

2006 Low Income Needs Assessment

Presentation of the Results of the 2006 Snohomish County Low Income Needs Assessment occurred on Monday, October 2, 2006. The eleven categories of social or health services in Snohomish County used for the assessment, ranked by the percent of respondents who perceive them as “extreme service gaps” (“extremely important” and “very hard to get”), are listed below.

Category	Attendees (#)	Respondents (%)
Affordable Dental Care:	10	46%
Living Wage Jobs:	27	39%
Housing Assistance:	26	38%
Legal Help:	1	35%
Affordable Medical Care:	23	35%
Drug/Alcohol Treatment:	6	31%
Affordable Childcare:	12	31%
Mental Health, Counseling:	18	29%
Energy Assistance:	2	26%
Adult Basic Education:	6	24%
Food Assistance:	3	17%

Attendees were asked to select three of the categories they considered a top priority and/or would like to discuss strategies about. The number of attendees that selected them and the percentage of respondents, for each category, are also noted above.

The top six categories, ranked from the attendees’ selections, were then broken into groups for discussion of strategies to address these needs. The categories were: Living Wage Jobs; Housing Assistance; Affordable Medical Care; Mental Health, Counseling; Affordable Child Care; and Affordable Dental Care.

Living Wage Jobs

Key Needs Assessment Findings:

- 48% of those responding had income from someone in the household with wages.
- The mean monthly income for the overall sample of responding households is \$1,068.
- The median monthly income is \$900.

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Single Major Strategy to Address Living Wage Jobs:

Improve access to transportation options, as well as access to dispersed jobs.

Results:

Jobs would become more viable and available for workers, and employment retention would increase.

Key Actions:

- Improve transportation to promote/improve access to transportation means and jobs
 - Better bus lines/passes
 - Subsidy for cars and required insurance
 - Assisted program for car access
- Clear pathways to employment – education/career counseling
- Increase in wages
- Emphasize vocational education – apprenticeships that traditionally pay higher wages
- Zoning/permits to locate businesses closer to community living areas.
- Encourage/require businesses to subsidize employee transportation.
- Create incentives to employers to encourage access to employment.

Key Partners & Roles:

- Community Transit
- Business Community – flexible work schedules
- Employer-based transport support
- TANF (DSHS)

Resources:

- Money from the state to employers, the state to businesses, and businesses to employees

Housing Assistance

Key Needs Assessment Findings:

- 22% of all respondents report having to share housing due to costs
- 71% of all respondents reported housing assistance as extremely important. Ranking it second below affordable dental care.
- 38% of all respondents reported housing assistance as very hard to get. Ranking it third below affordable dental care and living wage jobs.

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Single Major Strategy:

Promote, secure, and preserve affordable housing by: percent requirement for Low-Income housing; Community Land Trusts, purchase Low-Income units; if Low-Income units are removed, developers must replace them (mitigation); ease zoning and process for those who build Low-Income housing

Collateral Gaps/Problems Related to Housing Assistance:

- Disabled & Mentally Ill – multiple issues
- Not enough beds for Youth & others
- Aging population – move toward downsizing
- Mobile home parks being sold off
- Credit
- Low-Income wages

Results:

- Increase number (percent) of affordable housing units
- Incentives for low-income housing/rental housing
- Focus on rental housing – maybe condos

Key Actions:

- Develop Community Land Trusts with target populations as eligible residents (engage residents in development)
- Focus on replacing and adding affordable rental units
- Establishing mixed use zones (business with housing upstairs)
- Establish zero-lot line zoning (Arizona does this)
- Co-Housing
- Sweat
- Sweat equity

Key Partners & Roles:

- County – zoning incentives; policies
- Housing Authorities
- United Way
- Homeless Policy Task Force
- Housing Consortium
- Developers
- Real Estate agents

- Washington Credit Association
- EPA
- Banks

Resources:

- Brownfield Redevelopment
- Community Land Trusts
- Banks
- Washington Housing Alliance

Affordable Medical Care

Key Needs Assessment Findings:

- 33% of all respondents report their health is worse than a year ago.
- 26% of all respondents reported someone in their household who experienced an illness in the last year that left them unable to work or care for their children.
- 65% of all respondents were covered by a health insurance plan such as Medicaid, Medicare, Basic Health Plan, or private insurance plan.

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Single Major Strategy:

Access to Primary & Specialty Care; outreach through marketing; sharing of translated materials

Results:

- Measurable reduction of under & un-insured persons not being served or the increase in access to primary & specialty care in a timely manner
- Marked reduction of Primary Care Doctors seen in Economic Developments in Snohomish County
- Increase ratio of Primary Care & Specialty Care providers to 1000 population

Key Actions:

- Establish collaboration of medical groups
- Establish collaboration of leaders at County-level
- Partnering with other Primary Care Providers or other medical facilities
- Partner with collaborative to End Homelessness 10 year Plan committee
- Engage Specialty Care into groups such as: Everett Clinic, Western Washington Medical Group, Providence Physicians Group

Key Partners & Role:

- Schools
- Compass Health
- Community Health Centers
- SeaMar
- PEHC
- DSHS
- County Human Services
- Snohomish Health District
- Emergency Care

Resources:

- Boeing
- Strategic Growth Plan
- Sharing multiple community needs assessment surveys

Mental Health, Counseling

Key Needs Assessment Findings:

- 17% of respondent households include at least one member who received mental health treatment.
- 6% of respondent households include at least one person who has had mental health treatment and substance abuse treatment.

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Single Major Strategy:

Snohomish County convenes a statewide coalition of other counties to explore the cost of not providing services to people in need of mental health services. Publish and present the results publicly and lobby the Washington State Legislature to not put all funds to Medicaid.

Results:

Provide diversified funding to more than Medicaid in order to get the services to the people who need it.

Key Actions:

Develop a coalition in county of mental health providers and other interested public and private entities to develop research to answer the question – What is the cost for not providing service.

Key Partners & Role:

- Public and private, non-profits, education – joining together (criminal justice, healthcare)
- Contact all 40+ counties in state to develop state-wide coalition

Resources:

- Criminal justice agencies
- Emergency rooms
- Medical care providers
- Employer/Employment agencies
- Previous studies

Affordable Child Care (Educational Opportunities 0-5)

Key Needs Assessment Findings:

- 12% of respondent households with children 0-5 who received ECEAP/Head start Services in the past year
- 37% of respondent households say childcare is extremely important.
- 31% of respondent households say childcare is very hard to get.

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Single Major Strategy:

Create a reason to stay

Results:

- More funding for quality childcare (which includes early learning opportunities)
- Invest in economic development within communities so people want to stay in the community. Example: library needed in many communities (county vs. city libraries problem)
- Universal availability of childcare & early childhood education.

Key Actions:

- Snohomish County summit of childcare providers to work to solve problems & including community leaders and diverse/culture
- Leadership development in underserved population
- Utilize school districts and neighborhood schools

Key Partners & Role:

- Head Start
- Early Childhood Education & Assistance Program (ECEAP)
- Little Red School House
- Volunteer Groups
- County
- Volunteers of America (VOA)
- United Way
- School Districts
- YMCA
- Businesses

Resources:

- Businesses
- Grants
- County Funds
- Department of Early Learning – State Early Childhood funds

Dental Access

Key Needs Assessment Findings:

- 72% of respondents said affordable dental care was extremely important ranking it the most important of the 11 needs examined.
- 46% of respondents say affordable dental care is very hard to get.

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Single Major Strategy:

Wrap dental access into the bigger picture of health care. Build resources in county and state for dental parity.

Biggest gap/Problems:

Access for single adults and the elderly

Results:

Educate the legislature and community about the extreme need for services and lay the ground work for other strategies.

Strategies/Actions:

- Expand Dental Brokerage at SHD to include individuals and seniors (currently only serve children and some family members)
- Expand use of dental hygienist students to provide services (currently used in Health District program)
- Dental product drives (like food drives) to gather dental hygiene products for low income individuals/families
- Expansion of Dental Van to service more rural communities
- Use food banks to collect and distribute dental products (toothpaste, toothbrushes, etc.)
- Lobby Corporations/Companies (including pharmaceutical companies) who make dental supplies to donate supplies or provide subsidy monies for the low income population
- State level - Legislate a "Sin Tax" on pop and candy and use the proceeds to provide dental services for low income population
- National level - Legislate a "corporate sin tax" (on corporations such as Pepsico, Coke, and Hershey) to provide tax monies earmarked for dental services for Medicaid population
- Advocate for Dental Health Parity with medical insurance industry (there shouldn't be dental coverage as separate from health coverage – it is all part of being healthy)
- Increase advocacy/education efforts with legislators and other funders
- Increase education to general public about dental health issues, wrapped into larger health and wellness picture
- Advocate for a Snohomish County pilot project to provide services to low income elderly and individuals
- Have dental health incorporated into school curriculum, showing connection between dental health and overall health (back end way to educate immigrant parents on dental health)

- Run a “Celebrity Campaign” to highlight importance of dental prevention and increase awareness of need for “dental parity” in health care system

Key Actions:

- Advocate/Educate legislators and community at large about extreme need for dental services for low income population
- Run “Dental Drives” to collect donated dental supplies and then distribute donated supplies through food banks, walk-in clinics, senior centers
- Identify a category in United Way’s Campaign for Giving which would target funds to expand Dental Brokerage at Snoh. Health District
- Expand Dental Brokerage to include singles and the elderly

Key Partners:

- Snohomish County Human Services
- Snohomish Health District
- United Way
- Senior Centers in Snoh. Co.
- Walk-In clinics (Everett Clinic, Group Health, etc.)
- Snohomish County Dental Association
- Dental Supply companies
- Food banks (VOA)

Resources:

Money, time and talent