapman, City of Asbury Park
Karen Demarco, Monmouth County Health Department
Laurie Duhovny, Monmouth County Human Services Advisory Council
Timothy Hearne, United Way of Monmouth County
C. Darryl Hughes, Meridian Health
Felicia Jackson, Planned Parenthood
Mary Lou Killian, 180 Turning Lives Around
Russel Like, Monmouth County Planning Board
Carl V. Lillvik, Monmouth County Workforce Investment Board
Robin Martin, 'Our State of Mind'-Consciousness of the African-American Diaspora
Maureen Mulligan, Coastal Habitat for Humanity
Tony Nuccio, City of Asbury Park
Doug Schultz, City of Asbury Park

UWMC Staff

Laura Schembri, Marketing & Communications Director
Christine Jagerburger, Community Impact Director

Overview/Background

UWMC is hosting seven facilitated focus group discussions in support of our Community Impact Transformation process. The Diversity & Demographics focus group is the first in the series. This focus group specifically examines:

- Data from the Population section of the 2008 Social and Demographic Report
- Responses to the Community Leaders Survey questions concerning Barriers to Service and Additional Information

Please refer to the attached PowerPoint presentation for an overview of Community Impact and for the Diversity & Demographics focus group's agenda & outline.

Discussion Topics

1. How have Monmouth County's demographics changed over the past 10 years?
2. What are the implications for health and human services, including barriers to accessing services?
3. What are the "best practices" in terms of providing services and overcoming barriers?

Population/Municipal Growth

- Increase in population in Western Monmouth County municipalities from 1990 to 2007
 - Upper Freehold 114.4% increase
 - Millstone 105.9% increase
 - Englishtown 52.4% increase
 - Holmdel 49.8% increase
 - Marlboro 48.5% increase
 - Manalapan 47.4% increase
- Western Monmouth County is a mostly rural environment/less population density
 - Possible need for facility expansion and mobile outreach to make services more accessible
- Housing development mirrored municipal growth patterns, overall new housing development has now declined
- Multi-family units now exceed single family housing units
 - Increase mostly in central region of county
 - Growth in multi-family units mirrors statewide trends
- Redevelopment/gentrification issues have impacted Eastern Monmouth municipalities
 - As middle income households move into the community, lower-income households can become displaced by process
 - Can result in higher priced and less affordable housing availability
 - Example Asbury Park ocean front development has impacted West Side neighborhoods
- Growth in Western municipalities did not necessarily result in a shift of resources from Eastern municipalities where population growth remained steady (core market)

Age Group Changes

- Significant increase in 45 to 64 year old population (42.5% increase 1996 to 2006)
 - Potential future impact on health & human services infrastructure
- Increase in senior population (2.1 % from 1996 to 2006)
- Need to adapt services and outreach to address current and future growth trends for aging population
- Increase in age restricted housing developments along the Route 9 corridor (Manalapan, Marlboro, Howell); represents a shift from developments traditionally located by the coast
 - Additional data needed on the specific demographic makeup of these communities in order to identify if and what services are needed, for example:
 - Income levels
 - Medical concerns
 - Transportation issues

- Cost savings for municipalities (i.e. costs of schools, demand on services) can influence towns concerning the development of age-restricted communities
- Decrease in youth population (ages 0-4 decreased 10.4% from 1996 to 2006)
- Service providers already seeing impact of aging population, shifting resources accordingly
 - Meridian example-seeing 80% of volume driven by senior population (over age 55); have consolidated pediatrics beds according to demand
- Community Leader Survey respondents overall ranked need for services for seniors lower than for services for youth
 - Highlights disconnect between data and perception/survey responses
 - People may be more passionate about services for youth than seniors
 - People may feel seniors needs are already met by existing services; and that there are not enough services to meet youth needs

Racial/Ethnic Diversity

- Between 1990 and 2006 the Latino population increased by 129.4% in Monmouth County
 - Meridian example-about 50% of its current family health center outpatient service clients are Latino
 - Reverse migration (returning to country of origin) trends due to the current economic situation
 - Barriers identified impacting this population include:
 - Client fear of receiving/accessing services from a government agency
 - May not able to qualify for services, documentation issues
 - Issues when children are US citizens and parents are not
 - Impact children's ability to access services
 - May keep children home from school
 - Fear of deportation/separation from children
 - Lack of trust of service providers
 - Not just an issue of service delivery, need to educate community on why they should access services not just what services are available
 - Cultural competency issues
 - Language barriers
 - Programs seeing younger Latino families accessing services, growth attributable not just to immigration but family growth
 - Increased need for prenatal/maternal services
- French/Creole (Haitian community) second most needed translation service at Jersey Shore Medical Center
- Polish, Russian and Hindi are next most requested translation services
- Emergence of Brazilian (Portuguese speaking) population
- Lower-income African American communities in Eastern Monmouth County being impacted by redevelopment/gentrification issues; loss of affordable housing
- Need to raise the bar on translation/interpretation services for social service staff
 - Having multilingual staff to provide direct translation as a requirement to being able provide service
 - Not relying on family members/children to provide translation to client
- Need to educate communities about social services systems and how to navigate and access available resources

- Need to further examine health disparities among cultural/ethnic groups

Overall Issues/Barriers to Service

- Transportation remains long standing issue across the entire county
 - Affects all ages groups
 - Specific concerns regarding lack of available East to West transportation
 - Historic issue as Monmouth County has/continues to transform from an agrarian/rural environment to suburban & urban communities
- Availability of affordable housing and transportation services impacts employers ability to attract and hire entry-level employees
- Community knowledge of available services
- Community understanding of how to navigate social service system
 - Coordinating services between multiple agencies serving same client to coordinate care
- Medical services/doctors who will not accept Medicaid; impacts all socio-economic levels
- “Not in my backyard” issues
- Prior convictions impacting person’s ability to qualify for services
- Suspensions/fines of driver’s licenses (i.e. failing to pay child support) impacts person’s ability to get to work, earn income and pay off fines to have license unsuspended; causes downward spiral
- Need volunteers, including skilled professional volunteers (i.e. doctors, nurses) to help provide continued/expanded services

Best Practices/Overcoming Barriers

- WIB Transportation program
 - Program existed/funded for 2 years
 - Provided wrap around/discretionary funds to individuals to meet their transportation needs
 - Insurance, car repairs, etc.
- MAPP initiative
 - Monmouth County Department of Health leadership in bringing agencies together to create common goals for the county regarding Health
 - Created neutral “table” to bring organizations together
 - Overcoming silos by sharing information and best practices among partners and community
 - Looking at the big picture-need to benefit entire county, not just their own agency
 - Working together to bring resources into the county; not competing for funding
 - Committee support of multiple applicants for same grant application
- Asbury Park Collaborative
 - History: about 80 nonprofits in Asbury Park, many providing the same services
 - All competed for same funding, state funder mandated agencies to get together and collaborate
 - Now meeting monthly to network and work together
 - If an agency is not a part of the Collaborative they will not receive a letter of support from the group for funding

- Asbury Park Housing Initiative
 - 5 agencies collaborative applying for \$5,000,000 federal grant to build affordable housing in Asbury Park
 - Applying for funding first, then will decide how to distribute among the agency partners
- Consider mobile services to overcome transportation barriers
 - Mobile services can be very costly
 - Multiple partners could share cost and resources
- We are currently transactional but we need to become transformational
- Need to create long-term, lasting positive community change
- Need to adapt our current structures, to change to meet the changing need

Additional Comments

- New housing costs are still high by municipality despite current housing issues
- Foreclosure rate high in Monmouth county as comparable across the state
 - Monmouth County has a higher percent of owner-occupied housing than other counties, may impact data
- Housing subsidies may impact data included in the 2008 Social & Demographic Report concerning the Housing Statistics by Municipality table (page 45)
 - Uncertain how the US Bureau of the Census incorporated housing subsidies into their calculations/determinations specifically regarding rent

Follow Up Actions

- 2008-2009 Planning Board data now available
- www.monmouthplanning.com
 - Click on “Research & Special Studies” on the left-hand side of the page to get to my section’s reports, which include Demographic & Economic Statistics, Monmouth County At-A-Glance, New Residential Development Survey, and the annual Monmouth County Profile, among others
- UWMC Social & Demographic Report will be updated and distributed with new data