

Kitsap Community Resources

2014 – 2017
Kitsap County
Community Needs Assessment



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Our economy has taken a broadside hit, and most economists and budget watchers agree that we are now in the midst of a profound structural shift. Congress will eventually enact major cuts in the growth rates of Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security. Even more threatening to [the non-profit] sector are likely cuts in the real amount of discretionary spending – not just growth rates. In a cruel irony, these cuts will not only reduce the supply of funding for many of the services that non-profits provide; they will also dramatically increase the demand for these services.”

Mario Morino, co-founder, Venture Philanthropy Partners¹

Kitsap Community Resources (KCR) is operating during a time of dramatic change. The economic decisions made at all levels of government will have a profound impact on the scope and delivery of KCR services for years to come. The purpose of this Community Needs Assessment is to provide the KCR Board of Directors with a broad overview of the state of our community, its citizens, and its service providers and further provide the foundation for the KCR Strategic Plan.

This assessment will discuss the key population and demographic shifts in our County as well as provide an overview of the key measures of poverty in Kitsap County. Also included will be a detailed review of ten primary community indicators including Employment and Training, Housing, Food and Nutrition, Early Learning, Children, Youth and Family, Crime, Energy and Utilities, Veterans, Health/Mental Health/Substance Abuse, Aging, and Transportation.

POVERTY

Poverty poses a significant challenge for Kitsap County, with 11.3% of its residents living at or below the Federal poverty thresholds. Census data reveal that children are more likely to be living in poverty, with 14.9% of its residents under the age of 18 living at or below the poverty line. Also, family households that are headed by a single person (single parent or other adult) are much more likely to be living in poverty than married couple households. It is important to recognize that these statistics may understate the financial strain faced by many in our community as there is a significant gap between Federal Poverty levels and the actual level of income required to support basic needs. One of the major safety nets in place for struggling families is Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The State of Washington has been recently enforcing the 60-month limit for TANF recipients, ensuring a continual number of local recipients timing out of benefits and potentially facing an even steeper financial crisis.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

With an unemployment rate of 7.4% in mid-2012, Kitsap County has fared somewhat better than the state and nation. While the national economy has demonstrated some recent signs of recovery, the unemployment rate is expected to remain above healthy levels for at least four more years. Youth ages 16 – 19 have an unemployment rate of 25.2%, as compared to the Washington State rate of 33.1%. Through its partnership with Workforce Development Council, KCR's Employment and Training Division offers job seekers a variety of programs including job training, interview skills, and placement services. The segments of the regional economy that will experience the most job growth over the next 10 years include professional business services, government, wholesale & retail as well as health services. Most new jobs in Kitsap will need two-year degrees.

HOUSING

Housing costs are increasing in Kitsap County. In fact, rent has increased 69% over the past 10 years while the proportion of people living in poverty increased from 8% to 11.3% over the same period. The median rent is \$945 and 42.9% of individuals who rent housing pay more than 35% of their income for housing. Foreclosures are declining- from a high of 513 foreclosures during April-June 2009 down to 189 foreclosures during April-June 2012. At the same time, however, one in five mortgaged homes in Kitsap County – 20.4% - is “under water”, defined as owing more on the mortgage than the current market value. This translates to 11,819 homes locally that had negative equity for the first quarter of 2012.

It is difficult to quantify the number of households facing homelessness in our county. The homeless population is transient, in that some households just move through a brief state of homelessness and then back into permanent housing, others may cycle in and out of homelessness, while countless other households remain chronically homeless for extended periods of time. The 2012 Annual Point in Time Count revealed 523 homeless individuals living in our county. This is down from a high of 1,117 in 2005. Based on information from the Department of Social and Human Services' (DSHS) Basic Food Program, however, there are 2,356 homeless families in Kitsap as of March 2012, rising significantly from a level of around 500 households in 2003. Of these families, 49% indicate they are living with no resources.

Service delivery for individuals and families without homes or those who face the imminent risk of homelessness changed dramatically with the recent opening of the Housing Solutions Center (HSC). The HSC provides a single point of entry for all households seeking housing assistance including shelter, rental assistance, and connections with local landlords and subsidized housing providers. During the first eight months of operation, the HSC served 1,927 non-duplicated households, of which there were 694 that identified themselves as literally homeless and another 427 who identified themselves as imminently at risk of losing their housing. Of households served, 27% had no income and 57% earned less than \$700 per month.

Available housing resources include emergency housing and shelters, transitional and supportive housing, project and tenant based subsidized housing, rental and deposit assistance, and local private market landlords. The community waiting list has declined since the opening of the Housing Solutions Center, with 11 households waiting for shelter at the end of October, 2012.

FOOD AND NUTRITION

In a recent study conducted by Food Lifeline which included residents of Kitsap County, 79% of the food bank clients surveyed indicated they are “Food Insecure” while 34% have “Low Food Security”. Food Insecurity is defined as having limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally

adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways. Food insecurity with hunger is considered very low food security. Additionally, 47% report choosing between food and paying for utilities and heating fuel, 42% report choosing between food and paying for housing, and 30% report choosing between food and paying for medicine/medical care.

The Women Infants and Children (WIC) program provides supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk. In 2010, WIC programs in Kitsap served 10,765 women, infants and children and provided 27,095 nutrition education sessions. Of all infants born in Kitsap County, 48% are served by WIC.

The need for emergency food assistance has increased dramatically in recent years. Kitsap has a rate of 146.8 per 1,000 persons receiving Food Stamps and 8% of Basic Food recipients are homeless. Of all students enrolled in the local school districts, 45.5% are covered by the Free and Reduced Lunch program. There are 8 food banks in Kitsap County which served 16,114 non-duplicated households and a total of 82,933 food boxes in 2011-2012. Over the past five years, the number of non-duplicated households has increased 12%, while the number of food boxes has increased 212%. Countywide, food banks are experiencing a decline in donations while food costs are predicted to rise in the coming year due to the price of feed corn.

EARLY LEARNING, CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY

Children aged 0-9 comprise the majority of children in childcare. The population of children ages 0-4 has decreased 5.3% over the past five years, and those ages 5-9 decreased 8.6%. Childcare homes have decreased from 207 to 113 from 2003 to 2011 while centers have remained steady over that period at 65. Overall, total availability is unchanged. The median monthly cost for full time care at centers in 2009 by age group: infant - \$780 (increase from \$602 in 2004), toddler \$680 - (increase from \$535 in 2004), preschool - \$607 (increase from \$516 in 2004). In-home care was less expensive than center providers by \$22 for preschoolers, \$30 for toddlers and \$130 for infants.

Four agencies operate in a county-wide partnership to provide Head Start, Early Head Start, and ECEAP (Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program) program services. These four agency programs include KCR, Olympic Educational Service District #114, Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe Early Childhood Education Center, and the Suquamish Tribe Early Learning Center.

All school districts have had an overall decrease in the proportion of students failing one or more WASL/MSP/HSPE content areas in each grade level. The annual dropout rate county wide is 2.7%. Kitsap County had a graduation rate of 78% in 2010-2011, declining slightly from 80% in 1993-1994. The graduation rates vary significantly by School District: Bainbridge Island– 93.6%, Central Kitsap – 84.7%, North Kitsap – 79.3%, Bremerton – 68.1%, and South Kitsap – 66.0%.

The rate of accepted referrals for child abuse and neglect in Kitsap County has shown a decreasing trend since 1998, although the rate has been mostly unchanged or slightly increasing since 2005.

CRIME

The crime rate is a combination of the violent crime rate and the property crime rate as measured by the number of index offenses per 1,000 persons. The property crime rate has decreased 6% per year from 2000 to 2007; and since 2007, the rate has remained relatively stable. There has been an increase over the past three years; however it is not statistically significant. The violent crime rate

has decreased 14% per year in the past three years. The total crime rate has also decreased 5% from 2000 to 2007, with no change since then; less than 10% of the total crime rate is due to violent crime.

ENERGY AND UTILITIES

KCR provides energy assistance to local low income residents facing the loss of their primary heating source. The total assistance provided for electricity, gas and other heating sources totaled \$2,435,028 in 2011, reflecting an 81% increase from the 2007-2008 level of \$1,340,779. These funds provided energy assistance to 4,551 households in 2011. KCR also provides weatherization services to include replacement of water heaters, replacing broken windows and doors and insulating water heater tanks. As of August 2012, KCR weatherized 38 units countywide in 2012, for a total cost of \$417,242.

VETERANS

The number of Kitsap County veterans who are 18 years of age or older is estimated to be 35,457. Of these veterans, 89.6 % are male, 5.8% live in poverty, and 25.6% have a disability. The vast majority of veterans aged 18-64 are employed, with 77.9% in the workforce and 5.5% unemployed. Veteran's assistance programs provided emergency assistance to 395 veterans in 2011.

HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The infant mortality rate in Kitsap County (5.7 per 1,000 live births) is slightly higher than the Washington State rate (5.0 per 1,000 live births). The infant mortality rate for Kitsap County has not changed since 1990-92. According to the 2010 Census, 28,681 individuals (14.2%) lacked health insurance of any kind. Of those without insurance, 9.4% were under age 18. Peninsula Community Health Services (PCHS) provided over 70,000 medical and dental visits in 2011 and of these individuals served, 50% of them were uninsured in 2011, up from 21% in 2007. Alcohol and drug related deaths are on a steady increase at 11.9 per 100 deaths. Opiate related hospitalizations have increased 7.6% since 2000 to a rate of 23.3 per 100,000. Kitsap Mental Health Services served 5,092 clients in 2011 down from 5,564 in 2010.

AGING

While the growth of total Kitsap County population and 60+ population remained essentially even between 1990-2000, the number of 60+ residents increased significantly as a percentage of total county population between 2000 and 2010. Older adults comprise 20% of all people living in Kitsap County. Overall, the aging adult population is characterized by fixed and falling incomes, and services for this population have experienced reductions.

TRANSPORTATION

Kitsap Transit issued 5,537 Orca fare cards in 2011, of which 2,854 went to low income individuals. This compares to 7,284 (3,111 low income) in 2010, and 3,627 (1,121 low income) in 2009. In addition, Kitsap Transit's Access Service provided door-to-door service to nearly 230,000 people in 2011, with ridership down 2.8% from the first half of last year. The Kitsap Transit Board approved the start of the pilot program, "Free Fares for Vulnerable Populations", which included the issuance of 5,000 tickets to 25 local agencies, coordinated through the Housing Solutions Center.

ⁱ Morino, Mario, Leap of Reason: Managing to Outcomes in an Era of Scarcity; Venture Philanthropy Partners in partnership with McKinsey and Company, © 2011, p.41.