

BLAIR COUNTY PROFILE

Our Strengths, Challenges, and Issues



A Needs Assessment Using the Compass II Model - January 2009

www.hso.blairco.org/needsassessment.html

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Beginning in early 2007, the Blair County Human Services Office and the United Way invited other key community leaders to join and support an effort to conduct a countywide needs assessment. The purpose of the comprehensive assessment was to identify community assets, identify targeted needs, and develop an action plan to fill those needs. However, the ultimate goal is to improve the lives of all people living in Blair County. This project was carried out by utilizing the COMPASS II® tool, a guide developed by the United Way of America.

This needs assessment endeavor confirmed that Blair County has many assets, including its community leaders, service providers, community organizations, residents, and basic foundations such as natural resources and a hometown sense of pride. Extensive data was collected through surveys, focus groups, community meetings, and reviews of local indicator data. The findings also clearly identified priority challenges and issues. This report, *Blair County Profile: Our Strengths, Challenges, and Issues* describes our methods utilized, survey and focus group results, and data collection, and it includes a matrix outlining the supporting data which led to the selection of the top six priority issues for Blair County. Although there were many challenges and issues that deserve attention, crime, substance abuse, and the economy are those that our citizens and leaders feel most impact the quality of life.

It would have been difficult to complete this needs assessment without the support and dedication of the individuals who served on the Steering Committee and the Needs Assessment Partnership. These individuals and organizations supported the effort because they care about Blair County and all its residents.

We have completed the first three phases of the COMPASS II model and will begin to use this report to develop a Community Plan. We ask for your commitment and support in assuring that progress is made as we develop and implement strategies and outcomes that will make a difference for Blair County.

Sincerely,

Jean Johnstone, Partnership Chairperson
Catholic Charities, Inc. of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

Robin Beck, CPO
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Executive Summary

In 2007, the United Way of Blair County and the Blair County Human Services Office invited organizations to collaborate on a community-wide needs assessment. The Blair County Needs Assessment Partnership was formed to provide direction and on-going support for the project. The ultimate goal of the comprehensive assessment was to identify community assets, identify targeted needs, and develop an action plan to fill those needs. This project was carried out utilizing the COMPASS II® tool, a guide developed by the United Way of America.

Organizational Structure and Funding

The needs assessment process was directed by a seven member Steering Committee, including a consultant who was hired as the Process Manager. The Steering Committee collaborated with a broader group of local resource people, identified as the Needs Assessment Partnership. Members of the Partnership included stakeholders on whom the community decisions would have an impact, who had an interest in the effort, who represented diverse sectors of the community, and who were likely to be involved in shaping and implementing the community impact plan developed later in the effort.

Members of the Partnership served on five workgroups. The Household Survey Work Group conducted the random household survey. The Asset Mapping Work Group conducted surveys with associations, service providers, businesses and the faith community. The Key Informant Work Group conducted a key informant survey, assisted in organizing Community Meetings, and conducted focus groups. The Communications Work Group publicized the activities of the Needs Assessment Partnership. Lastly, the Data Analysis Work Group reviewed all survey data and assisted in the collection of indicator data for Blair County.

The needs assessment process was primarily funded by the Blair County Human Services Office and the United Way of Blair County. The United Way was responsible for securing the AmeriCorps VISTA positions. Other agencies contributed significantly to the project with in-kind services such as meeting rooms, printing, use of equipment, and volunteer hours.

Methods

The primary purpose of the Blair County Needs Assessment was to provide the community with increased knowledge of the current challenges and issues that affect residents of the county, as well as the strengths and assets from which to create solutions. Both objective indicator (factual) data and subjective survey (opinion) data were collected utilizing the following methods:

1. a written survey of randomly selected households in Blair County
2. a written survey of businesses, associations, services providers, and faith organizations.
3. a written survey of key informants

4. focus groups with representation from youth, persons with disabilities, senior citizens, and people dealing with family violence issues within the county
5. local, state, and national reports
6. Community Meetings

The surveys, focus groups, and data collection focused on ten issue areas: economics, education, environment, health, housing, leisure activity, safety, social, transportation and other.

Summary of the Household Survey and Results

The purpose of the household survey was to collect both subjective (opinion) and incidence data from people who live within Blair County. The household survey included questions regarding demographics, neighborhood/community strengths, community concerns, and questions specific to household or personal issues.

A random sample of 2000 households (approximately five percent) was drawn from the 41,542 households in Blair County so that each zip Code was represented according to its percentage of total households in the county. The surveys were mailed in June 2007, along with a cover letter and pre-paid return envelope. Information about the household survey was publicized through television interviews, newspaper and other media releases, and agency newsletters to consumers.

There were 601 surveys returned to the Blair County Human Services Office. Fourteen of those were not useable due to not being filled out properly, resulting in a household random sample of 587 completed surveys (29.4% response rate). Our random household survey was generally representative of Blair County. There were some limitations in that Blair County respondents were slightly older, slightly higher income, and had more female representation (about 12% more) than the population described in the United States Census reports for Blair County. Survey responses were entered into the SPSS for Windows 16.0.1 statistical program which was used for analysis and graphic displays.

The 2007 household survey captured some of the perceptions that residents have about their neighborhood and/or community including how difficult it is to create and sustain a sense of community. Two positive results were that 71% of respondents felt that people in their neighborhood trust each other and two-thirds agreed that people in their neighborhoods help each other out when they have a problem or in times of crisis. However, only slightly more than one-third gather together formally or informally to participate in activities.

With regard to volunteering, only 26.1% say that they regularly volunteer in their neighborhoods. However, the wording of the question may have caused a lower than expected response and therefore may not accurately reflect the amount of volunteering that occurs outside their “neighborhood.” Almost 50% of the volunteering that most often occurred was for a religious group.

Survey responses were disappointing regarding the opportunity to affect how things happen in the neighborhood. More than 63% of respondents felt they have little or no opportunity to affect how things happen in their neighborhood.

The household survey asked participants to identify the level of concern (not an issue, minor issue, moderate issue, major issue, or no opinion/don't know) regarding twenty-five different community issues under the following categories: economics, education, environment, health, housing, leisure activity, safety, social, transportation and other. Nearly 70% of respondents identified crime and alcohol/drug abuse as the top two community challenges with the next four issues related to economic concerns. Out of the twenty-five issues, the six priority community issues identified for Blair County were chosen because they were ranked by 50% or more of respondents as a major/moderate issue:

1. Crime
2. Alcohol and other drugs
3. Unemployment or underemployment
4. Lack of jobs
5. Lack of affordable medical care
6. Poverty

In the final section of the household survey, participants were asked whether any of the same twenty-five issues had been a challenge or an issue in their household. Thirty-six percent of respondents identified anxiety, stress, or depression as the highest issue in their household. The top six household issues identified by the residents of Blair County are:

1. Anxiety, stress, or depression
2. Not having enough money to pay the doctor, buy prescription medications, or get medical insurance
3. Finding it difficult to budget
4. Experiencing noise or other pollution
5. Not having enough money to afford recreational activities
6. Not being able to afford entertainment activities

Child Advocates of Blair County in compliment to the general household survey taken used the household survey with their Head Start parents. The household survey was administered to a volunteer sample of 215 parents. Like the general data, data obtained was also analyzed using the SPSS statistical analysis program but was kept separate from the random household survey data gathered by the Needs Assessment Partnership. This survey allowed comparison with our random sample results for the county as a whole and was beneficial in the overall need assessment process in that it provided results from a subgroup that was underrepresented in the Blair County survey data.

In comparing the two data sets (Blair County household survey and the Head Start survey), there is general agreement on the top five community issues; however, the rank order changed with lack of jobs listed as the top challenge in the Head Start survey. Respondents in the Head Start survey had stronger opinions related to community challenges. With regard to household challenges, over 50% indicated a lot of anxiety, stress, and depression in their households.

Summary of the Key Informant Survey and Results

Another survey was sent to 121 key informants who would be asked their opinions about community strengths and needs of Blair County.

Key informants were selected from local, county, and state elected officials; school district leaders and board members; police chiefs; library presidents; media contacts; community foundations; civic leaders; county planners; human resource directors for major employers; leaders of non-government funding sources; recreation commission; etc. The key informant survey and cover letter was mailed in February 2008. Thirty-nine completed surveys were received (a 32.2% response rate). The surveys were entered into the SPSS for Windows 16.0.1 statistical program.

The response rate was 87.2% when asked whether the community is one where leaders from business, labor, government, education, religious, neighborhood, non-profit, and all other sectors come together and work productively to address critical community issues. On a moderate strength level, local key informants believe activities support community cohesion and diversity/inclusion. However, there was moderate disagreement that participation in the political process was being promoted and that leaders shared common goals/vision.

The key informants ranked, alcohol/drug abuse, crime, and lack of jobs highest among community issues. The percentage of key informants who ranked alcohol and drug abuse as a major/moderate issue in Blair County was 97%. The top five priorities identified in the key informant survey were the same as in the household and Head Start surveys. One area of major concern for key informants was transportation, especially inadequate public transportation (71.8%).

Summary of Focus Groups and Results

Four focus groups were conducted for (1) youth, (2) persons with disabilities, (3) senior citizens, and (4) people dealing with family violence issues within the county. They were utilized to obtain access to groups with frequent concerns that occasionally are not well represented in random sample surveys. The Process Manager developed materials, including an agenda, questions, and discussion points in order to provide a consistent format for conducting the focus groups. The format served two purposes: (1) to ensure that broader issues of the community needs assessment were discussed; and (2) to guide the participants in addressing issues that were specific to their focus group.

Participants in the focus groups agreed on many of the positive aspects about living in Blair County, including a good quality of life; lots of natural resources; good school systems, including four colleges/universities close by; people who have good work ethics and a variety of skills; and the availability of leisure, cultural, and recreation activities. They feel that Blair County is a relatively safe place to live with good collaboration between providers of services, non-profit agencies, law enforcement, emergency responders, schools, faith-based organizations, etc. Many people agreed that ours is a community that cares. Once it becomes aware of an issue, it will take steps to address the concern as a community.

The youth focus group was held on February 8, 2008 with sixteen people ages 12-20, representing various communities around Blair County. The top five challenges identified by youth in Blair County were: alcohol and other drugs, not enough recreation places, racial or ethnic discrimination, crime, and family violence/child abuse. There was also a significant discussion about bullying, with fourteen out of the sixteen youth having experienced being bullied sometime in their lives. They acknowledge that there are lots of activities in schools; however, participating in them is not possible for everyone because it costs too much money.

With regard to substance abuse, they commented that drugs are so blatant that people do not even recognize it. One participant said, “alcohol is such a way of life that parents and families do not see it as an issue.” On a positive note, the participants believe that when teens are in trouble, there are places to get help.

The focus group for persons with disabilities was conducted on February 11, 2008. There were twelve participants from Blair County with different disabilities. Although there were unique issues facing these residents, they identified many community resources and support systems that have been helpful and available to them. The top five challenges identified for persons with disabilities in Blair County were: economy, health, transportation, social issues, and housing.

Many of the challenges facing persons with disabilities centered around economic and medical issues, such as job availability; transportation; eligibility for financial support that doesn’t reach far enough; and inadequate medical care locally including lack of persons to diagnose and treat mental health issues especially with children. They believe that recreation activities are very limited or do not exist for them.

A senior citizens focus group was held on February 25, 2008 with nine participants representing various communities around the county. The top five challenges identified by senior citizens in Blair County were: economy, social issues, environment, leisure activities, and health. Although this group faces many challenges as they grow older, most of their concerns focused on their families and on youth. They are concerned because current jobs do not pay well and younger people are leaving the area. They believe there is a need to strengthen core family values and standards such as basic living skills, parenting, being a good neighbor and citizen, responsibility to self and community, etc. The senior citizens identified air and noise pollution from large trucks in certain areas as a concern.

A focus group on family violence issues was held with nineteen community representatives from the Stop the Violence Against Women Task Force on February 28, 2008. The top five challenges identified by them were: economy, social issues, safety, health, and housing. Violence resulting from the impact of drug abuse in families and the community was a general concern. Other specific concerns were low income and/or affordable housing; lack of affordable child care and leisure activities for children and families; lack of employment for individuals without a high school or college education; and single mothers raising children without adequate resources such as education, employment, etc.

Asset Mapping Surveys

The asset mapping surveys were designed to build positive relationships with businesses, associations, service providers, and the faith community while learning what organizations are already doing to improve the community. The methods for each survey are summarized below:

1. Business Survey

In cooperation with the Blair County Chamber of Commerce, the business survey was distributed to a selected group of members in September 2007. There was a total of 806 surveys, with 67 businesses responding, or 8.3%. It appears that the survey was primarily completed by small businesses focusing on financial, service and retail industries.

Businesses stated that they were most involved in the following four community initiatives: promoting volunteering (45%), promoting good health (42%), promoting arts and culture (40%), and beautifying community spaces (36%).

Seventy-five percent of the businesses that responded had made charitable contributions up to \$20,000. Volunteer hours contributed by the company ranged from under 20 hours to over 3,000 hours with the most frequency between 100 and 150 hours. In addition, over 60% donated materials and equipment to benefit community projects. They also partnered with other organizations and provide opportunities for employees with special skills to volunteer.

2. Associations Survey

A distribution list of the major associations in Blair County was developed and the survey was mailed in September 2007. A total of 96 association surveys were sent, with 15 responding, or 15.6%.

Associations reported that they were most involved in the following four community initiatives: promoting youth development (80%), promoting community networks (80%), promoting volunteering (60%), and promoting good health (60%). The survey indicates that there is a wide variety of opportunities and settings for people who wish to volunteer in the community.

3. Service Provider Survey

The Blair County Human Services Office mailed or emailed the survey to key community service providers. A total of 145 service provider surveys were sent, with 53 responding, or 36.6%. Both large and small agencies responded, including the most significant agencies in the county. Service providers stated that they were most involved in the following five community initiatives: promoting good health (66%), promoting volunteering (58%), fostering community networks (57%), preparing people for jobs (55%), and promoting youth development (53%). Of those who responded, two-thirds utilize volunteers in providing services for their agency. Over 60% have made staff and spaces available for community initiatives.

4. Faith Community Survey

Although surveying the faith community was not part of the COMPASS II model, we researched and used a survey from another community (Tompkins County, NY) to identify the types of assistance provided by faith communities. In September 2007, the Blair County Human Services Office mailed or emailed the faith community survey. A total of 250 faith community surveys were sent, with 29 responding, or 11.6%.

The survey shows that faith communities are most involved in initiatives that are consistent with their mission. The most common were: developing youth; educating and strengthening families; donating money for basic needs; and visiting the elderly. Over 80% provided basic material needs and financial donations and 50% of respondents provided direct service. Youth groups were reported in over 72% of the congregations.

Community Meetings

Seven community meetings were held to inform the public about the needs assessment, to share the results to date from the surveys and other initiatives, to obtain feedback from the community on them, and to provide the opportunity to become involved in developing the Community Plan. Members of the Steering Committee used a consistent agenda and PowerPoint presentation at each of the seven community meetings. A site was chosen within each of the school district regions in Blair County (Altoona, Bellwood, Claysburg, Hollidaysburg, Martinsburg, Tyrone, and Williamsburg).

Basic demographic information was collected from the 52 participants representing local government, libraries, law enforcement, schools, child-serving agencies, health care, media, and citizens.

In general, there was agreement among participants at all sessions regarding the survey findings and corroborating indicator data. The consensus was that all of the issues and challenges are related to the economy and, therefore, that bringing well paying jobs and industry to Blair County should be a priority. Community members stated that crime and drugs are issues, but ones they feel that are being addressed. Participants thought that the needs assessment should have identified more issues related to the lack of affordable housing, transportation, lack of affordable child care and children without health insurance, and health care for senior citizens.

Indicator Data

The purpose of collecting and analyzing indicator data is to document strengths and issues in the community in order to show whether research supports or does not support the perceptions of key informants and the general public, as reflected in survey results. Members of the Data Analysis Work Group, along with the Process Manager collected state and local indicator data on demographics, economy, education, environment, health, housing, leisure activities, safety, social issues, and transportation. Data was obtained from a variety of federal, state, and local sources and entered into the SPSS for Windows 16.0.1 software program in order to develop standardized graphic displays.

Demographic Highlights for Blair County

Blair County is located in south-central Pennsylvania and covers an area of 61,476 square miles. According to the 2007 estimate from the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of Blair County is 125,527. From 1950 to 2005, the population in Blair County decreased by ten percent. Reports indicate that from 2000 to 2007 the population of Blair County decreased by 2.7% while Pennsylvania's population increased by 1.2%.

Blair County is fairly homogeneous with white persons representing 97% of the county's population. In general, it is a county with a large percentage of older people without children. Persons 65 years and older represent about 21.7% of the total adult population. From 1990 to 2000, there was an 18.6% increase in people ages 75 to 84 and a 28.7% increase for those over age 85. At the same time, Blair County is losing younger professional adults with children.

Priority Challenges for Blair County

As a result of this needs assessment, the priority challenges identified for Blair County are:

- ⊙ Crime
- ⊙ Alcohol and Other Drugs
- ⊙ Unemployment or Underemployment
- ⊙ Lack of jobs
- ⊙ Lack of Affordable Medical Care
- ⊙ Poverty

The Matrix of Priority Issues and Supporting Data/Survey Results will assist in understanding how the priority challenges were selected and are supported by state and local indicator data (Appendix H of the report). Given the confirmation of the indicator data, whose discussion follows, we are confident in the validity of these results, and although the worsening economy since the assessment was conducted might make some of these priorities even more urgent or others not listed to be of additional concern, we recognize an imperative for our community to address these challenges.

Economy Priority Area and Indicator Data

Section Ten of the report includes indicator data related to income, unemployment/employment, and poverty. Blair County is suffering from economic struggles and its residents expressed that in the household survey results. In addition, the major challenges identified in the Blair County Needs Assessment were related to economic conditions, including unemployment/underemployment, lack of jobs, poverty, and budgeting difficulties. Over 20% of respondents to the household survey were not able to afford recreational or entertainment activities. The economy was rated the number one community challenge in three of the four focus groups.

The average per capita **income** for Blair County is \$20,174 which is lower than that for Pennsylvania at \$24,694. Estimated median household income and wages are also lower for Blair County. This is due in part to Blair County's having more technical-service type jobs that tend to pay lower wages. The average wage per employee in Blair County is almost \$10,000 less per year than in Pennsylvania as a whole.

The average **unemployment** rate in Blair County has ranged from 4.2% to 5.9% in the time period from 2000 to 2007 and is currently slightly less than the state's rate. Results from the Household Survey show that economic issues ranked high in both community and household challenges. Over 59% of those responding to the survey ranked unemployment/underemployment as a major/moderate issue community challenge. Key informants agreed with 77% reporting unemployment/underemployment as a major/moderate issue. Although there was a significant increase in the county employment rate in 2007, the greatest number of employer units are in retail trade which has one of the lowest annual average wages at \$19,654. In Blair County, 62% of the population with any disability is unemployed. The focus group conducted with persons with disabilities stressed economic issues as a common theme.

In addition to wage and income data, other county economic indicators include **poverty** levels, food stamp use, and government assistance programs. In Blair County, the use of food stamps and medical assistance is higher than the state average with one in five people getting assistance.

Twelve percent of people are getting food stamps and 20% are receiving medical assistance. The percentage of students who are enrolled in free/reduced school lunch programs in Blair County is 35%.

The 2005 estimated poverty rate in Blair County is 14.0% which is higher than the state average of 11.9%. The estimated poverty rate for children under 18 in Blair County is 20.3%. The number of homeless persons served in shelters in Blair County almost doubled from 129 persons served in 2000 to 233 in 2007.

Safety Priority Area and Indicator Data

Section Eleven outlines indicator data related to crime, alcohol and other drugs, and unsafe schools and juvenile at-risk behavior. In the Blair County 2007 Household Survey, 70.4% of those responding ranked **crime** as the number one major/moderate community challenge. Crime was ranked number five in the Head Start survey with over 62.2% of respondents stating it was a major/moderate issue. Those responding to the key informant survey had similar views with 78.9% reporting crime as the second highest major/moderate issue. In the youth focus group, crime was ranked as their number one concern for Blair County.

The patterns of crime in Blair County for 2006-2007 are defined by the PA Uniform Crime Reports. According to those reports, the Part 1 crime rate (serious offenses such as murder, negligent manslaughter, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny theft, arson, and motor vehicle theft) in the county increased since 2003 and is now equal to Pennsylvania for serious crimes. Data indicates an increase as well for Part 2 crimes (encompass all other crime classifications outside those defined as Part I offenses) in the county. In 2006 14.1% of total arrests in Blair County were for those under the age of 18 which is a slight decrease from 2000 at 15.0%. In 2008, the Blair County District Attorney's Office handled 3,045 cases. Of those, 912 cases were drug cases and 685 were Driving Under the Influence (DUI) offenses.

There appears to be general agreement within Blair County that **alcohol and other drug abuse** has adversely affected the quality of life and impacted crime rates. It was ranked number one by 97% of key informants as a major/moderate issue and was the second highest rated issue in the random household survey and by Head Start survey respondents.

Although **unsafe schools** was not listed as one of the top community challenges/issues in the household survey, the data verifies that incidents are occurring in schools within Blair County at or near the same rate as reported by the state. For 2006-2007, there were 488 incidents resulting in 98 arrests. There were 37 reports of possession of weapons and 150 assaults on students.

Health Priority Area and Indicator Data

Section Twelve highlights indicator data relate to overall health issues; alcohol and other drugs from a health perspective; anxiety, stress, and depression; and lack of affordable medical care and not having enough money to pay for medical care. The five leading causes of death in Blair County are heart disease, cancer, stroke, chronic lower respiratory disease, and accidents. The death rate in Blair County is higher than for Pennsylvania and there is a notable decrease in birth rate making Blair County an aging population.

The needs assessment indicates that **alcohol and drugs** are a high priority health issue. It was ranked number one by 97% of key informants as a major/moderate issue. Over 69% of households and 67% of Head Start participants reported that alcohol and other drugs was a major/moderate issue. It was rated by youth as the number one concern for their population. Participants in the family violence focus group stated that substance abuse is a significant factor affecting families.

Trends in Blair County from 2000 to 2006 indicate a 22% increase in persons treated for alcohol, a 42% increase in persons treated for heroin, and a 12% increase in persons treated for cocaine. Since 1997, the number of accidental drug overdoses in Blair County tripled in some years.

In 2007, 3,093 Blair County students in grades 6, 8, 10 and 12 participated in the Pennsylvania Youth Survey. Information taken from the PAYS survey indicates that Blair County students recorded the highest lifetime prevalence-of-use rates for alcohol (45.6%), cigarettes (22.3%) and smokeless tobacco (14.7%). Other lifetime prevalence rates ranged from 0.3% for heroin to 9.0% for inhalants. The rate of illicit drug use excluding marijuana is summarized by the indicator “any illicit drug (other than marijuana),” with 11.5% of surveyed students reporting use of these drugs in their lifetimes.

Blair County students also reported the highest past-30-day prevalence-of-use rates for alcohol (16.3%), cigarettes (9.6%) and smokeless tobacco (6.9%). Other past-30-day prevalence rates ranged from 0.2% for crack cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine and ecstasy to 3.7% for marijuana. Overall, 4.0% of students reported the use of some illicit drug (other than marijuana) in the past 30 days.

Respondents to the Blair County household survey and the Head Start survey put **anxiety, stress, and depression** as the number one challenge within their own households at 36% and 52% respectively. The major behavioral health provider in Blair County reports an average of twenty cases per month of serious mental health disorders (priority one) and another eight to ten cases of sub-acute problems with some anxiety/stress. Depression often is accompanied by co-occurring mental disorders (such as alcohol or substance abuse) and, if left untreated, can lead to higher rates of suicide.

The national annual suicide rate is 11 per 100,000. The rate in Blair County is higher at 14.3%. Over the last eleven years, the average number of Student Assistance Program referrals for suicide ideation, gesture, or attempt in schools was over forty students per year. As indicated on the Pennsylvania Youth Survey, youth in Blair County also experience symptoms of depression with 32.4% of students feeling depressed or sad most days.

In Blair County, 31% of those responding to the random household survey indicated that one of their household challenges was not having enough money to pay the doctor, buy prescription medications, or get medical insurance. As a community challenge, the **lack of affordable medical care** was listed by 57% of households as well as 74% of key informants.

As with most of the survey results, Head Start families saw it as an even greater challenge at 64%. About 19.5% of the population in Blair County is eligible for medical assistance as compared to 15.1% for Pennsylvania. Approximately, 4,875 adults ages 65 and older are enrolled in Pennsylvania’s prescription assistance program (PACE/PACENET).

Other Indicator Data

Another theme that emerged from the surveys, focus groups, and community meetings was social and children's issues including but not limited to family violence, bullying, teen pregnancy, etc. Section Thirteen contains indicator data for **child abuse and family violence**. It also provides references to other indicator data which was not addressed within the needs assessment report. The substantiated child abuse rates in Blair County vary from year to year but are higher than for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

With regard to family violence, there were 453 Protection from Abuse orders filed in 2007 in Blair County. Locally domestic violence abuse reports have remained steady for the past five years, although there was a 6% increase in 2005. Use of the domestic abuse shelter has increased 30% since 2004-2005. The number of victims served through the Blair County Victim Services Office for all crimes in 2008 was 1,961.

When reviewing **education** indicator data for Blair County, 10% of adults ages 25 and over did not finish high school, but that percentage has improved since 1990. The high school drop out rate for Blair County is 1.8% which is comparable to Pennsylvania's rate of 1.9%. Fewer students in the county attend two-four year college, but 25% do participate in non-degree post secondary education.

Conclusions

The main reason for undertaking this community assessment was to identify and prioritize community issues to help guide programmatic and fiscal decisions. Everyone involved in this endeavor, including the Steering Committee, members of the Needs Assessment Partnership, and participants in focus groups and community meetings, is committed to strategies that create clearly recognizable improvement in the lives of Blair County residents. This can be accomplished by creating new partnerships and by joining existing collaborations to focus on results that create measurable impact on the six priority challenges and issues that were identified by survey results, focus groups, and supported by indicator data.

This needs assessment process confirmed that Blair County has many assets, including community leaders, businesses, service providers, community organizations and individuals. Those individuals who took time to complete the household survey or to attend the community meetings, and those who dedicated many hours as members of the Partnership are some of what makes Blair County a great place to live. But it is also apparent that there are significant challenges, many of which have become even more challenging with recent job losses and economic conditions that are impacting our local community and the nation.

This is a report on what has been done since the inception of COMPASS II, with a look at what is to come. The challenge is to motivate key community leaders and citizens to use this information to understand the issues and to work collaboratively toward resolving them.

We take our next step by sponsoring a formal event releasing the *Blair County Profile: Our Strengths, Challenges, and Issues*. Over 150 key leaders in Blair County will be invited to hear the results of the needs assessment, receive a hard copy of the full report, and join the Partnership. The Partnership will then begin the task of selecting priority issues and best practice outcomes as part of the Community Plan.

It is with sincere gratitude that we recognize those who throughout the past year have invested their time, guidance, and perspective into the Blair County Needs Assessment for the purpose of making Blair County an even better place to live and work. Acknowledgements are offered in section two, “Blair County Needs Assessment Process” on pages 24-26 of the full report.

For those who want electronic access to the information contained in this report, the entire report and additional, detailed sources of data are found at the website of the Blair County Human Services Offices (<http://www.hso.blairco.org/needsassessment.html>).



How To Use This Report

This report summarizes a community building process developed by the United Way of America and utilized by the Blair County Needs Assessment Partnership. The COMPASS II® model helps communities assess both their assets as well as their needs as initial steps to setting priorities and taking action to improve the quality of life for their residents.

The initial stages of this effort in Blair County began in early 2007 and involved the collection of data from multiple sources, including several different types of surveys, public indicator data, focus groups, and community meetings. The Executive Summary on pages 9-20 provides a concise overview of the findings from all the data sources. For those who want more information on methods and findings within each data type, the body of the report provides more detail as outlined in the table of contents.

Readers are urged to keep track of which particular set of findings they are reviewing and to systematically work through these different sources of information. References for all sources of data are included at the end of the report. Finally, the report also outlines the next phases of the COMPASS II for Blair County and includes recommendations for developing a community plan.

For those who want electronic access to the information contained in this report, the entire report and additional, detailed sources of data are found at the website of the Blair County Human Services Office (<http://www.hso.blairco.org/needsassessment.html>). If you have questions or concerns about the methods or conclusions of this process, please contact the staff of the Blair County Human Services Office at (814) 693-3112, 423 Allegheny Street, Suite 443, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648.

For more information about how to become involved with the next stages of this program contact United Way of Blair County at 814-944-0884 or the Blair County Human Services Office at 814-693-3112.



Section One:

Overview and Philosophy of the COMPASS II Model

The United Way of America defines “community building as the process of mobilizing communities to improve people’s lives. It engages diverse stakeholders, including residents and others, in sustained, collaborative, strategic efforts to strengthen and improve conditions in an identified geographic area.” Community building is the coming together of diverse segments of a community to develop a community agenda. It is more than a set of meetings or a project. It is the development and pursuit of a community impact plan. COMPASS II® is the guide to community building that many communities are using to provide a framework for accomplishing their needs assessment.^{1*} It works by identifying community strengths and assets and by matching and connecting those strengths and assets with strategic opportunities for people to improve their community. COMPASS II includes people in the decision-making process on whom the decisions will have an impact.

There are eight phases to the COMPASS II Program:

Phase 1: Form a Community Partnership

The sponsoring organization(s) holds a preliminary meeting of potential partners and determines the feasibility of conducting the COMPASS II process. The feasibility inquiry will help determine the goals of the proposed process, the amount of resources available to expend, and the scope of the process to be undertaken. With the support of the partners, a Community Partnership is formed.

Phase II: Inventory Key Community Assets

During Phase II, there is an inventory of Key Community Assets. This review of select associations and organizations looks at the resources and capacities available to which people can connect to improve the community.

Phase III: Collect and Analyze Community Data

There are two components to this phase of collecting and analyzing community data. The first step includes conducting surveys with the general population and key informants within the community. The second embarks on research on quantitative indicators of social, economic and environmental conditions. As a result, a community database can be developed for use by a variety of community groups.

Phase IV: Create a Community Vision

The intent of this phase is to create a powerfully stated vision for the future of the community. A representative sample of stakeholders from the community is brought together to share its vision for the community. This group will explore the strengths and successes of the community as well as its vulnerabilities and challenges.

* Note: All footnotes are referenced at the end of this report in the section entitled *References, Bibliography, and Websites*.

Phase V: Select Priority Issues and Establish Targeted Community Outcomes

The Community Partnership will utilize the needs assessment report to select a limited number of priority issues and establish targeted community outcomes. The selection process focuses on those issues that are most critical to achieving the community vision and those with the potential for having a significant impact on the issues.

Phase VI: Build an Outcome-Focused Community Impact Plan

During Phase VI, a community impact plan is developed that outlines how the Community Partnership will mobilize community assets to achieve targeted community outcomes. After adopting strategies for achieving the intended outcomes, specific action plans, a budget, and a plan for tracking progress and measuring success are presented to the members of the Community Partnership to gain commitments to roles and actions.

Phase VII: Take Action

In Phase VII, community assets are mobilized to achieve the targeted community outcomes identified in the community impact plan. The Community Partnership distributes the final plan of action to all associations and organizations, which are interested in or affected by the action plan. These associations and organizations can use the plan as a blueprint for redistributing their resources to address the priority issues.

Phase VIII: Track Process, Progress and Impact

In the final phase, it is critical to assess the effectiveness of the process and make improvements as appropriate, including updating information about any emerging community assets and issues. It is important to monitor the impact by comparing actual community outcomes with the targeted community outcomes and the community vision set forth earlier. How has the community changed as a result of the actions taken?



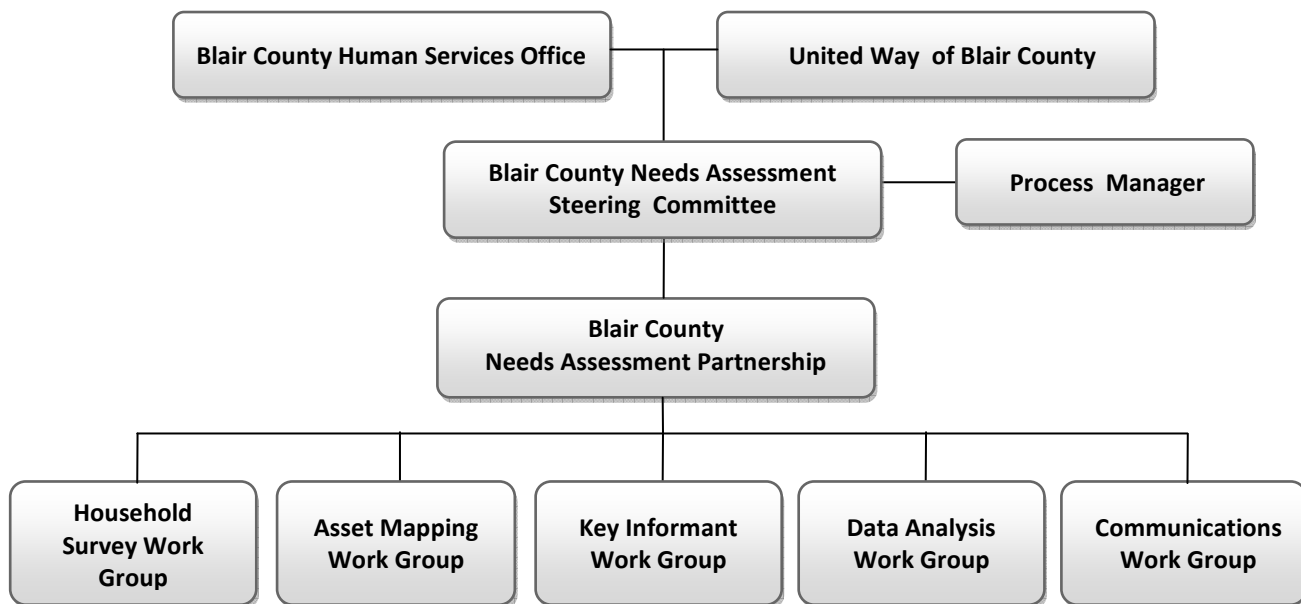
Section Two:

Blair County Needs Assessment Process

A. Implementation of COMPASS II in Blair County

The Blair County Needs Assessment Partnership is a community partnership effort to provide a comprehensive and enduring assessment of the needs and assets in our community. Its purpose is to identify community assets, identify targeted needs, and develop an action plan to fill those needs. In 2007, the United Way of Blair County and the Blair County Human Services Office invited organizations to collaborate on a community-wide needs assessment. An organizational meeting was conducted and the Partnership was created to provide direction and on-going support. The organizational structure that was implemented is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Blair County Needs Assessment Organizational Chart



B. Blair County Needs Assessment Steering Committee

This group met at least monthly to oversee the comprehensive needs assessment and to assure that the process was moving forward appropriately. The following persons served as members:

Jean Johnstone, M.P.A., Partnership Chairperson, Catholic Charities, Inc. of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

Robin Beck, United Way of Blair County

Tommi Burchfield, United Way of Blair County
Cathy Crum, Blair County Human Services Office
Donna D. Gority, Blair County Commissioner
Coleen A. Heim, M.S., Process Manager
JoEllen Steinbrunner, Retired, Consultant and Blair County Mental Health/Mental Retardation/Drug and Alcohol Program Administrator
Autumn Temple, AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America)
Shawn P. Withrow, AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America)

C. Blair County Needs Assessment Partnership

The Steering Committee collaborated with a broader group of local resource people, identified as the Needs Assessment Partnership. The Partnership was essential in guiding the entire COMPASS II community-building effort. Members of the Partnership included stakeholders on whom the community decisions would have an impact, who had an interest in the effort, who represented diverse sectors of the community, and who were likely to be involved in shaping and implementing the community impact plan developed later in the effort. A special thank you to the following people who served as members:

Ruthann Akers, Child Advocates of Blair County
Robin Beck, Blair Senior Services, Inc. and presently with the United Way of Blair County
Kathryn Bullington, The Community Interest Group
Tommi Burchfield, United Way of Blair County
Cathy Crum, Blair County Human Services Office
Anthony DeGol, United Way of Blair County
Susan G. Estep, E.D., Center for Independent Living of SC PA
Allan Faight, Blair County Community Services Agency
Mahlon Fiscel, Family Services Inc.
Mark Frederick, L.P.C., Altoona Regional Health System, Behavioral Health
Donna D. Gority, Blair County Commissioner
Janice Groskin, B.S., Blair Senior Services, Inc.
Terriann (Terri) Grove, CONTACT Altoona
Coleen A. Heim, M.S., Process Manager
William Hunter, MAPA, Blair County Community Action Agency
Joe Hurd, Blair County Chamber of Commerce
Jean Johnstone, M.P.A., Catholic Charities, Inc. of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown
Dan Lago, Penn State Altoona
Sally A. Lenz, Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries
Steve Michelone, Altoona City Fire Department
Becky Mingle, Blair County Human Services Office
Erica Peterson, Child Advocates of Blair County
Tim Salony, Blair County Library System
JoEllen Steinbrunner, Retired, Consultant and Blair County Mental Health/Mental Retardation/Drug and Alcohol Program Administrator
Autumn Temple, AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America)
Heather A. Withrow, Easter Seals Central Pennsylvania
Shawn P. Withrow, AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America)

D. Role of the Process Manager

A part-time consultant was hired to assume the role of Process Manager. This person was responsible for administering the entire community-building process. The Process Manager provided the day-to-day administration of the effort; collected data for the Needs Assessment Partnership to review; scheduled and facilitated work group meetings, community meetings, and focus groups; maintained an expense report; and prepared the final report. The Steering Committee, Partnership, and work groups were provided with meeting agendas and minutes. In addition, a Google Group was established for posting of all relevant needs assessment documents and correspondence.

E. Work Groups

Members of the Partnership served on five workgroups. The Household Survey Work Group conducted the random household survey. The Asset Mapping Work Group conducted surveys with associations, service providers, businesses and the faith community. The Key Informant Work Group conducted a key informant survey, assisted in organizing Community Meetings, and conducted focus groups. The Communications Work Group publicized the activities of the Needs Assessment Partnership. Lastly, the Data Analysis Work Group reviewed all survey data and assisted in the collection of indicator data for Blair County. Work group members also assisted in the development of the Blair County Needs Assessment Report.

F. Data Entry

The Blair County Needs Assessment Partnership was fortunate to have available two AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) positions to accomplish data entry and assist in the final preparation of the report. Data was entered using the SPSS for Windows 16.0.1 statistical program.

G. Funding

This needs assessment process was primarily funded by the Blair County Human Services Office and the United Way of Blair County. The United Way was responsible for securing the AmeriCorps VISTA positions. However, several other agencies contributed significantly to the project including Altoona Regional Health System and Penn State Altoona. In-kind services such as meeting rooms, printing, use of equipment, and volunteer hours were provided by many other organizations. As of the preparation of this report, a total of \$32,044 in direct funding was spent. Other organizations spent \$3,931 and approximately \$29,452 of in-kind services were documented.



Section Three:

Methods

The primary purpose of the Blair County Needs Assessment was to provide the community with increased knowledge of the current challenges and issues that affect residents of the county, as well as the strengths and assets from which to create solutions. Both objective indicator (factual) data and subjective survey (opinion) data was collected. The needs assessment in Blair County began by asking people and organizations, through surveys and focus groups, their views about the following:

- ⦿ Neighborhood and Community Strengths
- ⦿ Community Challenges and Issues
- ⦿ Household Challenges and Issues
- ⦿ Involvement in Community Initiatives /Projects

A. Method for Household Survey

The purpose of the household survey was to collect both subjective (opinion) and incidence data from people who live within Blair County. The household survey included questions regarding demographics, neighborhood/ community strengths, community concerns, and questions specific to household or personal issues.

The Household Survey Work Group determined the scope and data collection method for the household survey. The survey and cover letter clarified definitions for “neighborhood,” “community,” and “household” and asked households to specify their municipality, borough, or city. The household survey and cover letter are included as Appendix A.

A random sample of 2000 households (approximately five percent) was drawn from the 41,542 households in Blair County so that each Zip Code was represented according to its percentage of total households in the county. The services of Labor Specialties, Inc. (LSI) were utilized to obtain the database list. Two thousand surveys were mailed in June 2007, along with a cover letter and pre-paid return envelope. The Communications Work Group along with Needs Assessment Partnership members publicized the household survey through television interviews, newspaper and other media releases, and agency newsletters to consumers.

There were 601 surveys returned by respondents to the Blair County Human Services Office. Fourteen of those were not useable due to not being filled out properly, resulting in a household random sample of 587 completed surveys (29.4% response rate). Survey responses were entered into the SPSS for Windows 16.0.1 statistical program which was used for analysis and graphic displays.

The household survey was also administered by Child Advocates for Blair County to a volunteer sample of 215 parents in their Head Start Program. The household survey data obtained from Head Start was also analyzed using the SPSS statistical analysis program but was kept separate from the random household

survey data gathered by the Needs Assessment Partnership. This survey, while not primarily a part of our needs assessment process, provides a very interesting sample of young parents who are income-eligible for a significant human service program. This survey allowed comparison with our random sample results for the county as a whole.

B. Method for Key Informant Survey

The purpose of this component was to assess what community key informants believed to be the strengths and needs of Blair County. The Key Informant Work Group had three tasks to accomplish for the needs assessment (1) administer a key informant survey, (2) conduct focus groups, and (3) sponsor community meetings. They selected the groups and developed a distribution list of 121 key informants who would be asked to complete a survey on their opinions about community strengths and issues. Key informants were selected from local, county, and state elected officials; school district leaders and board members; police chiefs; library presidents; media contacts; community foundations; civic leaders; county planners; human resource directors for major employers; leaders of non-government funding sources; recreation commission; etc.

The key informant survey and cover letter which were mailed in February 2008 are attached as Appendix B. Thirty-nine completed surveys were received, a 32.2% response rate. The surveys were entered into the SPSS for Windows 16.0.1 statistical program. The survey was completed by a cross-section of leaders from across Blair County.

C. Format for Focus Groups

Four focus groups were conducted for (1) youth, (2) persons with disabilities, (3) senior citizens, and (4) people dealing with family violence issues within the county. They were utilized to provide access to groups with concerns that may not be well represented in random sample surveys. As was recommended by the COMPASS II manual, three people were used at each focus group (facilitator, person to welcome and register participants, and a recorder). The Process Manager developed materials, including an agenda, questions, and discussion points in order to provide a consistent format for conducting the focus groups. The format varied slightly based on the need of the particular group and timeframe. Each focus group lasted no more than an hour and a half with the goal of having 10 to 15 participants in each session. Demographic information was not collected from focus group participants other than what was documented on the group by the recorder. Two experienced facilitators from the Steering Committee guided the focus group discussions based on items from the household survey tool. The format served two purposes: (1) to ensure that broader issues of the community needs assessment were discussed; and (2) to guide the participants in addressing issues that were specific to their focus group.

A youth focus group was held on February 8, 2008, in cooperation with the Salvation Army. There were sixteen people ages 12-20 representing various communities around Blair County with about an equal mix of male and female. Four adult leaders/parents were also present.

The focus group for persons with disabilities was conducted on February 11, 2008, in cooperation with the Center for Independent Living of Southcentral Pennsylvania. There were twelve participants from Blair County with different disabilities. There were two males and ten females.

A senior citizens focus group was held on February 25, 2008, in cooperation with Blair Senior Services. There were nine participants representing various communities around Blair County with about an equal mix of males and females.

A focus group on family violence issues was held with community representatives from the Stop the Violence Against Women Task Force on February 28, 2008, in cooperation with Family Services, Inc. There were nineteen participants representing various organizations in the county with seven males and twelve females.

Participants were asked to respond to the following:

- ⊙ What are the strengths/assets of living in our community (Blair County)?
- ⊙ Rank the top five issues for Blair County from issues under the following categories: economic, educational, environmental, health, housing, leisure, safety, social issues, transportation, and other.
- ⊙ What are the major challenges/issues in our community (including those specific to your population)?
- ⊙ How can we address our/your challenges/issues with community resources?

Information was recorded on the results of their ranking of issues specific to Blair County and their population as well as participant comments and summary points. The sample facilitator's guide for the focus groups is included in Appendix C.

D. Method for Asset Mapping Surveys

The Asset Mapping Work Group developed a distribution list of organizations and reviewed the sample surveys provided in the COMPASS II manual. Asset mapping surveys were sent to businesses, associations, service providers, and the faith community. The methods for each survey are summarized below:

1. Business Survey

The purpose of the business survey was to build positive relationships with businesses, while increasing the understanding of organizations that already engage in improving the community. In cooperation with the Blair County Chamber of Commerce, the business survey was distributed to a selected group of members. An email was sent by the Chamber Executive Director to businesses informing them that the survey would be forthcoming. Because of the confidential nature of some of the questions in the business survey, a sub-committee of the Chamber of Commerce helped to modify the survey.

The business survey and cover letter which was mailed in September 2007 are included in Appendix D. A total of 806 surveys were sent, with 67 businesses responding, or 8.3%. It appears that the survey was primarily completed by small businesses focusing on financial, service and retail industries.

2. Associations Survey

An association is a group of citizens working together for a common purpose or common interest. The purpose of the association survey was to build positive relationships with associations, while learning how the citizens in the community are already engaged in the process of improving the quality of life. An Excel spreadsheet distribution list of the major associations in Blair County was developed and the survey and cover letter were mailed in September 2007. The association survey and cover letter are included in Appendix E. A total of 96 association surveys were sent, with 15 responding, or 15.6%.

3. Service Provider Survey

The purpose of the service provider survey was to build positive relationships and trust with service providers, while learning how service providers are already improving the community. Generally, service providers have a significant interest in community assessments and community-building efforts, and their response rate in Blair County conformed to the generalization. An Excel spreadsheet distribution list of key service providers in the county was developed. Postcards were mailed to service providers informing them that the survey would be forthcoming. The Blair County Human Services Office then mailed or emailed the survey and cover letter. In addition, agencies were reminded through the Blair County Health and Welfare Council to complete and return their surveys. A total of 145 service provider surveys were sent, with 53 responding, or 36.6%. The sample was characterized by both large and small agencies and the most significant agencies in the county participated. The survey and cover letter are included in Appendix F.

4. Faith Community Survey

The faith community is an integral part of life in Blair County who provides assistance and outreach in many ways. Although surveying the faith community was not part of the COMPASS II model, we researched and used a survey that the Tompkins County (New York) COMPASS II Community Assessment Committee included in their community report² because we wanted to identify the types of assistance provided by faith communities. In September 2007, the Blair County Human Services Office mailed or emailed the faith community survey and cover letter. A total of 250 faith community surveys were sent, with 29 responding, or 11.6%. The faith community survey and cover letter used in Blair County are included in Appendix G.

Table 1: Blair County Needs Assessment Survey Tracker³

Surveys	Surveys Sent	Surveys Returned	Percentage
Household	2000	587	29.4%
Key Informant	121	39	32.2%
Business	806	67	8.3%
Association	96	15	15.6%
Service Provider	145	53	36.6%
Faith-Based	250	29	11.6%

E. Format for Community Meetings

Upon completion of all surveys and focus groups, the Needs Assessment Steering Committee decided to conduct Community Meetings for the following purposes:

- To inform the public about the Blair County Needs Assessment Partnership
- To share the results of the needs assessment surveys and supporting data
- To obtain feedback on the results
- To provide an opportunity to become involved in developing the Community Plan

The Key Informant Work Group determined the number and location of meetings, prepared a standard format for facilitating the community meetings, and publicized each event. Members of the Steering Committee used a consistent agenda and PowerPoint presentation at each of the seven Community Meetings. A site was chosen within each of the school district regions in Blair County (Altoona, Bellwood, Claysburg, Hollidaysburg, Martinsburg, Tyrone, and Williamsburg).

The Communications Work Group, along with the Steering Committee and several Partnership members, developed a plan for publicizing the Community Meetings. An invitation letter and flyer were sent to key community leaders and organizations within each community. The Community Meetings were promoted through radio spots, newspaper articles, and media coverage during County Commissioners' meetings. The Human Services Office and the United Way sent out the flyer using email lists from surveys and distributed copies to members of the Health & Welfare Council. Flyers were posted in senior citizen transportation vans and forwarded to each of the senior centers in the county. In order to encourage regular citizens to attend as well as agencies, it was advertised that the name of a participant would be randomly drawn and a \$50.00 Sheetz card presented at each session.

The PowerPoint presentation provided an overview of the COMPASS II model, the needs assessment process in Blair County, and survey and data findings. There was an opportunity for participants to provide feedback and to volunteer for future planning. Basic demographic information was collected from the 52 participants representing local government, libraries, law enforcement, schools, child-serving agencies, health care, media, and citizens. The recorder wrote down all comments and recommendations as well as gathered information on persons willing to participate in future community-building processes.

F. Methods for Indicator Data

The purpose of collecting and analyzing indicator data is to document strengths and issues in the community in order to show whether research supports or does not support the perceptions of key informants and the general public as reflected in survey results. Members of the Data Analysis Work Group, along with the Process Manager collected state and local indicator data on demographics, economy, education, environment, health, housing, leisure activities, safety, social issues, and transportation. Data was obtained from a variety of federal, state, and local sources, including but not limited to: U.S. Census, Center for Rural Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Department of Education, Pennsylvania Department of Welfare, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Pennsylvania Department of Aging, etc.

G. Coding and Data Entry

Initially, coding and data entry for the household survey were done using the Abtab software provided as part of the COMPASS II manual. However, the decision was then made to purchase and code all the surveys into the SPSS for Windows 16.0.1 statistical program because it was easier to use, offered greater flexibility, and provided powerful tools for analyzing the data. SPSS allowed for uncomplicated creation of useful tables, charts, and graphs. It is also an industry standard in the education and research fields therefore, anyone who would like to analyze the raw data using their own copy of SPSS will be able to do so.



Section Four:

Household Survey Results

A. Blair County Demographic Data and Comparisons for Persons Completing the Household Survey

The purpose of the household survey was to obtain information from people who live within Blair County. The household survey included questions regarding demographics, neighborhood/community strengths, community concerns, and questions specific to household or personal issues (Appendix A). As shown in Table 2, our random household survey (2007) was generally representative of Blair County. There were some limitations in that Blair County respondents were slightly older, slightly higher income, and had more female representation (about 12% more) than the population described in the United States Census reports for Blair County.

Table 2: Comparisons of Blair County Demographics/Characteristics & Those Completing the Household Survey

Characteristics		Blair County Population	Household Survey (2007)
Age⁴	18-64	78.3%	68.2% (20-64)
	65 & Over	21.7%	26.5%
Gender⁵	Male	47.8%	29.5%
	Female	52.2%	66.4%
Race⁶	White	96.9%	96.8%
	Black or African American	1.4%	1.4%
	Spanish/Hispanic	0.6%	0.5%
	All Others	1.0%	1.3%
Median Income⁷	Income	\$40,730	\$42,500
Household⁸	2 or more adults without children	45.1%	53.8%
	2 or more adults with children	33.1%	25.7%
	1 Adult with at least 1 child	13.5%	2.6%
	1 Adult living alone	8.4%	13.8%

The household survey results show that the total sample demographics closely reflected the demographic characteristics of the county with regard to geographic location (Table 3).

Table 3: Response by Zip Code

Characteristics (continued)	Blair County Mailings	Household Survey (2007)
Response by Zip Code⁹		
16601 - Altoona	26.0%	24.4%
16602 - Altoona	25.0%	22.2%
16603 - Altoona	0.4%	0.2%
16617 - Bellwood	2.0%	2.2%
16625 - Claysburg	2.0%	2.4%
16631 - Curryville	0.1%	0.0%
16635 - Duncansville	8.0%	9.6%
16637 - East Freedom	1.0%	2.0%
16648 - Hollidaysburg	12.0%	11.6%
16662 - Martinsburg	4.0%	4.0%
16665 - Newry	0.3%	0.3%
16673 - Roaring Spring	4.0%	2.9%
16682 - Sproul	0.1%	0.0%
16684 - Tipton	0.2%	0.0%
16686 - Tyrone	10.0%	10.6%
16693 - Williamsburg	3.0%	3.7%

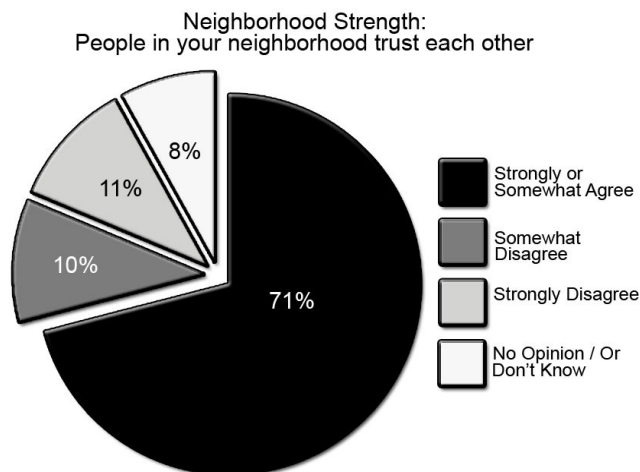
B. Neighborhood/Community Strengths

The household survey asked recipients to state their level of agreement to six questions regarding neighborhood/community strengths. Respondents are asked to rate the level of agreement on a Likert-type scale (Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Somewhat Disagree, Strongly Disagree, and No Opinion/Don't Know). The 2007 household survey captured some of the perceptions that residents have about their neighborhood and/or community including how difficult it is to create and sustain a sense of community.

Two positive results were that 71% of respondents felt that people in their neighborhood trust each other and two thirds agreed that people in their neighborhoods help each other out when they have a problem or in times of crisis (Figure 2). However, only slightly more than one-third gather together formally or informally to participate in activities.

Figure 2: Neighborhood Strengths

With regard to volunteering, only 26.1% say that they regularly volunteer in their neighborhoods. However, the wording of the question may have caused a lower than expected response and therefore may not accurately reflect the amount of volunteering that occurs outside their “neighborhood.” Almost 50% of the volunteering was for a religious group.



Survey responses are mixed regarding the opportunity to affect how things happen in the neighborhood. More than 63% of respondents felt they have little or no opportunity to affect how things happen in their neighborhood.

In the area of voting, eighty-six percent reported that they vote in most elections. However, the Center for Rural Pennsylvania reported voter participation in Blair County ranging from 46.1% to 67.2% from November 2000 – November 2006, which is consistent with rate for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.¹⁰

Figure 3: Categories of Community Challenges and Issues

C. Community Challenges and Issues

The household survey asked participants to identify the level of concern (not an issue, minor issue, moderate issue, major issue, or no opinion/ don't know) regarding twenty-five different community issues in the categories shown in Figure 3:



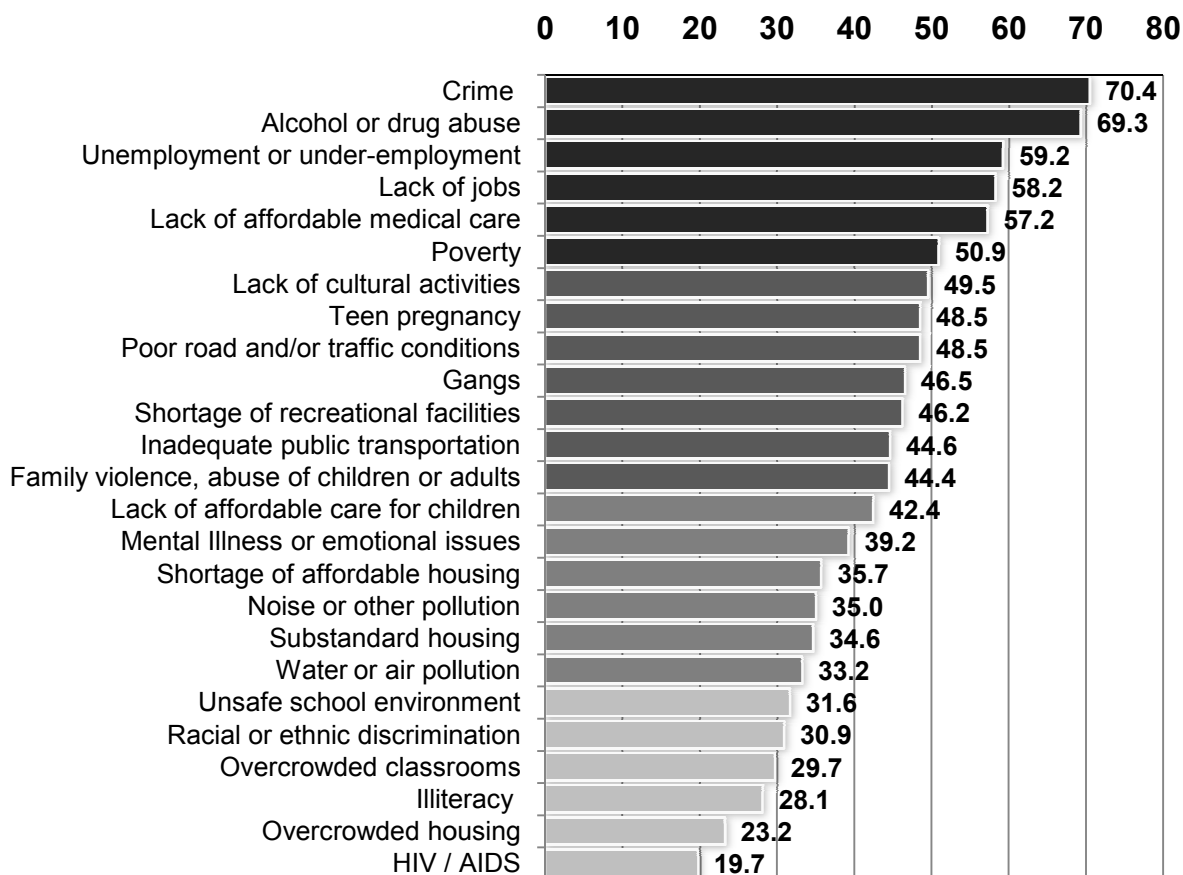
Out of the twenty-five issues, the six priority community issues identified for Blair County were chosen because they were ranked by 50% or more of respondents as a major/moderate issue:

1. Crime
2. Alcohol and other drugs
3. Unemployment or underemployment
4. Lack of jobs
5. Lack of affordable medical care
6. Poverty



As can be seen on Figure 4, nearly 70% of respondents identified crime and alcohol and drug abuse as the top two community challenges with the next four issues related to economic concerns. Five other issues were identified by over 46% of respondents including lack of cultural activities (49.5%), teen pregnancy (48.5%), poor road and/or traffic conditions (48.5%), gangs (46.5%), and shortage of recreational facilities (46.5%).

Figure 4: COMMUNITY CHALLENGES & ISSUES (Ranked by percentage identified as major or moderate issue).



The complete set of frequencies can be found on the Blair County Human Service Office website under Needs Assessment.¹¹ The prioritization tables on the website will show a combination of responses for major and moderate issue.

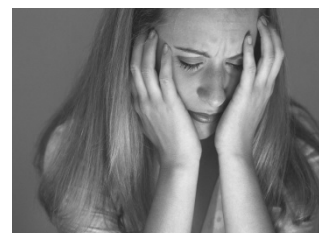
The responses for those who saw the issue as minor are one grouping and the responses for “not an issue” and “no opinion/don’t know” are combined.

D. Household Challenges and Issues

In the final section of the household survey, participants were asked whether any of the same twenty-five issues had been a challenge or an issue in their household. Respondents were asked to assess whether they found each area to be: not an issue, a minor issue, a moderate issue, a major issue, or no opinion/don’t know.

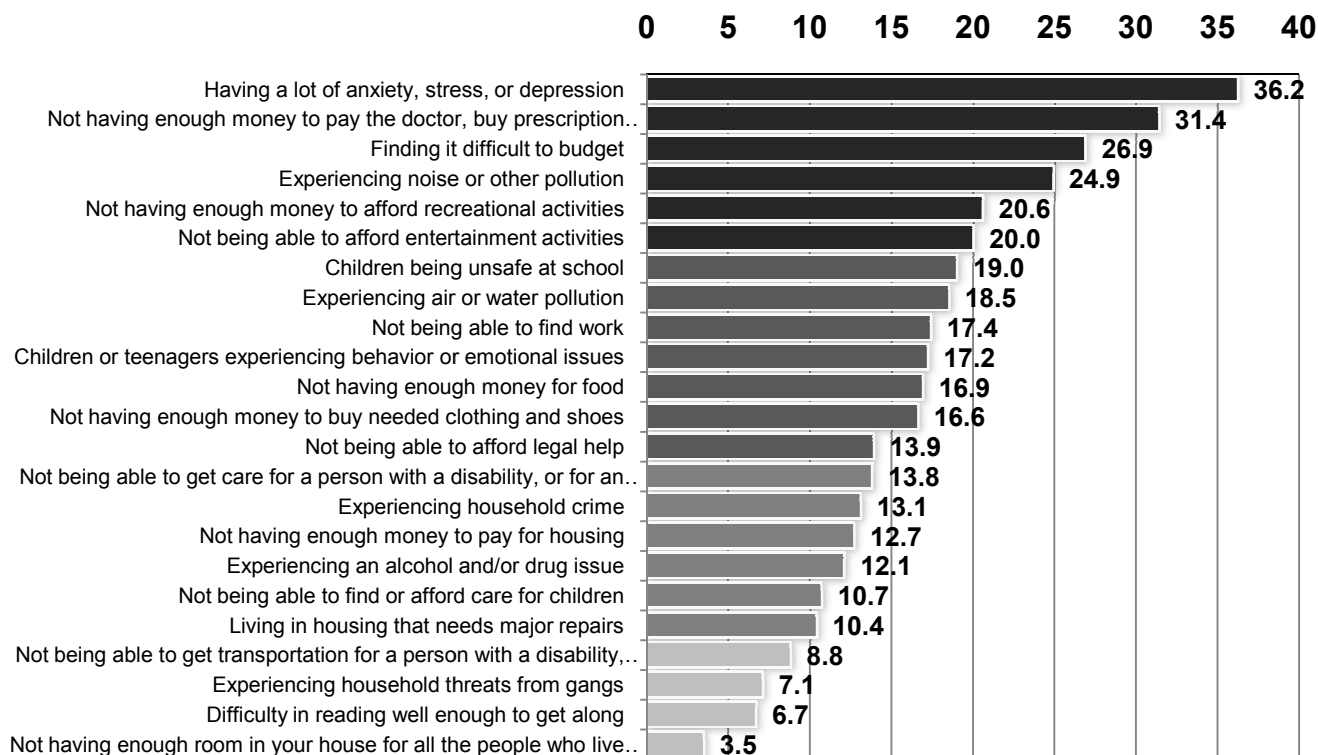
The top six household issues identified by the residents of Blair County are:

1. Anxiety, stress, or depression
2. Not having enough money to pay the doctor, buy prescription medications, or get medical insurance
3. Finding it difficult to budget
4. Experiencing noise or other pollution
5. Not having enough money to afford recreational activities
6. Not being able to afford entertainment activities



As Figure 5 indicates, thirty-six percent of respondents identified anxiety, stress, or depression as the highest issue in their household.

Figure 5: HOUSEHOLD CHALLENGES & ISSUES (Ranked by percentage identified as major or moderate issue).



E. Household Results by Subgroups

Subgroup analysis was only performed on the highest priority issues of crime, drugs/alcohol, unemployment/underemployment, lack of jobs, lack of affordable medical care, and poverty. With regard to income level, those households with an income under \$35,000 reported more of a concern with lack of affordable medical care and unemployment/underemployment as community challenges. Respondents with income under \$35,000 consistently had greater concerns overall with household issues a trend which was especially noticeable for those with incomes under \$25,000.

Single parents with at least one child were especially concerned with crime, alcohol and drug abuse, lack of affordable medical, and poverty.

Younger adults reported having more anxiety, stress, and depression in their household. One in five young adults also reported difficulty in budgeting. Young adults were noticeably more concerned about crime and alcohol/drug abuse as community challenges.

For household type, adults living alone were more likely to report that household issues did not affect them personally.

Lastly females and males had similar patterns of concerns on community challenges. Although for females, unemployment or underemployment was more of a concern.

F. Comparison with Head Start Survey

Child Advocates of Blair County used the household survey with their Head Start parents. It was very beneficial in the overall need assessment process in that it provided results from a subgroup that was underrepresented in the Blair County survey data.

- ◎ In comparing the two data sets (Blair County household survey and the Head Start survey), there is general agreement on the top five community issues; although, the rank order changed with lack of jobs listed as the top challenge in the Head Start survey. Respondents in the Head Start survey had stronger opinions related to community challenges.
- ◎ The top household challenges for Head Start families emphasized financial stressors, including difficulty budgeting and having funds for basic needs as well as entertainment. In fact, four out of the top five challenges for households were economic shortages.
- ◎ With regard to household challenges, over 50% indicated a lot of anxiety, stress, and depression in their households.
- ◎ The Head Start respondents reported less trust in their neighborhood than the random household survey but had similar levels of engagement in activities. Only 25% of respondents felt that they can affect change in their neighborhoods. They also had a significantly lower frequency of voting with 65.8% that do not vote in most elections.



Section Five:

Key Informant Survey

Key informant activities help to compile ideas for building on strengths to improve the community and involve community leaders in the community-building effort, which helps ensure that the final recommendations are carried out. Table 4 shows key informant survey responses for community strengths and Table 5 lists community challenges. The prioritization tables show a combination of responses for major and moderate issue.

Table 4: Key Informant Responses for Community Strengths

Community Strength by %	Major/ Moderate
Leaders come together and work productively to address critical community issues.	87.2%
Actively supports and strengthens connections between families, neighborhoods, and the whole community.	81.6%
Actively promotes positive relations among people from all races, genders, ages, and cultures.	74.4%
All religious groups come together to address pressing social concerns.	71.8%
People and organizations from all geographic regions get together to address mutual concerns.	64.1%
Actively promotes participation in the political process from all races, genders, ages, and cultures.	61.5%
Leaders from all sectors of the community share common goals and uphold a common vision for the community.	61.5%
Associations in neighborhoods from various parts of the community share strategies and work together.	61.5%
There exists a great deal of mutual respect among leaders from all sectors of the community.	52.6%

Table 5: Key Informant Responses for Community Challenges

Community Challenge by %	Major/ Moderate
Alcohol and/or Drug Abuse	97.4%
Crime	78.9%
Lack of Jobs	76.9%
Unemployment / Underemployment	76.9%
Lack of Affordable Medical Care	74.4%
Inadequate Public Transportation	71.8%
Poverty	69.2%
Mental Illness or Emotional Issues	66.7%
Abuse of Children or Adults	65.8%
Lack of Cultural Activities	60.5%
Lack of Affordable Child Care	60.5%
Shortage of Recreational Facilities	55.3%
Gangs	55.3%
Teen Pregnancy	52.6%
Substandard Housing	47.4%
Poor Road / Traffic Conditions	46.2%
Illiteracy	46.2%
Shortage of Affordable Housing	42.1%
Racial or Ethnic Discrimination	36.8%
Unsafe School	30.8%
Water or Air Pollution	25.6%
Overcrowded Classrooms	25.6%
Noise or Other Pollution	23.1%
Overcrowded Housing	21.1%
HIV / AIDS	10.5%

Key Informant Survey Highlights, Community Strengths, and Challenges:

- 87.2% of the respondents agreed that the community is one where leaders from business, labor, government, education, religious, neighborhood, non-profit, and all other sectors come together and work productively to address critical community issues.
- On a moderate strength level, local key informants believe activities support community cohesion and diversity/inclusion.
- For community strengths, there was moderate disagreement that participation in the political process was being promoted and that leaders shared common goals/vision.
- Out of the responses for community strengths, key informants see mainly positive strengths but almost 50% did not perceive leaders as having mutual respect among all sectors of the community.

- For community challenges across key informant responses, alcohol/drug abuse, crime, and lack of jobs were ranked the highest among community issues.
- The percentage of key informants who ranked alcohol and drug abuse as a major/moderate issue in Blair County was 97%.
- The top five priorities identified in the key informant survey were the same as in the household and Head Start surveys.
- Key informants reported that transportation was a major concern especially inadequate public transportation (71.8%).

Key leaders had an opportunity to provide additional comments on community challenges and resources within Blair County. The following are two quotes which are consistent with overall themes reflected in survey results, focus groups, and community meetings.

“We need to do more to offset the tremendous disadvantages that children living in poverty need to deal with. Major problems are interwoven. We need to shift our thinking and fiscal priorities.”

“More resources should be directed to entice some major industry to move to the area. This could really help the area decrease the poverty and unemployment rate. It would also keep our young adults in town rather than moving away.”



Section Six:

Needs Assessment Focus Groups

Although the response from the household survey represented most geographic areas of Blair County, certain groups may have been underrepresented of the community. In order to identify the particular needs of different groups, the Needs Assessment Partnership conducted four focus groups with members of the following populations:

- ⦿ youth
- ⦿ persons with disabilities
- ⦿ senior citizens
- ⦿ persons and/or organizations dealing with family violence issues



A. Youth Focus Group Highlights, Strengths, and Challenges

A youth focus group was held with sixteen youth ages 12-20 representing various communities. Each youth was asked to rank the top five challenges and issues for Blair County from in the following categories: economic, educational, environmental, health, housing, leisure, safety, social issues, transportation, and other. The results are shown in Table 6:

Table 6: Youth Focus Group Ranking of Concerns for Blair County

Issues	Number of Responses
Crime	13
Alcohol and drug use	9
Not enough recreation places	8
Unsafe schools	6
Family violence/child abuse	6
Teen pregnancy	6
Not enough cultural activities	4
Can't afford medical care	4
No jobs available	4
Unemployed/not working	3
Gangs	3
Mental illness (emotional problems, suicide, depression)	2
Bad roads/too much traffic	2
Not enough public transportation	2
Houses/apartments in bad shape	2
Racial or ethnic discrimination	1
Poverty/no money	1
Overcrowded classrooms	1
Can't afford a place to live	1
Not enough police interaction with crime	1
Can't find or pay for good child care	0

Issues (Continued)	Number of Responses
HIV/AIDS	0
Illiteracy	0
Water or air pollution	0
Noise or other pollution	0
Overcrowded/too many people	0

Next, the youth were asked to talk about strengths (what was good about Blair County). The following were their responses:

- ⊙ Lots of green spaces and parks.
- ⊙ Close to churches, mall, grocery stores, etc.
- ⊙ There is an effort to fix up downtown.
- ⊙ When teens are in trouble, there are places to get help.
- ⊙ Crime is not as bad as in bigger cities but the same issues still exist.

The young people were then asked to rank the top five issues for youth in Blair County from in the following categories: economic, educational, environmental, health, housing, leisure, safety, social issues, transportation, and other. The results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Youth Focus Group Ranking of Concerns for Youth in Blair County

Issues	Number of Responses
Alcohol and drug use	15
Not enough recreation places	12
Racial or ethnic discrimination	6
Crime	5
Family violence/child abuse	5
Teen pregnancy	5
Not enough cultural activities	5
Other – peer pressure	4
No jobs available	4
Unemployed/not working	3
Mental illness (emotional problems, suicide, depression)	3
Bad roads/too much traffic	3
Not enough public transportation	2
Houses/apartments in bad shape	1
Unsafe schools	1
Poverty/no money	1
Can't afford a place to live	1
Can't find or pay for good child care	1
Gangs	0
Can't afford medical care	0
HIV/AIDS	0
Illiteracy	0
Overcrowded classrooms	0
Water or air pollution	0
Noise or other pollution	0
Overcrowded/too many people	0

Here are further comments made by the youth regarding issues pertaining to them.

- ⊙ Of the sixteen youth, fourteen had experienced being bullied sometime in their lives. They felt that some bullying resulted from the lack of tolerance toward others whom they perceive as different (moving in from another area, students who are home schooled, religion, etc.). Others see bullying from kids who want to be in gangs.
- ⊙ “There are lots of activities in schools; however, participation is not possible for everyone because it costs too much money.”
- ⊙ Although they never used to worry about unsafe schools, they are dealing with or hearing about threats, bullying, drugs, etc. However, they believe that school security measures (i.e. cameras, security officer, etc.) have been effective in curbing problems.
- ⊙ “Drugs are so blatant that people do not even recognize it. Alcohol is such a way of life that parents and families do not see it as an issue.”

Lastly, they were asked what they think should or could be done to make Blair County a better place. Here were their comments:

- ⊙ There needs to be more free things for kids to do. “When kids are bored, they’ll do anything which can get them in trouble.” More recreation activities would help (swimming pools, basketball courts, more family-oriented opportunities such as roller skating, skateboard parks, community/intramural where everyone gets to play, etc.).
- ⊙ Give students financial support through the schools so they can participate in sports or band if they can’t afford to.
- ⊙ Need more teen related drug treatment programs.
- ⊙ The cops are doing the best that they can but more are needed, especially to be visible in certain neighborhoods.
- ⊙ Parents need to be more involved in their children’s education. High schools need to reach out to parents and other adults to volunteer in the schools.
- ⊙ More neighborhood watch groups.
- ⊙ Restore old buildings for heritage use and/or tear down abandoned buildings.
- ⊙ More diversity education in schools beginning in elementary school.

B. Persons with Disabilities Focus Group Highlights, Strengths, and Challenges:

A focus group was held with twelve persons with different disabilities. Participants were asked the question, “What are the strengths of our community (Blair County)?” The following were their responses:

- ⊙ It easy to know your way around.
- ⊙ Public parks and recreation options.
- ⊙ There are community supports (e.g. volunteerism, financial, etc.).
- ⊙ Public libraries where people can access computers for research and email, wonderful resources for the deaf, information can be printed, etc.).
- ⊙ Specialized treatment and support facilities.
- ⊙ Community pride.
- ⊙ Center for Independent Living gives people an opportunity to volunteer.



- ⦿ Churches collaborate and meet together for projects.
- ⦿ Various restaurants provide employment.

The next question asked “What are the major challenges/issues in our community (including your neighborhood/family/persons with disabilities)?” Their responses were as follows:

- ⦿ They have experienced discrimination as persons with disabilities.
- ⦿ Inadequate medical care locally and lack of persons to diagnose and treat mental health issues in children.
- ⦿ Youth are being trained by schools but not hired by businesses.
- ⦿ Bullying in schools is a concern for children with disabilities.
- ⦿ Persons with disabilities want to work but employment is not always easy. Transportation is not available after 5:00 and on weekends which makes it difficult for people to work or get hired for shifts.
- ⦿ Fixed income forces people to decide between services, food, heat, etc.
- ⦿ Eligibility for financial support doesn’t reach far enough or may not be known (e.g. housing).
- ⦿ Recreation activities are very limited or do not exist for persons with disabilities.

Participants were then asked to rank the top five challenges and issues for Blair County from the following categories: economic, educational, environmental, health, housing, leisure, safety, social issues, transportation, and other. The results are shown in Table 8:

Table 8: Persons with Disabilities Focus Group Ranking of Concerns for Blair County

Issues	Number of Responses
Economy	11
Health	8
Transportation	5
Social Issues	3
Housing	3
Safety	2
Education	2
Other – Political Activism Needed	2
Leisure Activities	1
Environment	0

Participants were asked to rank five concerns but not all participants chose five concerns.

Lastly, those with disabilities in the focus group were asked, “How can we address our/your challenges/issues with community resources?” The following were their suggestions:

- ⦿ Educate all people regarding disability to address discrimination.
- ⦿ Educate employers on the facts (e.g. liability, accommodations, persons with disabilities have better attendance rates and are good employees, hiring persons with disabilities will help the economy because they can take care of themselves, etc.).
- ⦿ Agencies can show success cases of persons with disabilities who are working and serving their community as opposed to an image of one that is sad and doesn’t show potential.

- ⊙ Persons with disabilities in an area tend to be a small group and therefore unable to advocate. They must band together to change bias and discrimination through political action.
- ⊙ Enforcement of current laws (e.g. sign language in schools, assistance with pumping gas, handicap parking, etc.).

C. Senior Citizens Focus Group Highlights, Strengths, and Challenges:

A focus group was held with nine senior citizens representing various communities around Blair County. To begin, participants were asked the question, “What are the strengths of our community (Blair County)?” The following were the responses from senior citizens:

- ⊙ Beautiful area with no congestion and easy driving.
- ⊙ Good school systems, including four colleges/universities close by.
- ⊙ People have good work ethics with a variety of skills, including mechanical and industrial.
- ⊙ Good central location within the State and easy access to major cities.
- ⊙ Quality of life is wonderful.
- ⊙ Availability of leisure, cultural, and recreation activities.
- ⊙ Sense of neighborhood.
- ⊙ Good emergency responders (police, ambulance, fire, EMS).



Next, the senior citizens were asked “What are the major challenges/issues in our community (Blair County)?” Their responses are listed below:

- ⊙ Air and noise pollution from large trucks in certain areas. Conflict created between others that need to make a living and those who are annoyed.
- ⊙ Loss of industry causes tax increases.
- ⊙ Perception by youth that there is nothing to do.
- ⊙ Parents not expecting youth to do chores or having other responsibilities.
- ⊙ Safety issues for seniors in some areas like downtown Altoona, while others in outlying areas may not have those concerns.
- ⊙ Lack of smaller well maintained housing for seniors who want to downsize.
- ⊙ Need one large industrial employer. Current jobs do not pay well and younger people are leaving the area.

The next question was, “What are the strengths for the senior population in Blair County?” The responses reflect a sense that their needs are being met:

- ⊙ The programs offered by Blair Senior Services (BSS) provide assistance, resources, transportation, and good socialization opportunities. BSS is the root of education and senior support.
- ⊙ The senior centers in outlying communities are good and provide food which draws in people.

The following were comments when asked “What are the challenges/issues for senior citizens in Blair County?”

- ⊙ Some feel safe in their communities while others do not.

- Lack of experience with technology
- Lonely for some senior citizens; therefore, it's hard to motivate them to leave their houses to connect with others.
- Lack of smaller homes and assistance with maintaining homes (e.g. no one to cut grass, shovel snow, do maintenance, etc.).
- Blair County is an aging community.

Finally, participants were asked to rank the top three issues for Blair County from the following categories: economic, educational, environmental, health, housing, leisure, safety, social issues, transportation, and other. The results are shown in Table 9:

Table 9: Senior Citizens Focus Group Ranking of Concerns for Blair County

Issues	Number of Responses
Economy	6
Social Issues	6
Environment	3
Leisure Activities	3
Health	2
Housing	2
Transportation	1
Safety	0
Education	0
Other	0

The senior citizens were asked, “How can we address major challenges/issues with community resources?”

- We need good paying jobs because current jobs do not pay well and younger people are leaving the area.
- There is a need to strengthen core family values and standards such as basic living skills, parenting, being a good neighbor and citizen, responsibility to self and community, etc.
- Communities need to get together to solve social issues.

D. Family Violence Focus Group Highlights, Strengths, and Challenges:

A focus group on family violence issues was held with nineteen community representatives from the Stop the Violence Against Women Task Force. Because of time constraints, participants were asked to complete a written questionnaire and then had an opportunity to comment.

The first question stated, “What do you believe are the strengths/assets of living in Blair County?” The following were highlights from their responses:

- It is a community that cares. Once it becomes aware of an issue, it will take steps to address it and does so as a community.
- Community and agencies work together to bring services to area.



- ⊙ Good work ethic.
- ⊙ Education system and opportunities.
- ⊙ Affordable housing.
- ⊙ Relatively safe environment.
- ⊙ Hometown pride and sense of community.
- ⊙ Healthy environment (clean air, fresh water, etc.).
- ⊙ Good collaboration between providers of services, non-profit agencies, law enforcement agencies, schools, faith-based organizations, etc.
- ⊙ Blair County offers both rural and urban benefits for recreational and social interaction.

The second question was “What do you believe are the major challenges/issues of living in Blair County?” The responses to that question were:

- ⊙ Shortage of recreational activities/education programs for children.
- ⊙ Alcohol and drug abuse and violence associated with drug activity.
- ⊙ Crime in general.
- ⊙ Lack of commitment to family (e.g. dysfunctional families).
- ⊙ Substandard housing.
- ⊙ Lack of affordable leisure activities for children and families.
- ⊙ Economy, including loss of employment or lower paying jobs.
- ⊙ Family violence.
- ⊙ Lack of affordable child care.
- ⊙ Gun safety/prevention – youth against youth violence.
- ⊙ Public transportation (weekends and evenings).
- ⊙ Lack of funding for some agencies, schools, etc.
- ⊙ Lack of employment for individuals without a high school or college education.
- ⊙ Single mothers raising children without adequate resources (e.g. education, employment, etc.).
- ⊙ High teen suicide rate.
- ⊙ Having enough to offer young people to stay in community and help it continue to grow.

For the next question, task force members were asked, “What are the strengths/assets that serve persons affected by family/domestic violence and child abuse?” The following were their responses:

- ⊙ Fairly homogeneous population/strong work ethic.
- ⊙ Good domestic abuse programs and services. The people involved really care, have been involved for years, and work together to bring change/education without judging.
- ⊙ People are becoming more aware of the problem.
- ⊙ Efforts are being made to cut drug and alcohol problems.
- ⊙ Cooperation between law enforcement and social service organizations.
- ⊙ Adoption of national research-based models that have a proven response to the needs of citizens (also leaders with vision).

Participants were then asked to rank the top three challenges/issues for persons affected by family domestic violence from the following categories: economic, educational, environmental, health, housing, leisure, safety, social issues, transportation, and other. The results are shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Family Violence Focus Group Ranking of Challenges for Persons Affected by Family Violence in Blair County

Issues	Number of Responses
Economy	15
Social Issues	12
Safety	9
Health	8
Housing	8
Education	4
Other	2
Leisure Activities	1
Transportation	1
Environment	0

Finally, the task force members were asked to: “Identify ways to address the challenges/issues of persons affected by family/domestic violence or child abuse by using community resources differently.”

- Additional funding for social programs, education, and law enforcement.
- Educate the victims and public about domestic violence and abuse situation.
- Stopping the cycle of violence and helping those affected to start over.
- Provide affordable childcare.
- Provide more transportation for women and children (job, take kids to daycare, etc.).
- More resources to help find safe, affordable housing.
- Employers need to educate themselves and their employees on the impact of domestic violence on productivity and workplace safety.



Section Seven:

Key Community Assets

Communities are built on strengths and assets; therefore, the needs assessment included a component on exploring key community strengths and assets. The purpose of asset mapping is to document the various resources as identified by different segments of the community, while developing relationships that focus on the potential for mobilizing these assets to improve the community.

The Asset Mapping Work Group conducted surveys for businesses, associations, service providers, and faith communities which focused on assets and not the challenges and needs of Blair County. The summary points for each survey are extracted from their respective tables or from the complete prioritization tables which are posted on the Blair County Human Services website under Needs Assessment.

A. Business Survey

Business Survey Highlights, Community Initiatives/Projects, and Assets:

- ⦿ Businesses stated (Table 11) that they were most involved in the following four community initiatives: promoting volunteering (45%), promoting good health (42%), promoting arts and culture (40%), and beautifying community spaces (36%).
- ⦿ Seventy-five percent of the businesses that responded had made charitable contributions up to \$20,000.
- ⦿ Volunteer hours contributed by the company ranged from under 20 hours to over 3,000 hours with the most frequency between 100 and 150 hours.
- ⦿ Over 60% donated materials and equipment to benefit community projects. They also partnered with other organizations and provided opportunities for employees with special skills to volunteer (Figure 6).

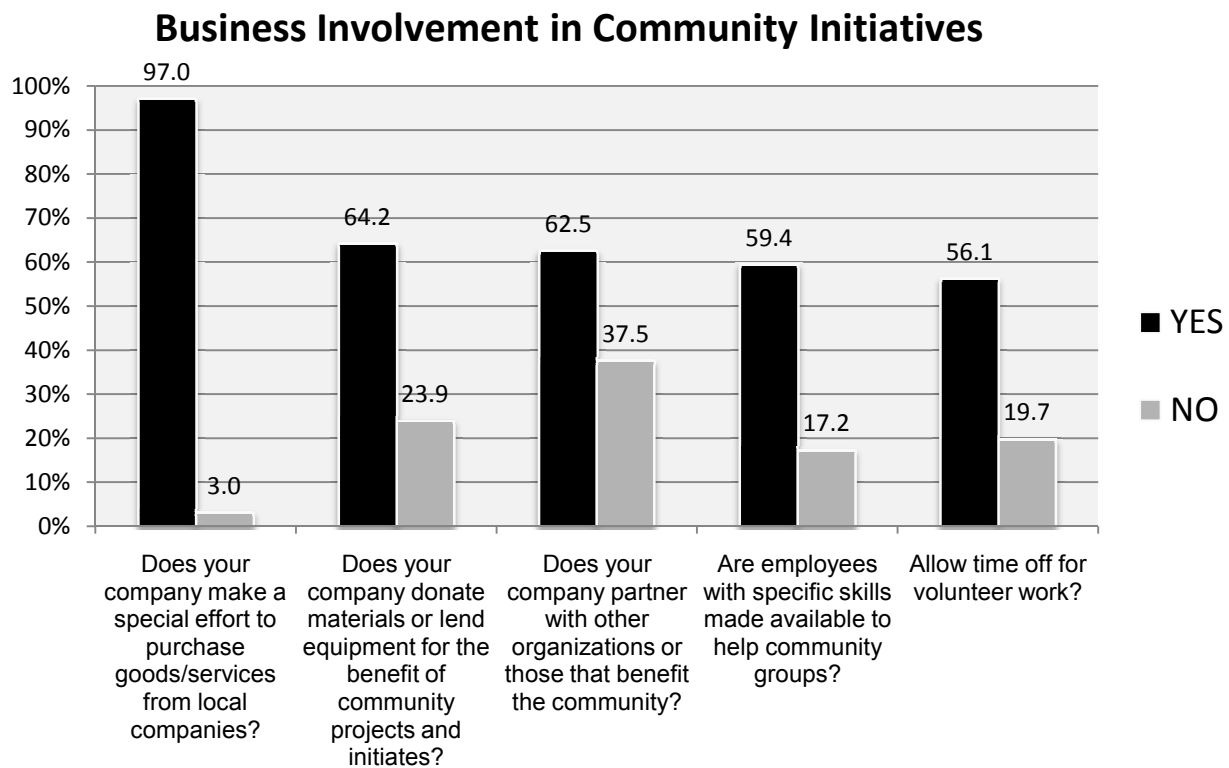


Table 11: Business Prioritization Percent Tables

Community Initiative by Percentage	Already Involved	Would Like to be Involved	Not Interested
Promoting volunteering	44.8	7.5	47.8
Promoting good health	41.8	11.9	46.3
Promoting arts and culture	40.3	11.9	47.8
Beautifying community spaces	35.8	13.4	50.7
Promoting youth development	32.8	13.4	53.7

Community Initiative by Percentage (Continued)	Already Involved	Would Like to be Involved	Not Interested
Increasing availability of and access to jobs	32.8	4.5	62.7
Increasing neighborhood safety	31.3	14.9	53.7
Preparing people for jobs	31.3	3.0	65.7
Promoting economic development in distressed areas	29.9	10.4	59.7
Fostering entrepreneurship	29.9	10.4	59.7
Business & industrial development in distressed areas	28.4	13.4	58.2
Fostering community networks	26.9	10.4	62.7
Fostering commercial real estate improvement in lower income neighborhoods	22.4	11.9	65.7
Promoting educational reform	20.9	13.4	65.7
Promoting commercial revitalization in lower income areas	19.4	11.9	68.7
Increasing availability of recreation activities	16.4	11.9	71.6
Fostering racial harmony	16.4	10.4	73.1
Connecting neighbors who need help with those who can help	14.9	9.0	76.1
Building neighborhood trust	14.9	6.0	79.1
Increasing affordable housing and home ownership	13.4	13.4	73.1
Designing a plan for community renewal	11.9	14.9	73.1
Improving access to transportation	10.4	11.9	77.6

Figure 6: Business Involvement in Community Initiatives



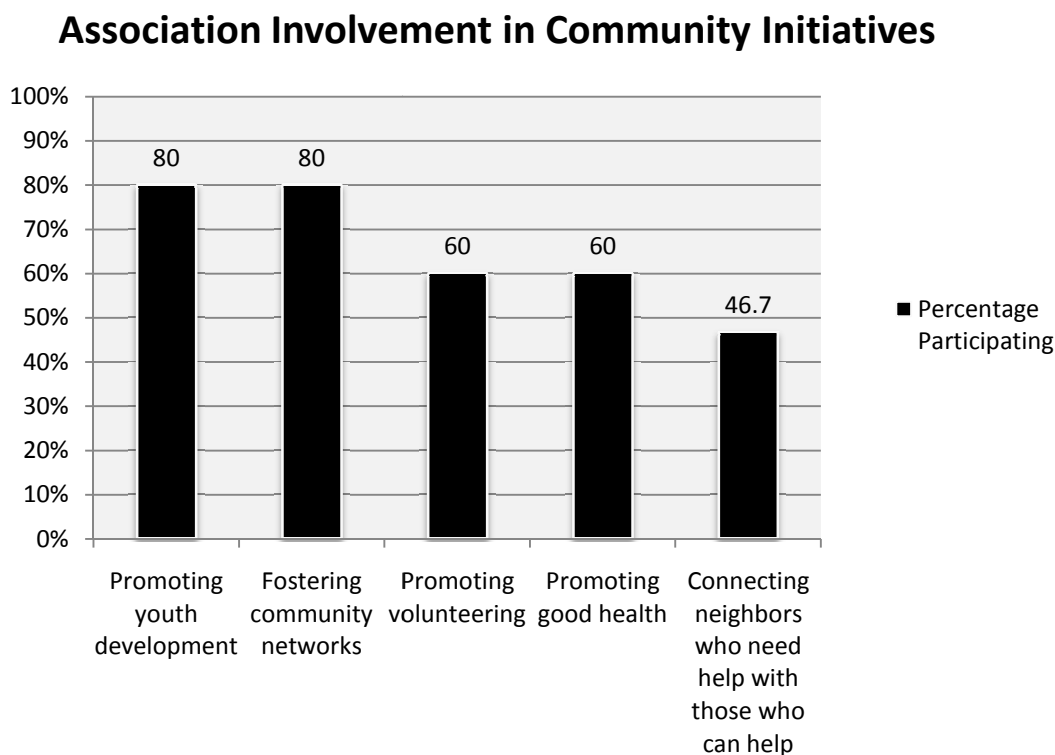
B. Association Survey

Association Survey Highlights, Community Initiatives/Projects, and Assets:

- Associations reported that they were most involved in the following four community initiatives: promoting youth development (80%), promoting community networks (80%), promoting volunteering (60%), and promoting good health (60%).
- By reviewing the survey results, there appears to be a wide variety of opportunities and settings for people who wish to volunteer in the community.



Figure 7: Association Involvement in Community Initiatives



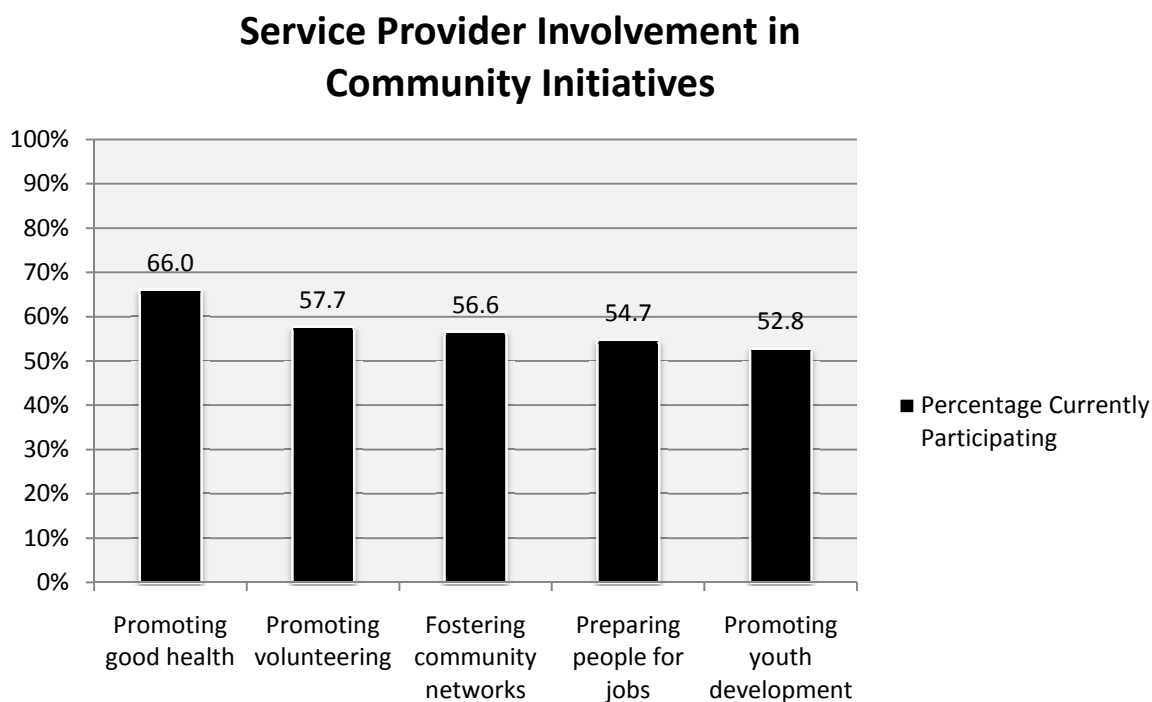
C. Service Provider Survey

Service Provider Survey Highlights, Community Initiatives/Projects, and Assets:

- Service providers stated that they were most involved in the following five community initiatives: promoting good health (66%), promoting volunteering (58%), fostering community networks (57%), preparing people for jobs (55%), and promoting youth development (53%).
- Of those who responded, two-thirds utilize volunteers in providing services for their agency.
- Over 60% have made staff and spaces available for community initiatives.



Figure 8: Service Provider Involvement in Community Initiatives



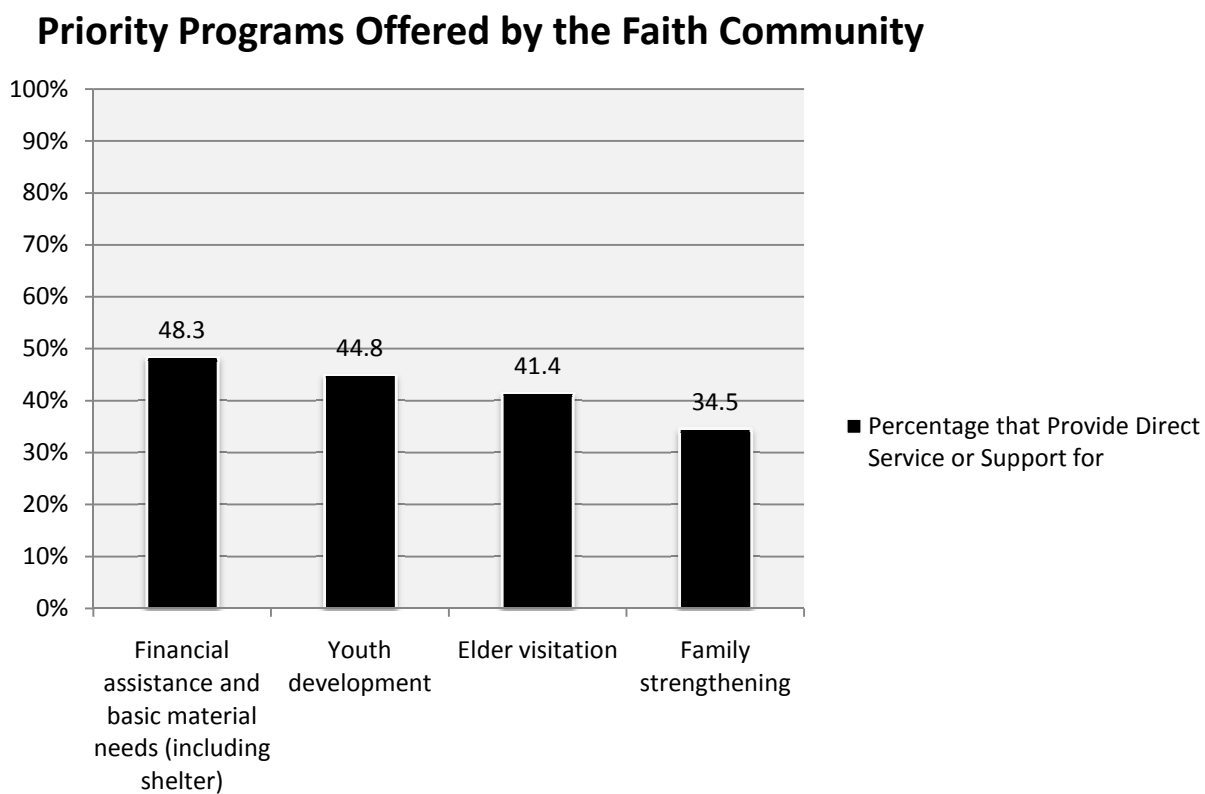
D. Faith Community Survey

Faith-Based Survey Highlights, Community Initiatives/Projects, and Assets:

- ◎ The survey shows that faith communities are most involved in initiatives that are consistent with their mission. The most common were: developing youth; educating and strengthening families; donating money for basic needs; and visiting the elderly.
- ◎ Over 80% provided basic material needs and financial donations and 50% of respondents provided direct service.
- ◎ Over 72% of the congregations reported having a youth group.
- ◎ It is apparent that faith communities are providing a “behind the scenes” network of support that is an extremely valuable asset in the county.



Figure 9: Priority Programs Offered by the Faith Community





Section Eight:

Community Meetings

Seven community meetings were held for the purpose of informing the public about the needs assessment, sharing the results and obtaining feedback on the needs assessment surveys and supporting data, and providing an opportunity to become involved in developing the Community Plan.

In general, there was agreement among participants at all sessions regarding the survey findings and corroborating indicator data. The following are selected concerns and issues voiced by participants.

- ⦿ All of the issues and challenges are related to the economy. There is a need to bring well paying jobs and industry to Blair County.
- ⦿ Crime and drugs are being addressed in Blair County.
- ⦿ Teen pregnancy is on the rise.
- ⦿ The inability of parents to parent effectively is a problem in our society.
- ⦿ Participants thought that there would be more issues with lack of affordable housing and transportation.
- ⦿ Participants were surprised that there were not more problems identified for senior citizens (e.g. depression, health care, etc.).
- ⦿ There is a concern with lack of affordable child care and children without health insurance.
- ⦿ Testing requirements in schools are leading to increased stress for students; therefore, it is easier to drop out.
- ⦿ Bullying, cliques, labeling of kids in schools is a cause for concern.





Section Nine:

Blair County Demographics

Blair County is located in south-central Pennsylvania and covers an area of 61,476 square miles. The County includes the City of Altoona, fifteen townships, and eight boroughs. It also includes a portion of another borough, which is split between the Blair County and Cambria County.¹² According to the 2007 estimate from the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of Blair County is 125,527 (Table 12).

From 2000 to 2007 the population of Blair County decreased by 2.7% (Figure 10), while Pennsylvania's population increased by 1.2% (Figure 11). From 1950 to 2005, the population in Blair County decreased ten percent.¹³

Blair County is fairly homogeneous with white persons representing 97% of the county's population (Table 13). Women slightly outnumber men according to U.S. Census data from 2006. At that time, 52.2% of the population was female and 47.8 % was male.

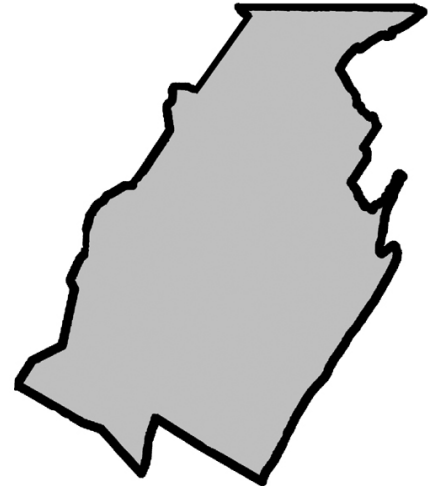


Table 12: Population and Household Type¹⁴

Indicator	Pennsylvania	Blair County
	Number	Number
Total Population (2007)	12,432,792	125,527
Percent Change 2000-2007	1.2%	-2.7%

Figure 10: Blair County Population 2000-2007¹⁵

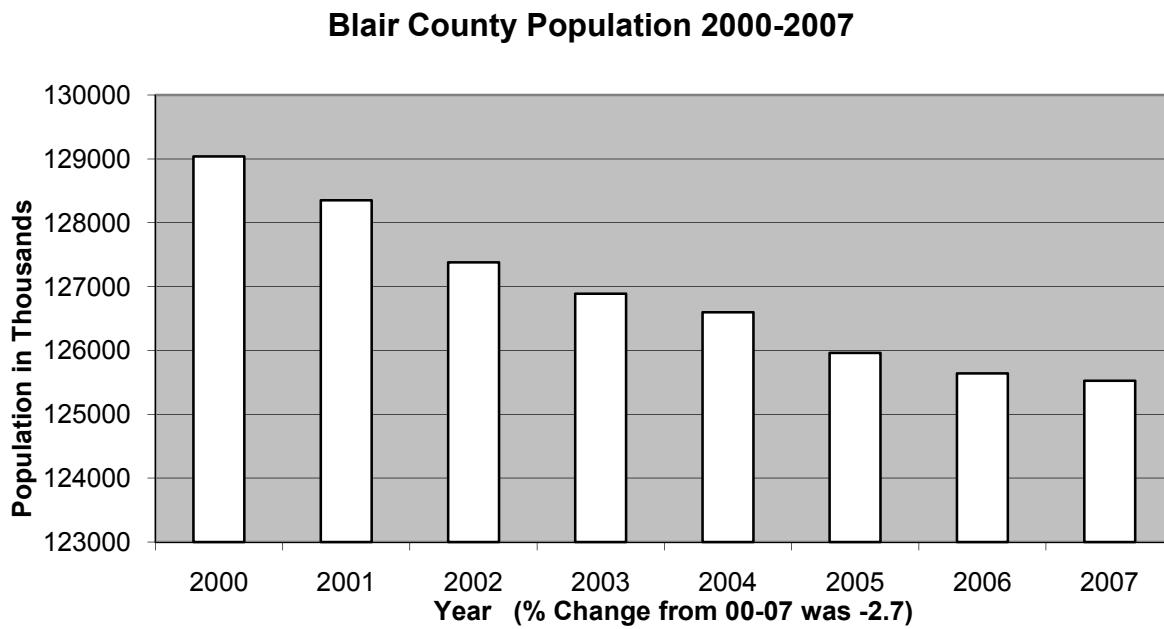


Figure 11: Pennsylvania Population 2000-2007¹⁶

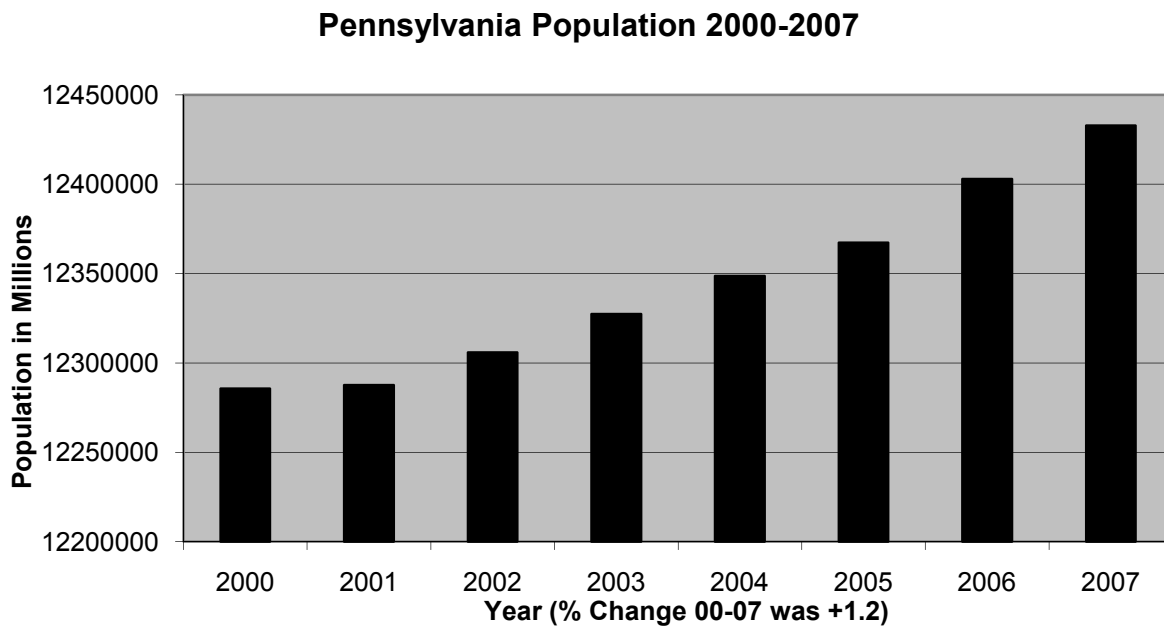


Table 13: Age Group and Race¹⁷

Population by Race (2006)	Pennsylvania	Blair County
White	85.7%	97.2%
Black	10.7%	1.4%
Other Race	3.6%	1.4%
Hispanic/Latino	4.4%	0.6%

Nationally, a dominant trend is the aging of the “baby boomers” (a person who was born during the Post-World War II baby boom between 1946 and 1964). In Blair County, people 65 years and older represent 21.7% of the total adult population. From 1990 to 2000, there was an 18.6% increase in people ages 75 to 84 and a 28.7% increase for those over age 85.¹⁸

In general, it is a county with a large older population without children. At the same time, Blair County is losing younger professional adults with children. There are also 25,182 persons with a disability, ages five and older.¹⁹

Figure 12: Comparison of Births for Blair County and Pennsylvania²⁰

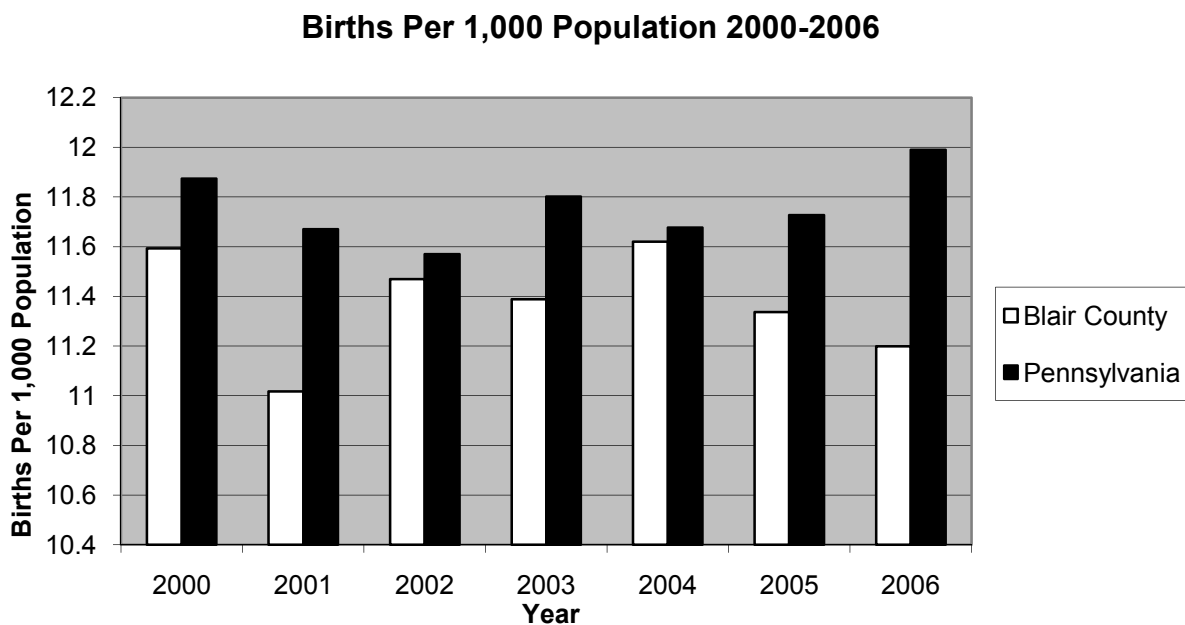
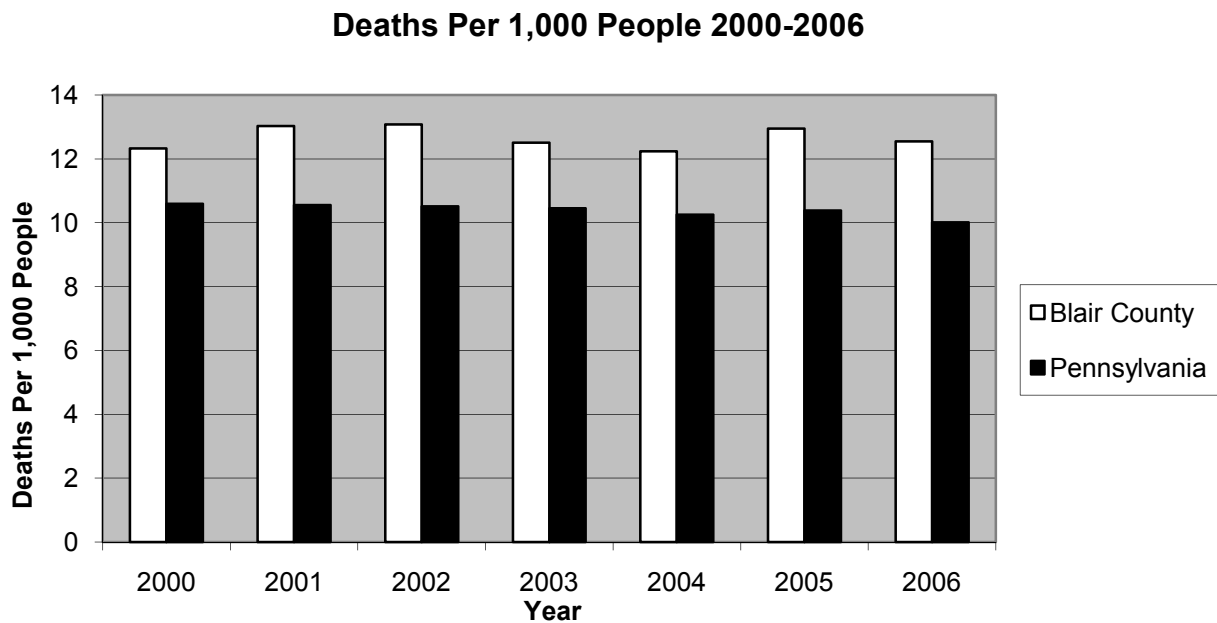


Figure 13: Comparison of Deaths for Blair County and Pennsylvania²¹



Based on 2006 census estimates, there were 50,528 households in Blair County.²² Only 18.8% were married couples with children and 8.1% were single parent households with children under the age of 18 (Table 14). The percent of children living with both parents was 71.9% (Table 15).

Table 14: Household Type²³

Household By Type (2006)	Pennsylvania	Blair County
Married Couples With Children	19.7%	18.8%
Married Couples Without Children	29.8%	32.0%
Male Headed, No Wife or Children	2.2%	2.1%
Female Headed, No Husband or Children	5.1%	5.2%
Single Parent With Children Under 18	8.7%	8.1%
Single Person	29.3%	28.5%
Other (Dorms, Prison, Etc.)	5.2%	5.3%

Table 15: Percent of Children Living with Parents²⁴

Percent of Children (2000)	Pennsylvania	Blair County
Living with Two Parents	73.0%	71.9%
Living with Mother Only	21.1%	20.2%
Living with Father Only	5.8%	7.9%



Section Ten:

Economy Priority Area and Indicator Data

Section Ten includes indicator data related to income, unemployment/employment, and poverty. By collecting and analyzing indicator data, the Data Analysis Work Group was able to review strengths and issues related to the economy. The intent was also to determine if the statistics supported or did not support the perceptions of key informants and the general public that the economy was a major/moderate issue.

Blair County is suffering from economic struggles and its residents expressed that in the household survey results. In addition, the major challenges identified in the Blair County Needs Assessment were related to economic conditions, including unemployment/underemployment, lack of jobs, poverty, budgeting difficulties. Over 20% of respondents to the household survey were not able to afford recreational or entertainment activities. The economy was rated the number one community challenge in three of the four focus groups.

A. Income

The average per capita income for Blair County is \$20,174 which is lower than that for Pennsylvania at \$24,694 (Table 16). Estimated median household income and wages are also lower for Blair County (Figure 14). This is due in part to Blair County's having more technical-service type jobs that tend to pay lower wages. The average wage per employee is almost \$10,000 less per year in Blair County than in Pennsylvania as a whole (Figure 15).

Table 16: Comparison of Personal and Household Income²⁵

Indicator	Pennsylvania	Blair County
Personal and Household Income (2006)		
Per-Capita Income	\$24,694	\$20,174
Median Household Income	\$46,259	\$40,730
Median Family Income	\$58,148	\$48,717

Per capita income is the mean money income received for every man, woman, and child in a geographic area. It is derived by dividing the total income of all people 15 years old and over in a geographic area by the total population in that area.

Figure 14: Estimated Median Household Income²⁶ Household income is the sum of money income received in the calendar year by all household members 15 years old and over, including persons not related to the householder, people living alone, and other nonfamily household members. Included in the total are wage or salary income; net self-employment income; interest, dividends, or net rental or royalty income or income from estates and trusts; Social Security or Railroad Retirement income; Supplemental Security Income (SSI); public assistance or welfare payments; retirement, survivor, or disability pensions; and all other income.

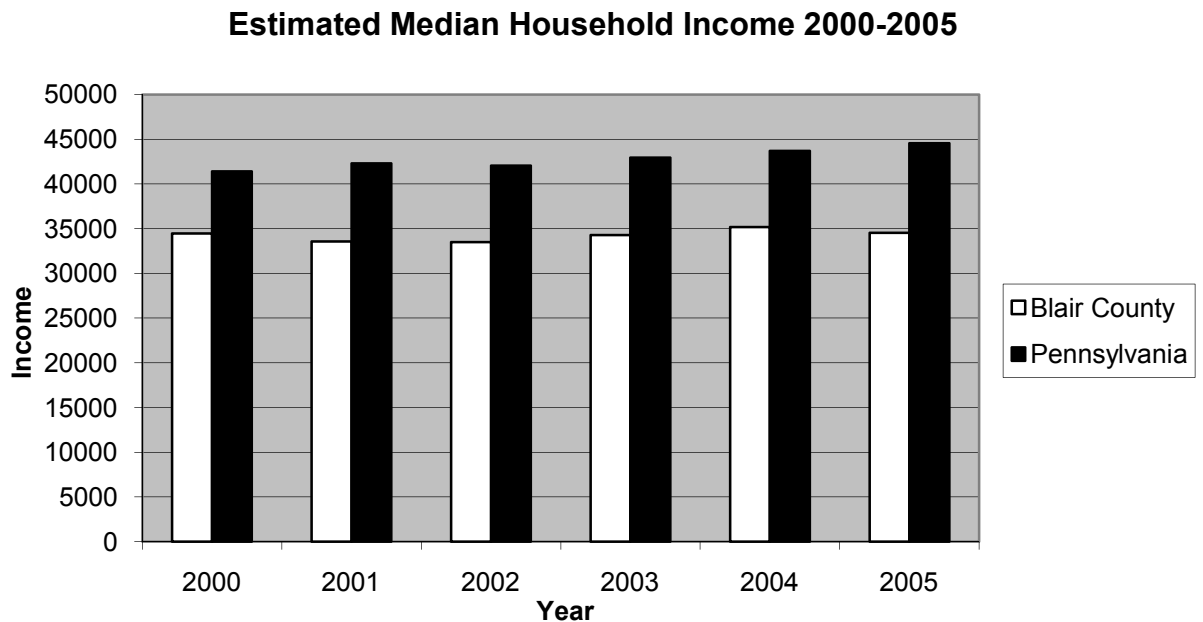
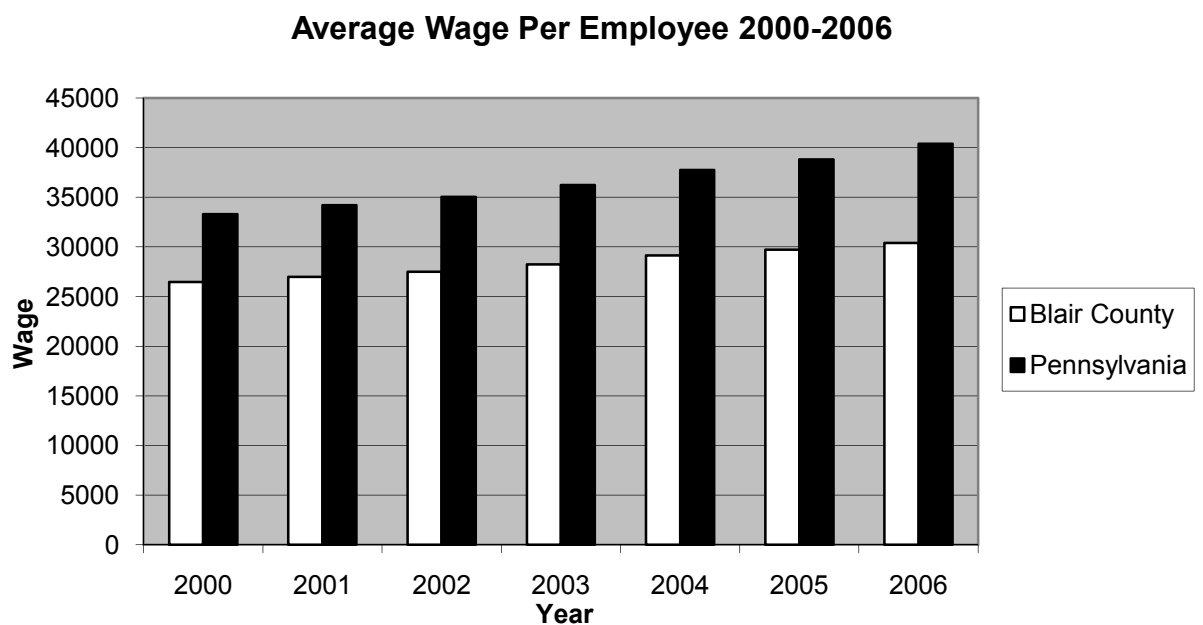


Figure 15: Average Wage Per Employee²⁷



B. Unemployment/Employment

The average unemployment rate in Blair County has ranged from 4.2% to 5.9% in the time period from 2000-2007 and is currently slightly less than the state's rate (Figure 16). Results from the Household Survey show that economic issues ranked high in both community and household challenges. Over 59% of those responding to the survey ranked unemployment/underemployment as a major/moderate issue community challenge.

Key informants agreed with 77% reporting unemployment/underemployment as a major/moderate issue. Blair County's employment rate and patterns in Figure 17 should be compared to Pennsylvania's in Figure 18. Although there was a significant increase in the county employment rate in 2007, the greatest number of employer units are in retail trade which has one of the lowest annual average wages at \$19,654.²⁸

Figure 16: Average Annual Unemployment Rate²⁹

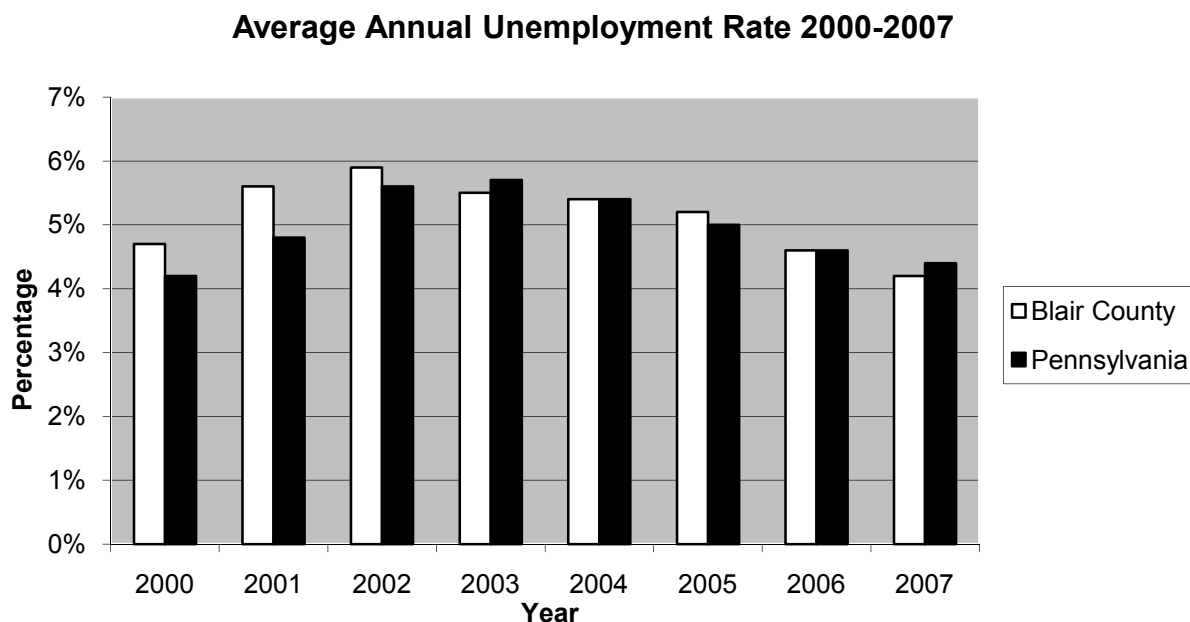


Figure 17: Blair County Employment Rate 2000-2007³⁰

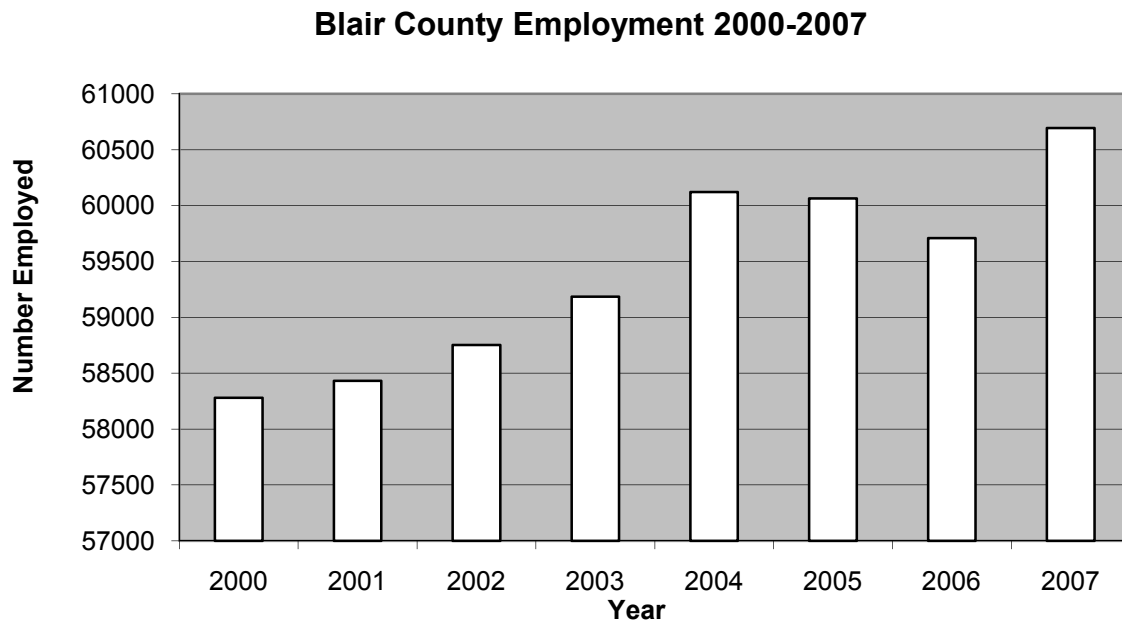
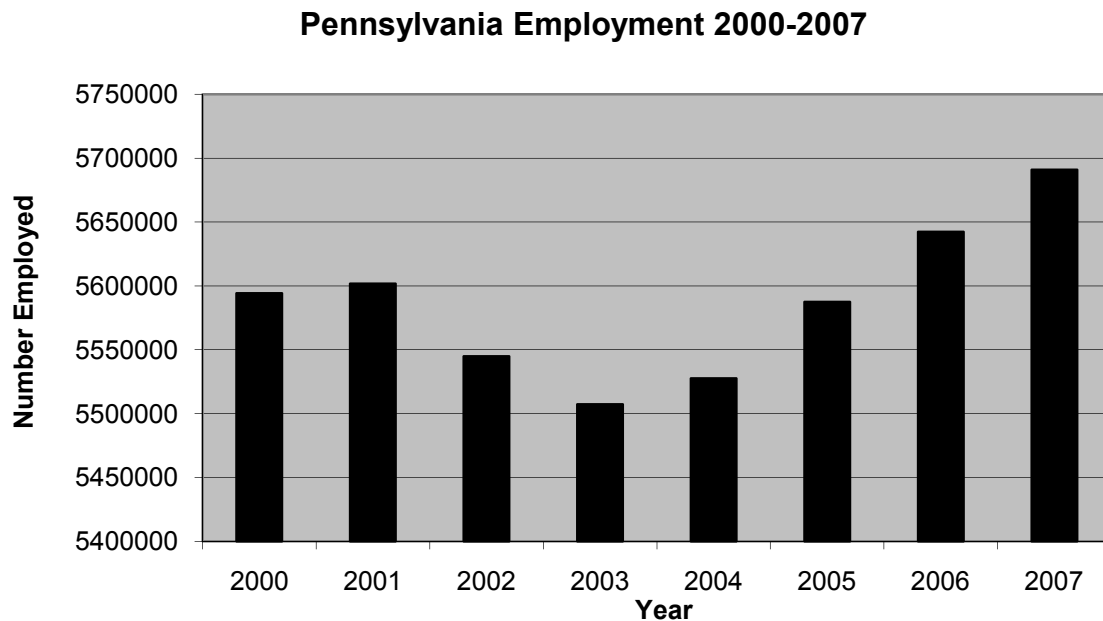


Figure 18: Pennsylvania Employment Rate 2000-2007³¹



Pennsylvania total includes employees and employers not assigned to a specific county. Data includes only those covered by the Workers Comp program (ES202) **THIS APPLIES TO BOTH CHARTS ON EMPLOYMENT**

Table 17 shows that 62% of the population with any disability in Blair County is unemployed. The focus group conducted with persons with disabilities identified economic issues as a common theme. Much discussion was focused around the issue that persons with disabilities want to work but employment is not always easily found.

One factor mentioned was that transportation is not available after 5:00 and on weekends which makes it difficult for people to work or get hired for shifts. In addition, public transportation is not available in most communities outside of Altoona and Hollidaysburg.

Table 17: Employment Status for Persons with Disabilities Considered in the Labor Force (2007)³²

Indicator	Pennsylvania	Blair County
Total Population with any Disability	928,880	12,410
Number of Population with any Disability Employed	327,075	4700
% of Population with any Disability Employed	35%	38%
Number of Population with any Disability Unemployed	602,770	7710
% of Population with any Disability Unemployed	65%	62%

C. Poverty

In addition to wage and income data, other county economic indicators include poverty levels, food stamp use, and government assistance programs. Blair County's unemployment rate follows state levels but it doesn't necessarily affect the poverty rate. In Blair County, the use of food stamps and medical assistance is higher than state average with one in five people getting assistance (Figures 19-20).

Twelve percent of people are getting food stamps and 20% are receiving medical assistance. The decrease in cash assistance since 2005 may be due to a change in laws and not reflective of the need by residents. The percentage of students who are enrolled in free/reduced school lunch programs in Blair County is 35% (Table 18).

Figure 19: Food Stamp Program: Percent of Population Participating 2000-2007³³

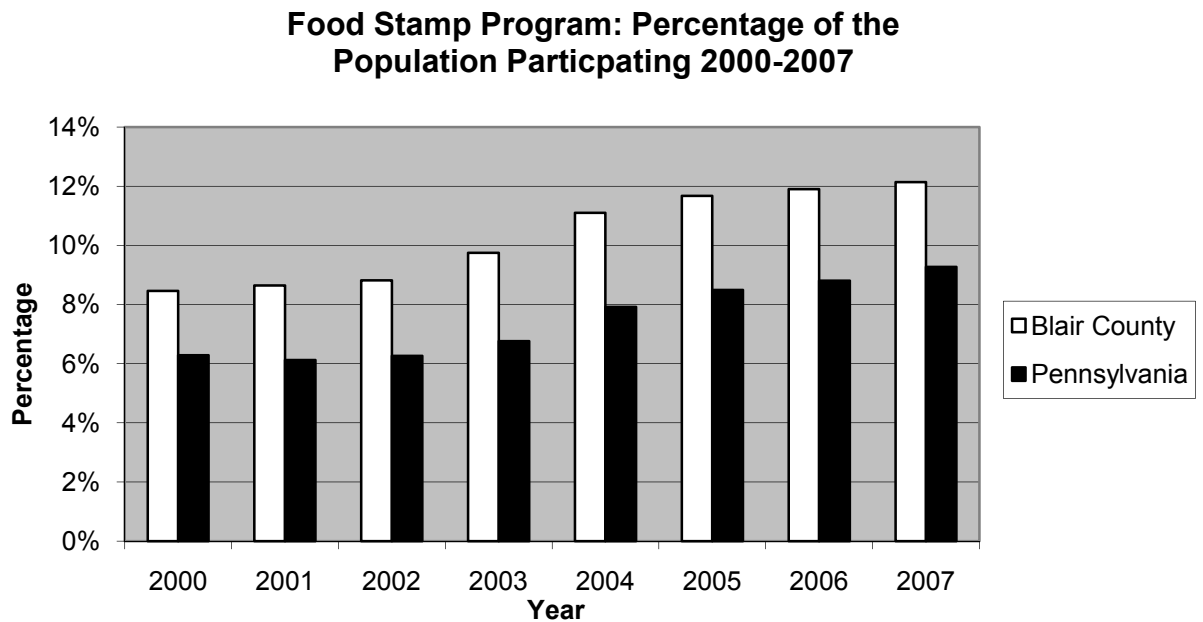


Figure 20: Cash Assistance Program: Percent of Population Receiving 2000-2007³⁴

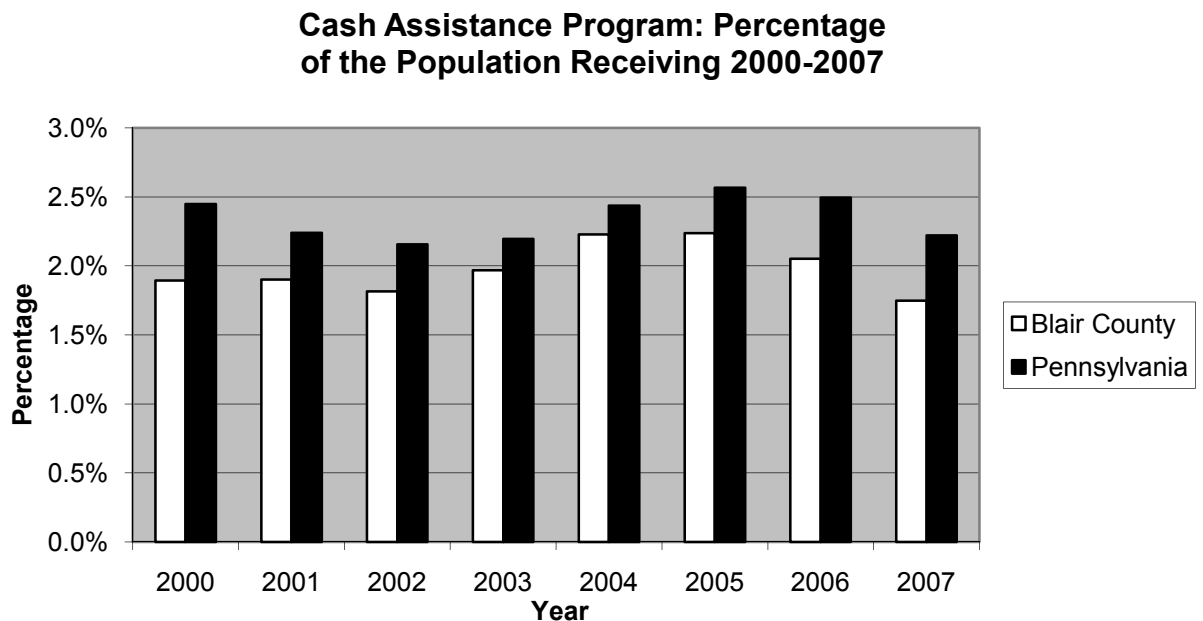


Table 18: Percent of Students Enrolled in Free/Reduced Lunch Programs³⁵

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Blair County	39.19%	39.72%	39.49%	39.17%	37.35%	35.87%
Pennsylvania	35.36%	35.03%	34.83%	33.71%	33.05%	32.08%

The 2005 estimated poverty rate in Blair County is 14.0% which is higher than the state average of 11.9% (Figure 21). The estimated poverty rate for children under 18 in Blair County is 20.3% (Figure 22). Some communities such as Altoona, Claysburg, and Tyrone have higher rates of poverty for children under the age of five (Table 19).

The number of homeless persons served in shelters in Blair County almost doubled from 129 persons served in 2000 to 233 in 2007 (Family Services, Inc.).

Figure 21: Estimated Poverty Rate 2000-2005³⁶

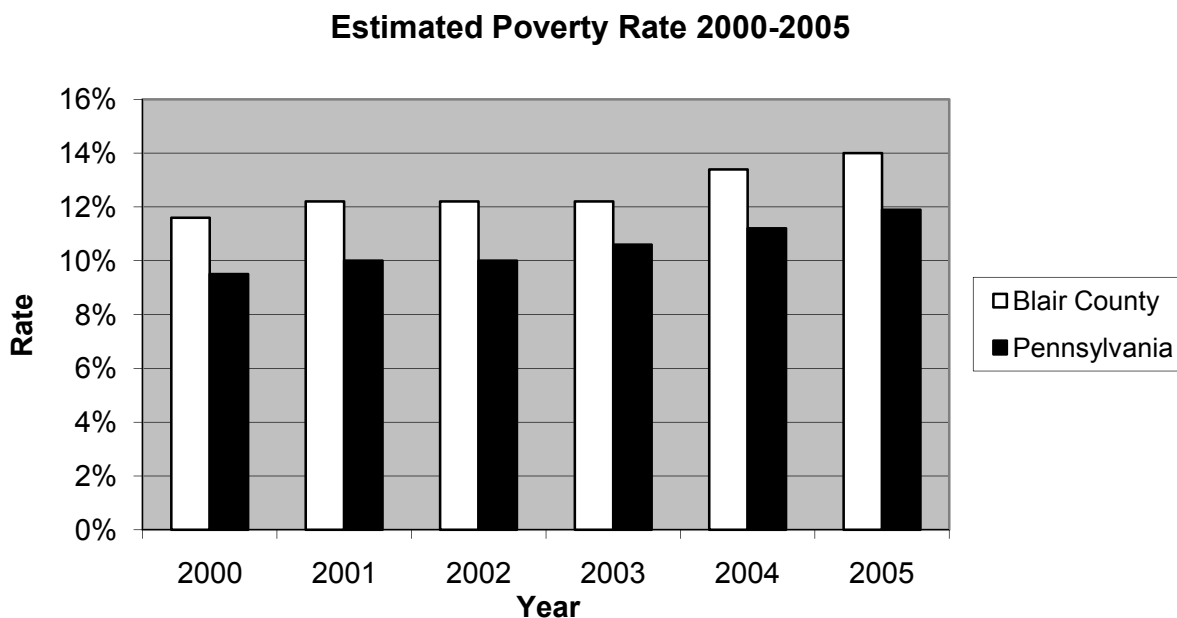


Figure 22: Estimated Poverty Rate for Children Under 18 2000-2005³⁷

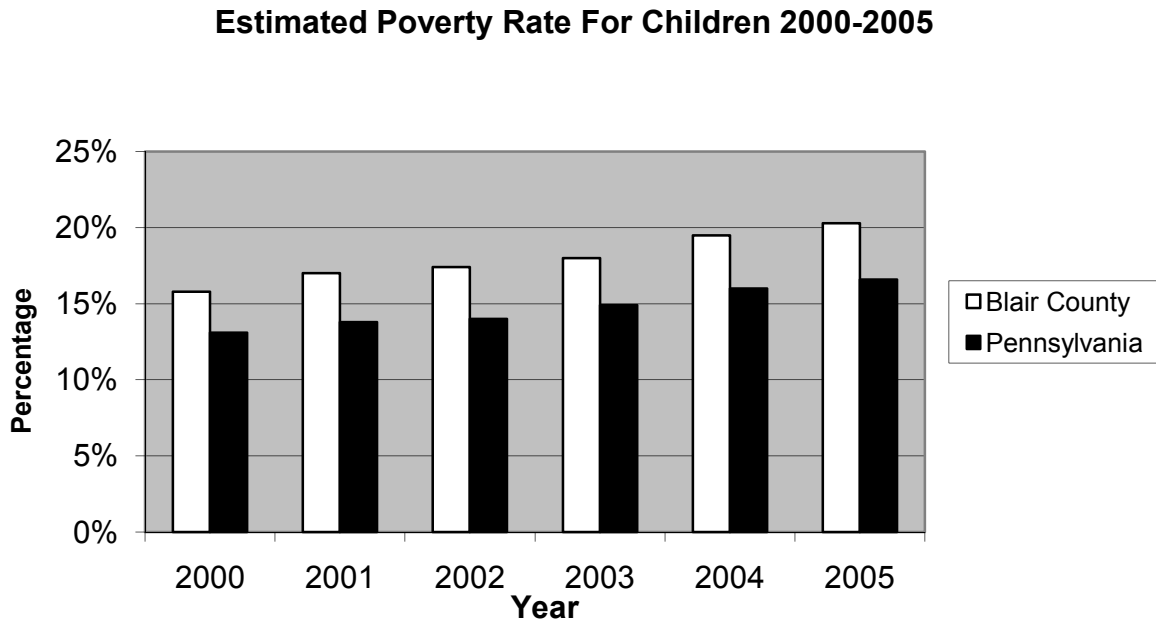


Table 19: Percent of Low Income Children Under 5³⁸

Zip Code	Post Office Area	Percent of Children Under 5 who are Low-Income
16601	ALTOONA	21.0%
16602	ALTOONA	27.1%
16613	ASHVILLE	12.4%
16617	BELLWOOD	10.6%
16625	CLAYSBURG	21.7%
16641	GALLITZIN	15.0%
16648	HOLLIDAYSBURG	11.5%
16673	ROARING SPRING	16.7%
16686	TYRONE	26.7%
16693	WILLIAMSBURG	17.6%



Section Eleven:

Safety Priority Area and Indicator Data

Section Eleven outlines indicator data related to crime, alcohol and other drugs, and unsafe schools and juvenile at-risk behavior. By collecting and analyzing indicator data related to safety, the Data Analysis Work Group was able to review strengths and issues as well as whether research supported or did not support the perceptions of residents that crime and alcohol and other drugs were major/moderate issues. Data were also readily available on unsafe schools and juvenile at-risk behavior which were not identified as major/moderate issues but were emerging themes in focus groups.

A. Crime

In the Blair County 2007 Household Survey, 70.4% of those responding ranked crime as the number one major/moderate community challenge. Crime was ranked number five in the Head Start survey with over 62.2% stating it was a major/moderate issue. Those responding to the key informant survey had similar views with 78.9% reporting crime as the second highest major/moderate issue. The youth focus group ranked crime as their number one concern for Blair County.

Table 20 highlights the number of reported offenses from 2000 to 2006 with the most significant increases occurring for drug abuse. The patterns of crime in Blair County for 2006 to 2007 are defined by the PA Uniform Crime Reports. Figure 23 indicates that the Part 1 (more serious) crime rate in the county has increased since 2003 and is now equal to Pennsylvania for serious crimes. Figure 24 shows an increase in Blair County for Part 2 (less serious) crimes. In 2006 14.1% of total arrests in Blair County were for those under the age of 18 which is a slight decrease from 2000 at 15.0%.³⁹

Table 20: Reported Crimes in Blair County (Uniform Crime Reports)⁴⁰

Number of Reported Offenses	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Murder	2	3	2	2	4	7	1
Rape	29	44	33	34	36	40	48
Robbery	93	86	99	93	83	88	108
Agg. Assaults	192	141	162	112	148	177	210
Burglary	715	667	842	583	644	728	759
Larceny	2334	2141	1758	1706	1742	2004	2121
Motor Vehicle Theft	174	147	166	132	165	132	162
Arson	38	26	15	11	25	32	33
Other Assaults	1307	1175	1017	974	974	958	1130
Fraud	263	244	356	240	233	277	289

Number of Reported Offenses (continued)	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Vandalism	1902	1612	1324	1376	1305	1235	1313
Sex Offenses	117	98	91	90	115	97	83
Weapons	21	38	22	33	37	42	52
Drug Abuse	366	375	533	463	434	497	606
Offenses Against Family & Children	22	13	10	20	25	27	27
Driving Under the Influence	456	293	373	440	510	507	442
Liquor Law	181	160	211	199	222	164	207
Drunkenness	212	160	197	192	241	248	198
Disorderly Conduct	799	361	317	330	521	629	690

Figure 23: Comparison of Reported Crimes – Part 1⁴¹

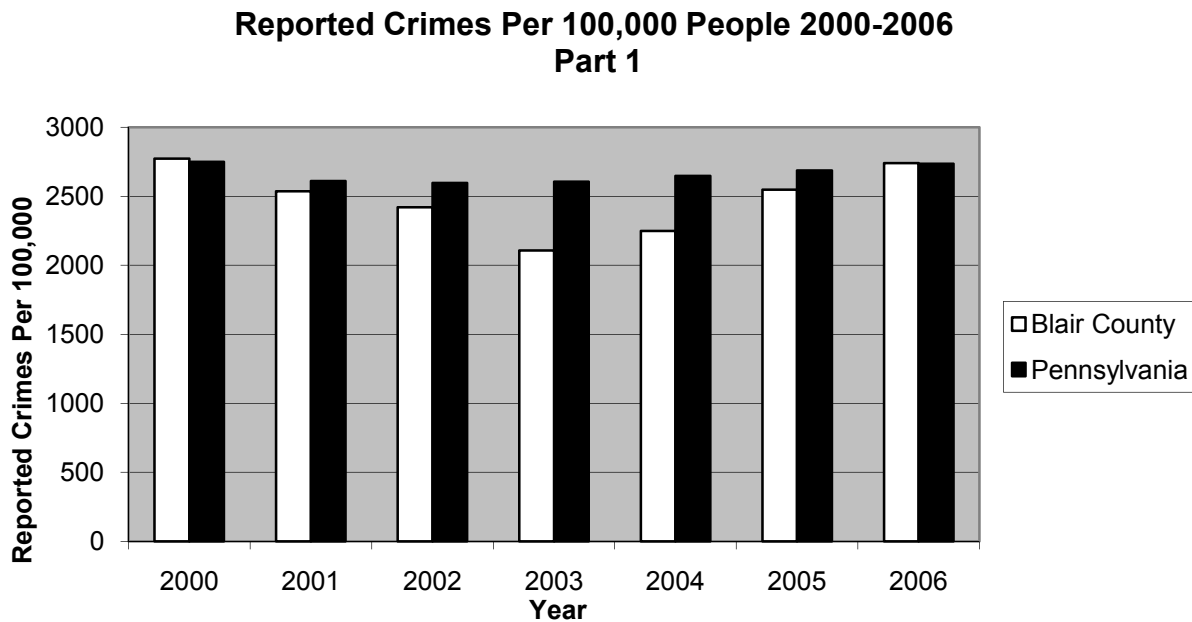
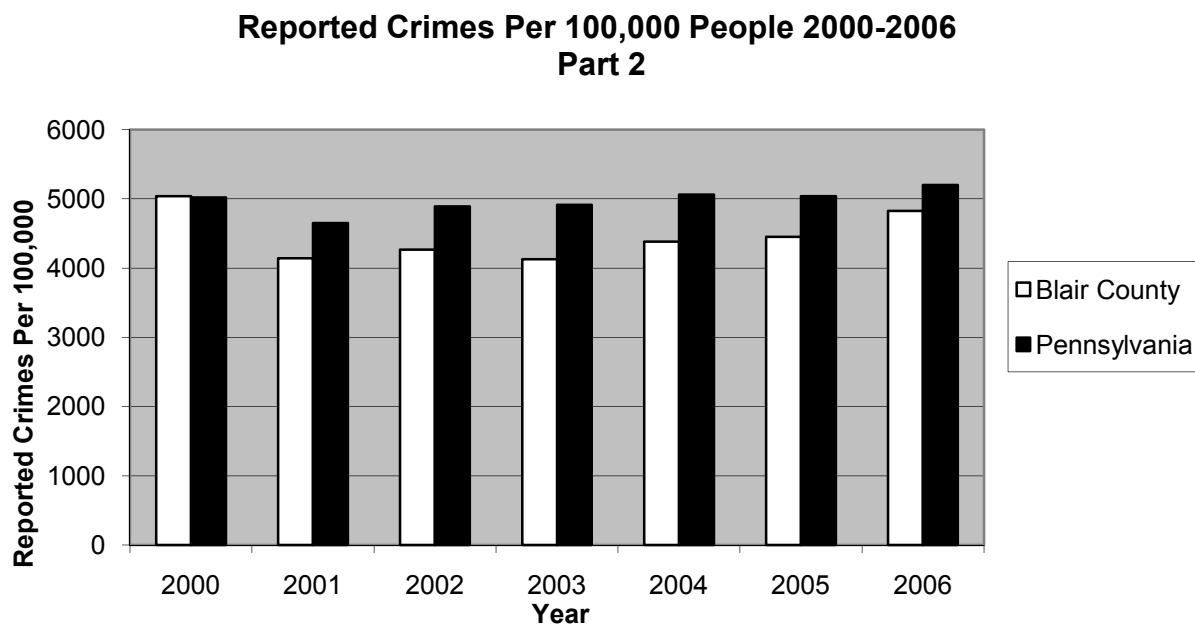


Figure 24: Comparison of Reported Crimes – Part 2⁴²



Part I = Part I crimes are more serious offenses such as murder, negligent manslaughter, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny theft, arson, and motor vehicle theft. Part I crimes are classified as either violent crimes or property crimes. Part II = encompass all other crime classifications outside those defined as Part I offenses. In the Commonwealth, the most common Part II offenses are drug related charges, vandalism, DUI, disorderly conduct, and other forms of assault.

In 2008, the Blair County District Attorney's Office handled 3,045 cases. Of those, 912 cases were drug cases and 685 were Driving Under the Influence (DUI) offenses. There were 13 cases of murder, manslaughter, and criminal attempt homicide and 266 assaults. Forty cases were sexual assaults (indecent assault, aggravated indecent, rape, and indecent exposures).⁴³

B. Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse

There appears to be general agreement within Blair County that alcohol and other drug abuse has adversely affected the quality of life and impacted crime rates. It was ranked number one by 97% of key informants as a major/moderate issue.

It was the second highest rated issue in the random household survey and the Head Start survey. Table 21 summarizes the pattern of change in crimes defined as drug and alcohol-related between 2006 and 2007. Criminal drug activity among juveniles is also an area of concern.

Table 21: Drug and Alcohol Related Reports for Blair County⁴⁴

PA Uniform Crime Report #	Analysis of Data comparing 2006-2007
210	Total DUI arrests (adult/juvenile) are down slightly
220	Liquor Law Violations for juveniles are up 27%
220	Liquor Law Violations for adults are down slightly
230	Drunkenness for juveniles is up 150%
230	Drunkenness for adults is up 75%
18A	Sale of Opium (an increase of 13 arrests)
18B	Sale of Marijuana up 16% (an increase of 2 arrests)
18C	Sale of Synthetic drugs down 20% (decreased by 1 arrest)
18D	Sale of Other drugs up 61%
18E	Possession of Opium Cocaine up 65% (including 11 juveniles)
18E	Possession of Marijuana for adults up 11%
18F	Possession of Marijuana for juveniles up 112% (increase of 9 persons)
18G	Possession of Synthetic drugs down 45% (5 persons)
18H	Possession of Other Drugs down 32%

Alcohol-related crashes in Blair County over the last five years have varied anywhere from four to seven per year.⁴⁵ According to the Blair County Drug and Alcohol Program, the number of Driving Under the Influence (DUI) arrests during the first ten months of 2008 stood at 500. The number of arrests for the same time period in 2007 was 318. Since 2000, annual DUI arrests ranged from 364 to 501.⁴⁶

C. Unsafe Schools and Juvenile At-Risk Behavior

Although having unsafe schools was not listed as one of the top community challenges/issues in the household survey, the data in Tables 22-23 verify that incidents are occurring in schools within Blair County at or near the same rate as reported by the state.

Table 22: School Safety Annual Report for Blair County Public Schools⁴⁷.

Number of Incidents in Blair County						
	2001- 2002	2002- 2003	2003- 2004	2004- 2005	2005- 2006	2006- 2007
Incidents	558	567	588	533	401	488
Offenders	616	642	605	561	420	507
Law Enforcement Involvement	309	348	359	336	265	307
Arrests	17	90	82	119	93	98
Assaults on Students	195	168	123	150	112	150
Assaults on Staff	3	5	8	9	9	7
Threatening a School Official/Student	4	12	33	14	16	11
Fighting	32	60	88	78	65	75
Bomb Threats	0	1	0	1	0	0
Terroristic Threats	23	9	1	1	3	4
Possession of Weapon	32	22	25	25	24	37
Drugs	25	34	59	34	20	29
Alcohol	17	9	7	10	4	7
Tobacco	108	111	119	93	106	82

Table 23: Comparison of School Safety Annual Reports for Blair County and Pennsylvania
(Incidents per 100 Students)⁴⁸

	Blair County Rates					PA Rates
	2001- 2002	2002- 2003	2003- 2004	2004- 2005	2005- 2006	2005- 2006
Assaults on Students	1.0	.87	.65	.80	.60	.32
Assaults on Staff	.02	.03	.04	.05	.05	.12
Threatening a School Official/Student	.02	.06	.17	.07	.09	.15
Fighting	.16	.31	.46	.41	.35	.56
Bomb Threats	0	.01	0	.01	0	.01
Terroristic Threats	.12	.06	.01	.01	.02	.02
Possession of Weapon	.32	.12	.16	.14	.11	.18
Drugs	.13	.18	.32	.18	.11	.15
Alcohol	.09	.05	.04	.05	.02	.04

On the Pennsylvania Youth Survey, Blair County students were asked ten questions about the age at which they first used alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs and participated in other antisocial behaviors. The results from the survey are shown in Table 24.

Table 24: Average Age of Onset of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use and Other Antisocial Behaviors, Blair County (2007)

Grades:	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	Over- All
Trying Alcohol	10.5	--	11.7	--	13.1	--	13.9	12.4
Drinking Alcohol Regularly	10.4	--	12.4	--	14.2	--	15.5	14.3
Smoking Cigarettes	10.3	--	11.5	--	12.5	--	13.4	12.1
Smoking Marijuana	10.6	--	12.4	--	13.6	--	14.4	13.4
Being Suspended from School	10.4	--	12.0	--	13.2	--	13.3	12.3
Being Arrested	10.5	--	12.5	--	12.9	--	13.7	12.8
Carrying a Handgun	10.7	--	12.3	--	12.8	--	13.2	12.0
Attacking Someone with Intent to Harm	10.7	--	12.0	--	12.9	--	13.3	12.2
Belonging to a Gang	10.8	--	12.1	--	12.6	--	13.3	12.0
Gambling (betting money or something of value)	10.5	--	11.3	--	12.2	--	13.4	11.6



Section Twelve:

Health Priority Area and Indicator Data

Section Twelve highlights indicator data related to overall health issues; alcohol and other drugs from a health perspective; anxiety, stress, and depression; and lack of affordable medical care and not having enough money to pay for medical care.

A. Overall Health Issues

The five leading causes of death in Blair County are heart disease, cancer, stroke, chronic lower respiratory disease, and accidents.⁴⁹ The death rate in Blair County is higher than in the state, as shown in Figure 25. There is also a notable decrease in birth rate making Blair County an aging population as shown in Figure 26.

Figure 25: Deaths per 1000 People 2000-2006⁵⁰

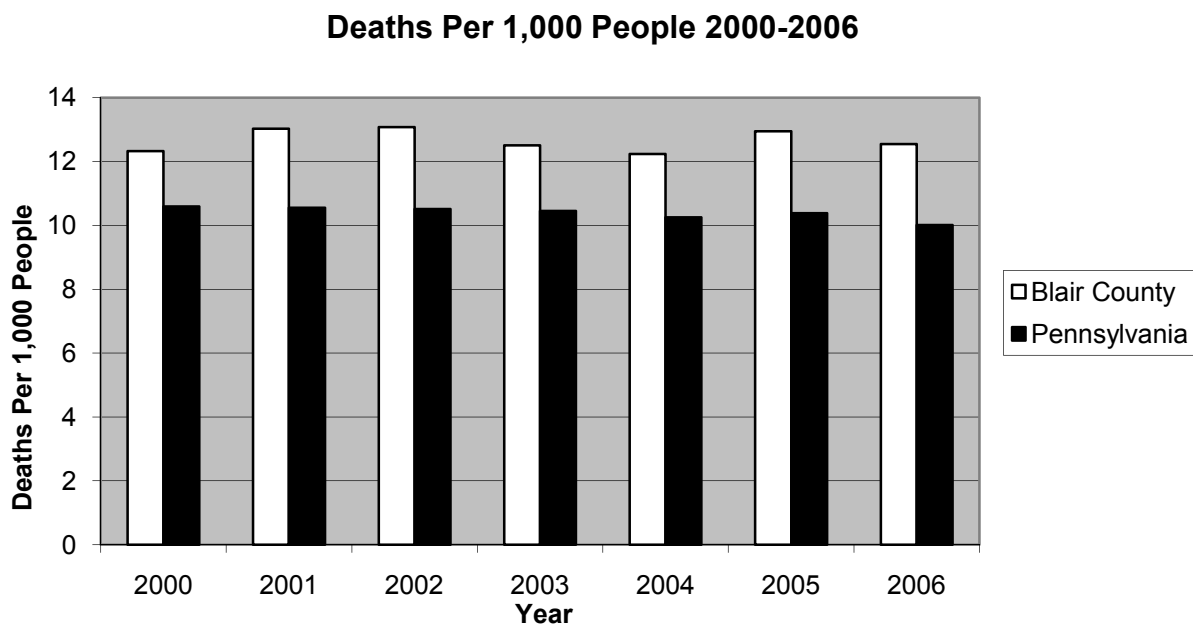
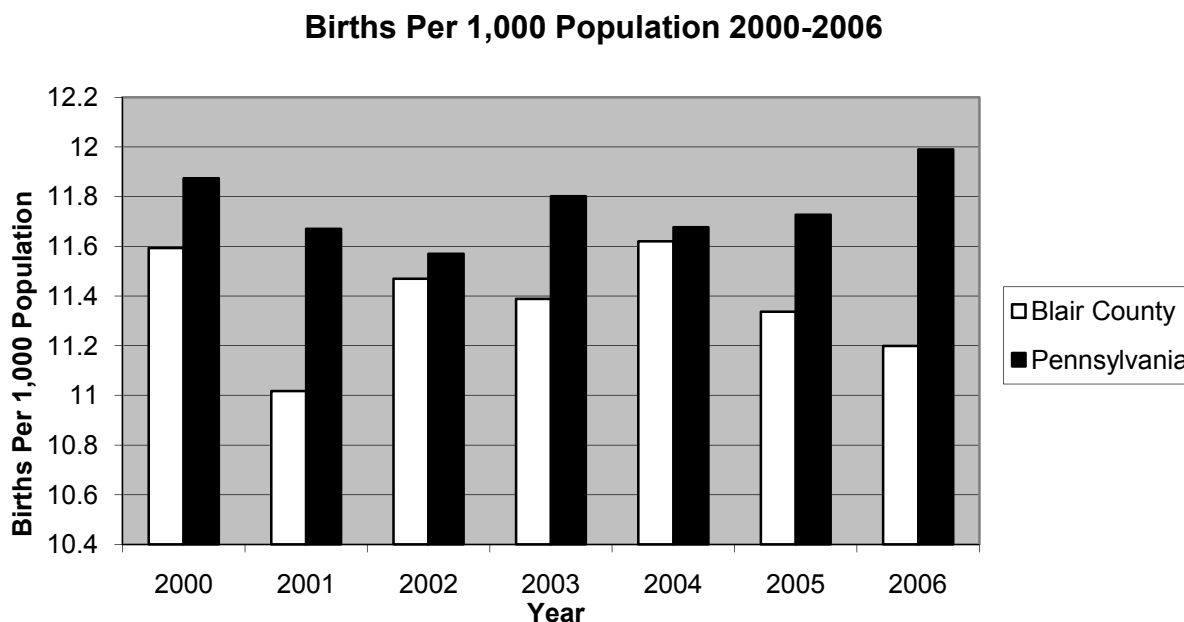


Figure 26: Births per 1000 Population 2000-2006⁵¹



There were four areas under the priority issue of health that were identified in surveys and focus groups as particular concerns of residents and community leaders in Blair County.

- ⦿ Alcohol and other drugs
- ⦿ Anxiety, stress, and depression
- ⦿ Lack of affordable medical care
- ⦿ Not having enough money pay to the doctor, buy prescription medications, or get medical insurance.

Each area is described below. Lack of medical care and not having enough money for medical care are combined in Section C.

B. Alcohol and Other Drugs

The needs assessment indicates that alcohol and drugs are a high priority challenge and issue for Blair County. It was ranked number one by 97% of key informants as a major/moderate issue. Over 69% of households and 67% of Head Start participants reported that alcohol and other drugs was a major/moderate issue. It was rated by youth as the number one concern for their population. Participants in the family violence focus group stated that substance abuse is a significant factor affecting families.

The Blair County Drug and Alcohol Program completed a Treatment Needs Assessment process during the fall of 2007. Overall the analysis indicated the assumption that the Blair County prevalence rates were higher in our community than national percentages. The reason for this assumption is directly related to the demand for services in the Blair County Community.

The Blair County Drug and Alcohol Program is the SCA (Single County Authority) for Blair County. The SCA is the agency designated by local authorities in a county (Blair County Commissioners) to plan, fund and administer drug and alcohol activities in a county. The SCA provided demand information over the last seven years that indicated over 5,000 unduplicated individuals accessed services through the county public funded system. This does not take into consideration those individuals that may have had private insurance or self paid for their care.

On a yearly basis an average of 1,600 unduplicated individuals access services, which represents 16% of the prevalence estimates. This is 6% to 9% greater than the national average of 7% to 10% estimates for persons admitting to having a substance abuse issue and presenting for service (demand) within a year cycle. This may be related to Blair County's Court requirement that all drug and alcohol criminal offenses be referred for evaluation.

The SCA has highlighted the following emerging trends for our community. In the last two years, an emergence of several nationally recognized gangs have been identified in the Blair County communities. This culture is being drawn in from cities outside of Blair County for the sole purpose of drug distribution. With this culture the Blair County Drug Task Force has seen an increase incidence of gun possession, and straw gun purchases. This culture is showing up in our adolescent sub-cultures and school environments.

Accidental overdoses have increased from nine (9) a year in 1996 to twenty-seven (27) in 2006. Overdoses have taken an average of twenty-six (26) deaths a year over the last four years. Increased prescription drug abuse, specifically, methadone, benzodiazepines and other opiate synthetic medication along with heroin are the primary drugs used in overdoses.⁵² Trends in Blair County from 2000 to 2006 indicate a 22% increase in persons treated for alcohol, a 42% increase in persons treated for heroin, and a 12% increase in persons treated for cocaine.⁵³

The following information and charts include data indicators for alcohol and drug abuse, which is listed in the health category in the COMPASS II tool. Data related to alcohol and other drugs are also found in the safety category.

Information in Tables 25-26 was gathered from the Treatment Needs Assessment, a data-gathering tool developed and designed by the PA Department of Health, Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Programs, and completed by the Blair County Single County Authority (SCA). These data were collected as part of the Client Information System (CIS) which is a statewide data collection system, managed by the Department of Health, Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Programs, and used by all PA counties to report specific data on the drug and alcohol treatment trends and patterns.

Table 25: Primary Substance of Abuse among Blair County Residents Under Age 18, Defined by Numbers of Persons Seeking Treatment.⁵⁴

State Fiscal Year 2005-2006 Treatment Needs Assessment Table 6a Demand for Service by Primary Substance of Abuse			
SCA Paid Episodes (Under Age 18) for:		Blair County	
Primary Substance of Abuse	Number of Admissions (Under Age 18)	Percentage of SCA Admissions (Under Age 18)	Percentage of Statewide Admissions (Under Age 18)
Marijuana / Hashish	67	54.92%	63.38%
Alcohol	38	31.15%	21.22%
Cocaine / Crack	5	4.10%	4.93%
Heroin	5	4.10%	3.93%
Other Opiates / Synthetics	1	0.82%	2.06%
Other	3	2.46%	1.66%
Benzodiazepine	0	0.00%	0.62%
Other Sedatives / Hypnotic	1	0.82%	0.49%
Inhalants	0	0.00%	0.48%
Methamphetamine	0	0.00%	0.28%
Over-the-Counter	1	0.82%	0.26%
Other Hallucinogens	0	0.00%	0.16%
Other Amphetamines	0	0.00%	0.11%
Barbiturates	0	0.00%	0.11%
Non-Prescription Methadone	0	0.00%	0.09%
Other Stimulants	1	0.82%	0.09%
PCP	0	0.00%	0.07%
Other Tranquilizers	0	0.00%	0.07%
Total	122	100.00%	100.00%

Table 26: Primary Substance of Abuse among Blair County Residents Over Age 18, Defined by Numbers of Persons Seeking Treatment.⁵⁵

State Fiscal Year July, 2005-June 30 2006 Primary Substance of Abuse among Blair County Residents Over Age 18, Defined by Numbers of Persons Seeking Treatment.			
SCA Paid Episodes (Over Age 18) for:		Blair County	
Primary Substance of Abuse	Number of Admissions (Over Age 18)	Percentage of SCA Admissions (Over Age 18)	Percentage of Statewide Admissions (Over Age 18)
Alcohol	584	42.26%	38.90%
Heroin	518	37.48%	24.40%
Cocaine / Crack	92	6.66%	18.83%
Marijuana / Hashish	92	6.66%	9.54%
Other Opiates / Synthetics	71	5.14%	5.76%
Benzodiazepine	5	0.36%	0.62%
Other	3	0.22%	0.58%
Methamphetamine	1	0.07%	0.46%
PCP	0	0.00%	0.17%
Non-Prescription Methadone	0	0.00%	0.16%
Other Sedatives / Hypnotic	0	0.00%	0.16%
Other Amphetamines	2	0.14%	0.10%
Other Hallucinogens	1	0.07%	0.08%
Barbiturates	0	0.00%	0.08%
Over-the-Counter	12	0.87%	0.05%
Other Tranquilizers	0	0.00%	0.04%
Other Stimulants	0	0.00%	0.03%
Inhalants	1	0.07%	0.03%
Total	1382	100.00%	100.00%

Since 1989, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has conducted a survey of secondary school students on their behavior, attitudes and knowledge concerning alcohol, tobacco, other drugs and violence. The *Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS)* of 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th grade public school students is conducted every two years. In 2007, 3,093 Blair County students in grades 6, 8, 10 and 12 participated in the survey.

Information taken from the PAYS survey (Table 27) indicates that Blair County students recorded the highest lifetime prevalence-of-use rates for alcohol (45.6%), cigarettes (22.3%), and smokeless tobacco (14.7%). Other lifetime prevalence rates ranged from 0.3% for heroin to 9.0% for inhalants. The rate of illicit drug use excluding marijuana is summarized by the indicator “any illicit drug (other than marijuana),” with 11.5% of surveyed students reporting use of these drugs in their lifetimes.

Table 28 shows Blair County students reported the highest past-30-day prevalence-of-use rates for alcohol (16.3%), cigarettes (9.6%), and smokeless tobacco (6.9%). Other past-30-day prevalence rates ranged from 0.2% for crack cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine and ecstasy to 3.7% for marijuana. Overall, 4.0% of students reported the use of some illicit drug (other than marijuana) in the past 30 days.

National data from the *Monitoring the Future* survey provide a valuable reference point for evaluating the severity of drug use behavior. Findings from the *Monitoring the Future* study highlight the pervasiveness of alcohol in middle and high schools with cigarette use the second most pervasive category of ATOD (alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs) use.⁵⁶ Given the national pattern, it is not surprising that alcohol is the most used drug among students in Blair County. Compared to their national counterparts, Blair County students reported higher average levels of lifetime smokeless tobacco and alcohol use and lower average levels of lifetime marijuana, ecstasy, inhalant and cocaine use.

For past-30-day alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use, students reported higher average levels of smokeless tobacco and cigarette use than their national counterparts and lower average levels of marijuana use and binge drinking. Blair County survey data in comparison with Pennsylvania data for 2001, 2003, and 2005 are available on the Blair County Human Service Office website.

Table 27: Blair County Students Reported Lifetime Use of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs (2007)⁵⁷

Grades:	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	Over-All
Alcohol	20.7%	--	47.0%	--	67.5%	--	77.8%	45.6%
Cigarettes	6.4%	--	22.4%	--	33.3%	--	47.7%	22.3%
Smokeless Tobacco	3.6%	--	14.7%	--	24.3%	--	30.6%	14.7%
Marijuana	0.8%	--	6.5%	--	14.4%	--	30.8%	8.9%
Inhalants	6.0%	--	9.9%	--	10.2%	--	11.1%	9.0%
Cocaine	0.5%	--	0.8%	--	2.0%	--	6.9%	1.7%
Crack Cocaine	0.3%	--	0.7%	--	1.3%	--	1.8%	0.8%
Heroin	0.1%	--	0.4%	--	0.4%	--	0.3%	0.3%
Hallucinogens	0.2%	--	1.4%	--	2.7%	--	9.3%	2.2%
Methamphetamine	0.3%	--	0.6%	--	1.1%	--	0.6%	0.7%
Ecstasy	0.2%	--	0.8%	--	1.3%	--	2.7%	0.9%
Steroids	1.0%	--	1.5%	--	1.5%	--	2.4%	1.5%
Any Illicit Drug (Other than Marijuana)	6.7%	--	11.6%	--	13.6%	--	19.2%	11.5%

Note: The symbol "--" indicates that data is not available because only students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 were surveyed as part of the Pennsylvania Youth Survey.

Table 28: Blair County Students Reported Past 30-Day Use of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs (2007⁵⁸)

Grades:	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	Over- All
Alcohol	2.6%	--	12.0%	--	29.2%	--	47.3%	16.3%
Binge Drinking	1.0%	--	5.3%	--	16.4%	--	26.2%	8.4%
Cigarettes	0.9%	--	8.4%	--	17.3%	--	24.0%	9.6%
Smokeless Tobacco	0.8%	--	7.0%	--	13.2%	--	15.3%	6.9%
Marijuana	0.4%	-	3.0%	--	5.8%	--	12.3%	3.7%
Inhalants	2.5%	--	3.3%	--	2.7%	--	1.5%	2.9%
Cocaine	0.1%	--	0.2%	--	0.9%	--	1.2%	0.4%
Crack Cocaine	0.1%	--	0.2%	--	0.2%	--	0.3%	0.2%
Heroin	0.0%	--	0.3%	--	0.0%	--	0.0%	0.2%
Hallucinogens	0.1%	--	0.3%	--	1.3%	--	2.4%	0.7%
Methamphetamine	0.1%	--	0.2%	--	0.2%	--	0.3%	0.2%
Ecstasy	0.0%	--	0.1%	--	0.4%	--	0.3%	0.2%
Steroids	0.2%	--	0.6%	--	0.9%	--	0.9%	0.6%

Note: The symbol "--" indicates that data is not available because only students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 were surveyed as part of the Pennsylvania Youth Survey.

There are many organizations that work diligently to provide services to residents or have programs that benefit the community. Because drugs/alcohol and crime were highlighted as major issues in Blair County, there are a few initiatives and/or programs which are being mentioned.

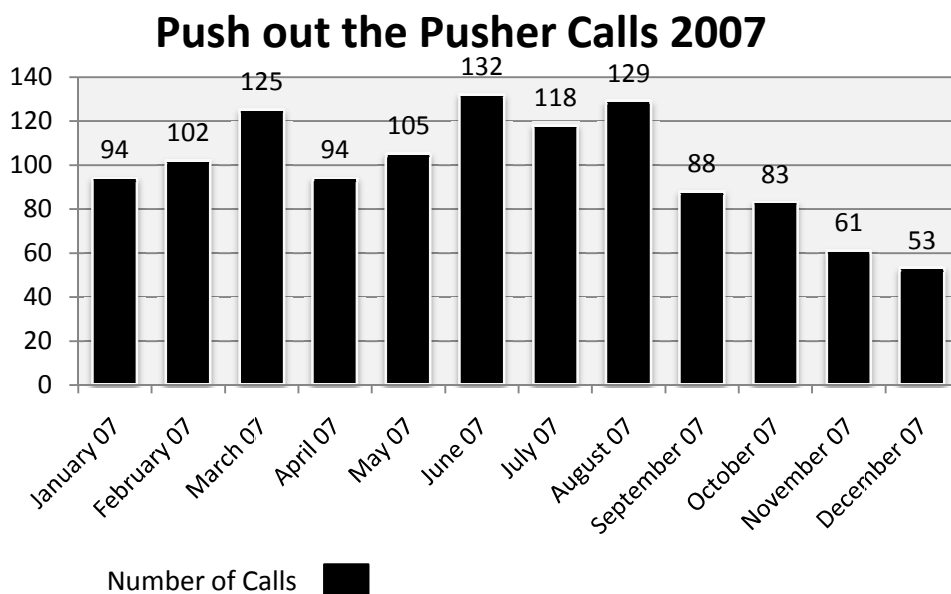
The Blair Countians for Drug Free Communities continues to direct planning and implementation of strategies that will impact environmental factors, community attitudes, perceptions and norms, and beliefs about alcohol and other drugs. The coalition has been operating out of the local county government. The Blair County Drug and Alcohol Program is the Single County Authority (SCA) in our community for planning, contracting, implementing and evaluation of community drug and alcohol prevention and treatment services. The Blair County Human Services Office currently utilizes the Communities That Care (CTC) philosophy and has staff designated to support the development of community partnerships, the survey of community risk and protective factors, the planning and implementation of evidence-based prevention programming, through community partners.

The Push Out the Pusher Hotline (693-3020) is available to report suspicious and/or drug activity in Blair County. Since May 2000, this hotline has received thousands of calls with many contributing to major drug arrests in the county. In the first three months of 2008, residents made 193 calls to the hotline.

Figure 27 indicates the call volume for each month in 2007.⁵⁹ The Push Out The Pusher hotline has been credited by state and local law enforcement as an effective tool in combating illegal drug activity. Operation Our Town, a business-led partnership with the community, has funded various efforts to reduce illegal drug use and related crime in the area.

In addition, residents of Blair County have become active in crime prevention with the creation of Neighborhood Watch groups. Currently, there are 16 active Neighborhood Watch groups organized through Blair Senior Services.⁶⁰

Figure 27: Telephone Calls to the Push Out the Pusher Hotline (2007)



C. Anxiety, Stress, and Depression

Respondents to the Blair County household survey and the Head Start survey put anxiety, stress, and depression as the number one challenge within their own households, at 36% and 52% respectively. The major behavioral health provider in Blair County reports an average of twenty cases per month of serious mental health disorders (priority one) and another eight to ten cases of sub-acute problems with some anxiety/stress. The medical clinic at the hospital sees over 40 cases per month of priority one and over 60 cases of pediatrics mental health issues. In addition, approximately twelve cases are referred elsewhere for medical evaluation and six for therapy.⁶¹

Depression often is accompanied by co-occurring mental disorders (such as alcohol or substance abuse) and, if left untreated, can lead to higher rates of suicide. About 7 out of every 100 men and 1 out of every 100 women who have been diagnosed with depression at some time in their lifetime will go on to commit suicide. The risk of suicide in people with Major Depressive Disorder is about 20 times that of the general population.

The national annual suicide rate is 11 per 100,000 with the highest rate of completed suicides among the elderly.⁶² The rate in Blair County is higher at 14.3% as indicated in Table 29. The number of Student Assistance Program referrals for suicide ideation, gesture, or attempt is summarized in Table 30. As indicated on the Pennsylvania Youth Survey, youth in Blair County also report symptoms of depression. As shown in Table 31, 32.4% of students felt depressed or sad most days.

Table 29: Suicide Statistics in Blair County 2002-2006⁶³

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total Number of Suicides	18	16	25	20	17	20
Sex: Male	16	14	21	16	13	17
Female	2	2	4	4	4	3
AGE: 0-15	0	0	0	0	0	0
16-25	2	3	4	1	0	5
26-35	3	0	3	2	1	3
36-45	3	3	5	4	7	8
46-55	3	5	7	2	2	3
56-65	1	1	3	6	4	1
66-75	2	2	2	1	1	0
75+	4	1	1	4	2	0

Table 30: Summary of Blair County Student Assistance Program Data - Number of Referrals and Statistics Related to Suicide Ideation, Gesture, or Attempt⁶⁴

School Year	Total Number of SAP Referrals	Number of Referrals for Suicide Ideation, Gestures, or Attempts	Number of Referrals for Suffered Recent Loss
1996-1997	1151	36	-
1997-1998	973	48	-
1998-1999	964	54	-
1999-2000	1023	65	-
2000-2001	1010	43	-
2001-2002	949	44	-
2002-2003	912	35	183
2003-2004	998	37	51
2004-2005	1055	34	73
2005-2006	1008	27	87
2006-2007	1018	19	69

(Student Assistance Programs have been established by law in all school districts to identify and assist students who may be experiencing problems with school performance or behavior. These problems may be related to mental health concerns, or alcohol and other drug use.)

Table 31: Percentage of Blair County Youth Reporting Symptoms of Depression (2007)⁶⁵

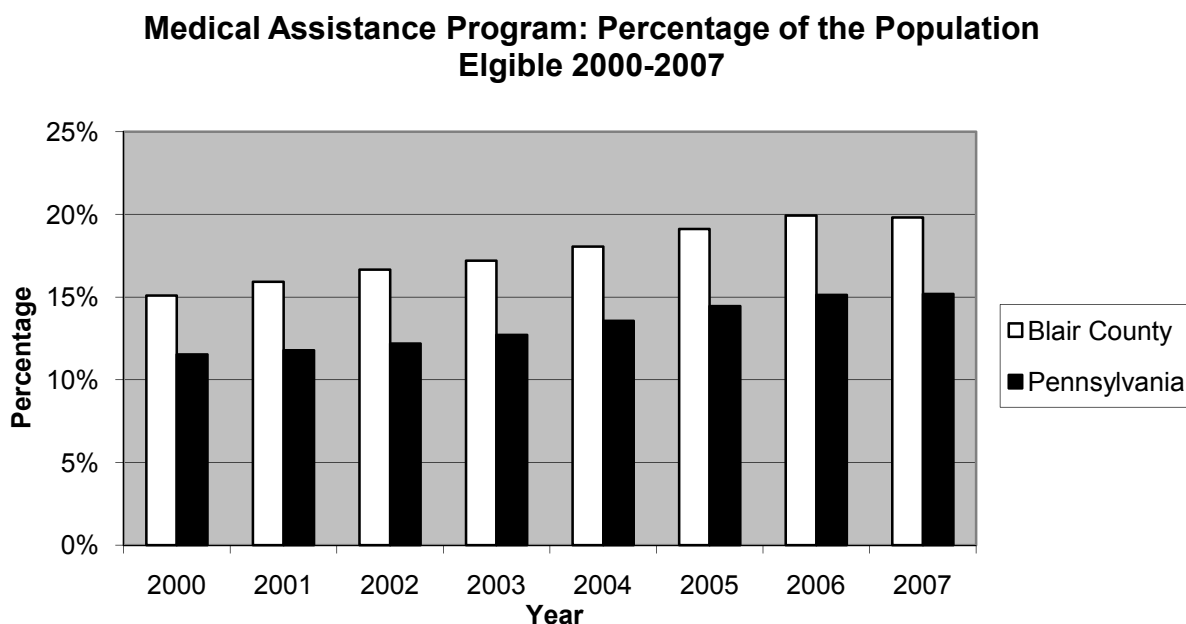
Percentage of Youth Reporting Symptoms of Depression, Blair County (2007)								
	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	Overall
In the past year, felt depressed or sad most days	30.0	--	33.8	--	33.5	--	32.5	32.4
Sometimes I think that life is not worth it	15.8	--	21.7	--	24.5	--	20.7	20.5
At times I think I am no good at all	24.2	--	29.9	--	32.1	--	27.9	28.6
All in all, I am inclined to think that I am a failure	10.9	--	14.0	--	16.0	--	11.9	13.2

Note: The symbol "--" indicates that data is not available because only students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 were surveyed as part of the Pennsylvania Youth Survey.

D. Lack of Affordable Medical Care and Not Having Enough Money to Pay for Medical Care

In Blair County, 31% of those responding to the random household survey indicated that one of their household challenges was not having enough money to pay the doctor, buy prescription medications, or get medical insurance. As a community challenge, the lack of affordable medical care was listed by 57% of households as well as 74% of key informants. As with most of the survey results, Head Start families saw it as an even greater challenge at 64%.

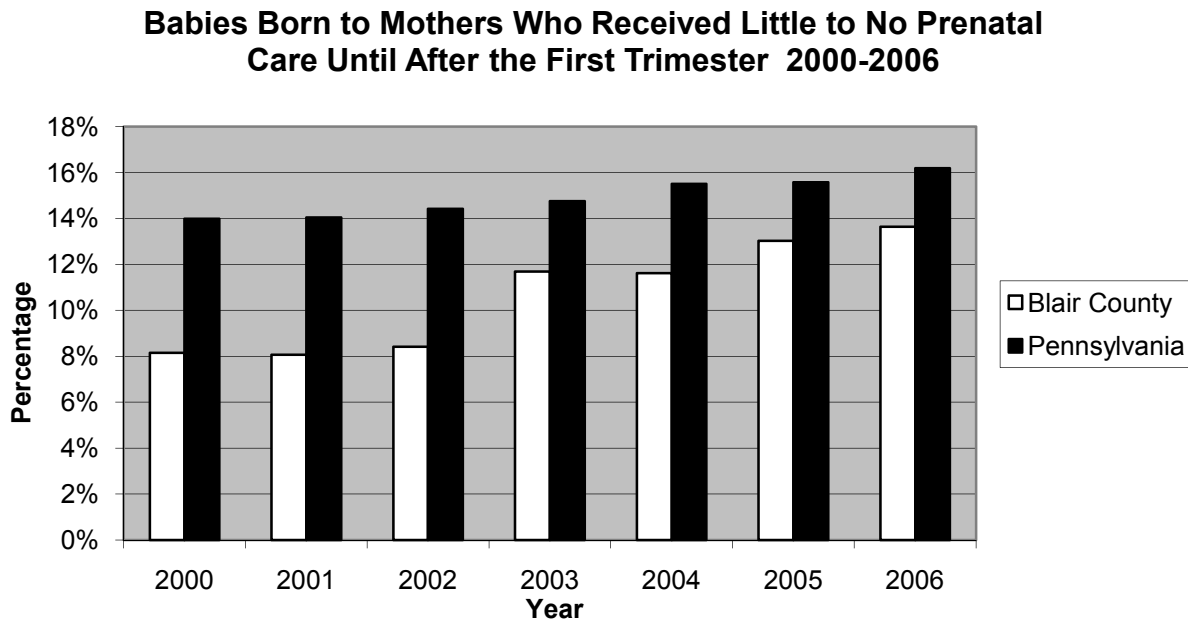
About 19.5% of the population in Blair County is eligible for medical assistance (Figure 28) as compared to 15.1% for Pennsylvania. Approximately, 4,875 adults ages 65 and older are enrolled in Pennsylvania's prescription assistance program (PACE/PACENET).⁶⁶

Figure 28: Medical Assistance Program: Percentage of the Population Eligible 2000-2007⁶⁷

Data taken from the 2004 Health Insurance Survey indicate 13.8% of people ages 19-64 in Blair County are without health insurance as compared to their counterparts in Pennsylvania at 11.1%. The estimated number of uninsured children under 19 years old in Blair County was 3.3% or 1,032 children.⁶⁸ Without health insurance, people do not have the means to pay for office visits, diagnostic tests, or prescription medications.

The result is often no treatment, overall poor health, or inappropriate emergency room use. Ten percent of the population over the age of 18 in the county do not have a personal health care provider and needed to see a doctor but could not because of medical cost.⁶⁹

Figure 29: Babies Born to Mothers Who Received Little or No Prenatal Care Until After the First Trimester 2000-2006⁷⁰





Section Thirteen:

Other Relevant Indicator Data

Section Thirteen contains indicator data for child abuse and family violence which was expressed as somewhat of a concern in surveys and focus groups. Education issues were not ranked high in any of the surveys but the level of education is related to the economy, so some indicator data for education are contained in Section B. The availability of other indicator data for Blair County such as environment, housing, leisure activities, and transportation is referenced in Section C.

A. Child Abuse and Family Violence

Another theme that emerged from the surveys, focus groups, and community meetings was social and children's issues including but not limited to family violence, bullying, teen pregnancy, etc. The substantiated child abuse rates in Blair County vary from year to year but are higher than for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Table 32).

Table 32: Rates of Reporting and Substantiation of Child Abuse⁷¹

	Blair County					Pennsylvania
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2007
Total Reports	321	320	301	339	298	24,021
Substantiated Number	60	68	52	75	57	4,162
Substantiated Percent	18.7%	21.3%	17.3%	22.1%	19.1%	17.3%
Total Reports Per 1000 Children	11.4	11.5	10.7	12.2	10.7	8.3
Substantiated Reports per 1000 Children	2.1	2.4	1.9	2.7	2.1	1.4

With regard to family violence, there were 453 Protection from Abuse orders filed in 2007 in Blair County.⁷² Locally domestic violence abuse reports have remained steady for the past five years although there was a 6% increase in 2005.⁷³ Use of the domestic abuse shelter has increased 30% since 2004-2005. Table 33 outlines the services to victims of violence in Blair County. The number of victims served through the Blair County Victim Services Office for all crimes in 2008 was 1,961.⁷⁴

Table 33: Services to Victims of Violence in Blair County⁷⁵

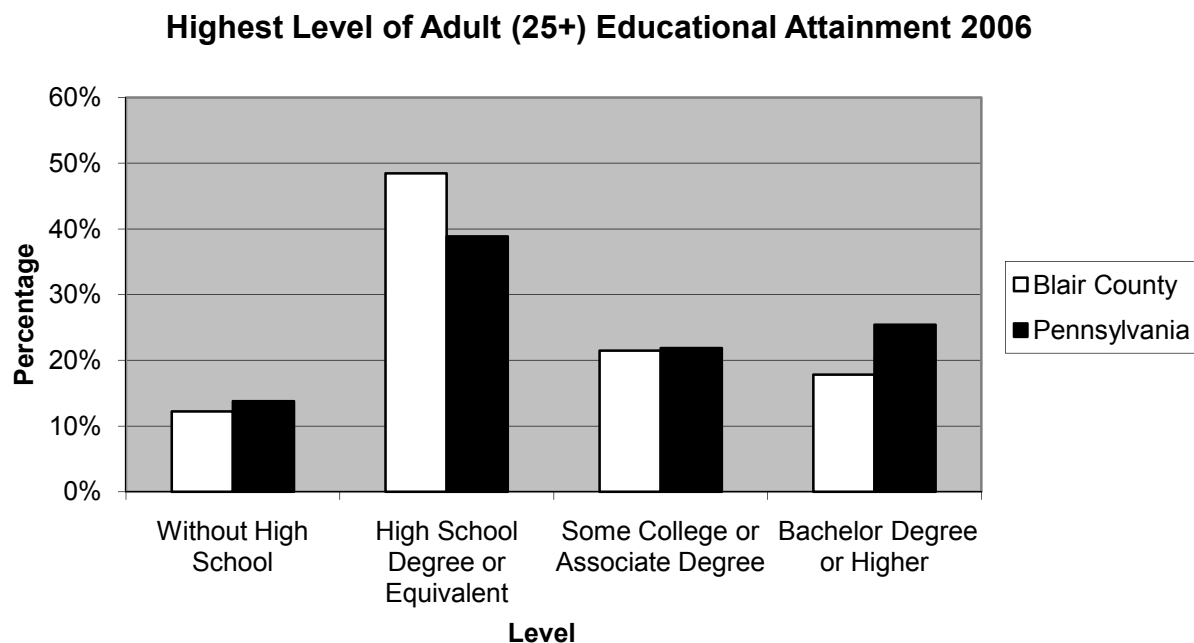
Crime Victim Support Services	2001/ 2002	2002/ 2003	2003/ 2004	2004/ 2005	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008
Child Victims	22	13	13	16	15	11	23
Adult Victims	111	112	139	121	129	90	282
Significant Others	40	38	60	33	21	18	57
Total of Violent Crimes	502	802	785	496	468	442	684

B. Education

When reviewing education indicator data for Blair County, over 10% of adults 25 and over did not finish high school, but that percentage has improved since 1990. The high school drop out rate for Blair County is 1.8% which is comparable to Pennsylvania is at 1.9%.⁷⁶ The annual rate, which is used by Pennsylvania and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), measures the percentage of students enrolled who drop out during a single school year. An annual rate is important because it reveals how many students are leaving school each year and how each year's rate compares with previous ones.

Figure 30 indicates that fewer students attend two-four year college, but a higher percentage (25%) participates in non-degree post secondary education.

Figure 30: Highest Level of Adult Educational Attainment 2006⁷⁷



C. Environment, Housing, Leisure Activities, and Transportation

The Blair County Planning Commission completed an Areawide Comprehensive Plan Report for Blair County in 2007.⁷⁸ The plan includes extensive information and data related to land use, economic development, and overall quality of life for residents. The report outlines strengths and weaknesses in many areas which were not covered in this needs assessment. The following is a listing of issues covered within that report:

- ⊙ Existing Land Use
- ⊙ Cultural and Historic Resources
- ⊙ Prime Agricultural Lands
- ⊙ Environment and Natural Resources
- ⊙ Park, Recreation, and Open Space
- ⊙ Housing
- ⊙ Community Facilities
- ⊙ Water and Sewer Infrastructure
- ⊙ Solid Waste Management
- ⊙ Stormwater Management
- ⊙ Transportation
- ⊙ Form and Function of Government
- ⊙ Quality of Life in Blair County: Citizen's Perspective
- ⊙ Population Characteristics and Trends
- ⊙ Economic Development and Tourism

The 2007 Pennsylvania County Data Book contains additional information specific to Blair County.⁷⁹



Charge to the Community

The primary purpose in undertaking this community assessment was to identify and prioritize community issues to help guide programmatic and fiscal decisions. As defined by United Way of America, “Community impact is about working at the community level; improving the lives of people in our community; and influencing whatever sectors, systems, networks, groups, or environments that can play a role in getting that done.”⁸⁰ Everyone involved in this endeavor, including the Steering Committee, members of the Needs Assessment Partnership, and participants in focus groups and community meetings, is committed to strategies that create clearly recognizable improvement in the lives of Blair County residents. This can be accomplished by creating new partnerships and by joining existing collaborations to create measurable improvement on the following six priority challenges and issues that were identified by survey results and focus groups, and were supported by indicator data.

- Crime
- Alcohol and Other Drugs
- Unemployment or Underemployment
- Lack of jobs
- Lack of Affordable Medical Care
- Poverty

This needs assessment process confirmed that Blair County has many assets, including community leaders, businesses, service providers, community organizations and individuals. Those individuals who took time to complete the household survey or to attend the community meetings, and those who dedicated many hours as members of the Partnership are some of what makes Blair County a great place to live. But it is also apparent that there are significant challenges, many of which have become even more challenging with recent job losses and economic conditions that are impacting our local community and the nation. It will also be important to assess why we have so many organizations that have been working on our challenges for years while we still have the same issues that are consuming our time and resources.

This is a report on what has been done since the inception of COMPASS II, with a look at what is to come. This report presents findings from the first three phases of the COMPASS II® Guide to Community Building that were carried out in the 2008 Blair County Needs Assessment. In addition to what has already been completed, the COMPASS II® tool provides recommendations and a framework that communities may follow to implement the remaining phases. Survey data made available from this needs assessment report may be useful to decision makers in areas of funding.

The challenge is to motivate key community leaders and citizens to use this information to understand the issues and to work collaboratively toward resolving them. The ultimate goal of this process is to improve the quality of life for the residents of Blair County.

We take our next step by sponsoring a formal event releasing the *Blair County Profile: Our Strengths, Challenges, and Issues*. Over 150 key leaders in Blair County will be invited to hear the results of the needs assessment, receive a hard copy of the full report, and join the Partnership. The Partnership will then begin the task of selecting priority issues and best practice outcomes as part of the Community Plan. New work groups would be formed to address specific priority areas (i.e. crime, drugs/alcohol, economy, etc.). Input and discussions from the work groups will be brought back to the Partnership and agency/community funders.

Once again, we thank all those who were involved in the needs assessment process and welcome those who are willing to work on improving their community.

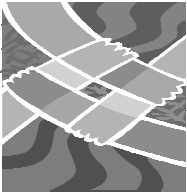
For those who want electronic access to the information contained in this report, the entire report and additional, detailed sources of data are found at the website of the Blair County Human Services Offices (<http://www.hso.blairco.org/needsassessment.html>).



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Appendix A : Household Cover Letter and Survey



Blair County Needs Assessment Partnership

423 Allegheny Street, Suite 443
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
(814) 693-3112

June 25, 2007

Dear Neighbor:

As part of the effort to build a better community in Blair County, we are conducting a Household Survey to learn more about strengths and issues in neighborhoods and households. We are contacting you because we highly value your opinion, and we believe your insights will help improve the community.

Your address has been randomly selected. All answers will be held in strictest confidence and you will not be identified.

We would like an adult (18-years-of-age or older) in your household to complete this survey and return it in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope as soon as possible, but no later than August 24, 2007.

When you are completing this survey:

Neighborhood means people who live near you (ex. within a few blocks or down the street/road).

Community means your municipality, borough, city, or township.

Household means members of your family and others living in your house.

Your participation will help ensure that this is a successful effort. Thank you in advance for your support in making this a better community.

If you have questions or need more information, please call Cathy Crum at 693-3112.

Sincerely,

Jean Johnstone
Chair
Community Partnership

This project is funded in part by the United Way of Blair County, the Blair County Human Services Office and Altoona Regional Health System.

Household Survey – Start Here

A. Neighborhood Strengths

1. Neighborhoods have strengths that help people make their neighborhood a better place to live. Here is a list of common strengths. For each one, please describe whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree that the strength exists in your neighborhood. **CHECK ONE NUMBER IN EACH ROW.**

Neighborhood Strength	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion/ Don't Know
1a. People in your neighborhood gather together formally and informally (for example at picnics or meetings).	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
1b. People in your neighborhood consider the same things important.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
1c. People in your neighborhood come together to work on common goals.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
1d. People and groups in your neighborhood come together to help each other out when they have a problem.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
1e. People in your neighborhood trust each other.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
1f. People who are different from one another (e.g., young and old, established residents and newcomers, black and white) participate together in neighborhood activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅

2. Do you regularly do volunteer work in your neighborhood? **CHECK ONE.**

☐₁ YES

☐₂ NO

2a. If yes, for which of the following do you volunteer? **CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.**

☐₁ Children or youth activities

☐₂ Civic group such as Kiwanis

☐₃ Cultural group such as a music group or museum

☐₄ Environmental group

☐₅ Group that works with lower-income people, elders, or homeless people

☐₆ Hospital or health group

☐₇ Human services organization

☐₈ Neighborhood group such as a neighborhood association

☐₉ Political group or candidate

☐₁₀ Religious group

☐₁₁ School

☐₁₂ Sports group

☐₁₃ Other group

2b. If yes, in the past month, about how many days, if any, have you done volunteer work?
CHECK ONE.

☐₁ None

☐₂ 1 day

☐₃ 2 days

☐₄ 3-to-5 days

☐₅ 6-or- more days

☐₆ Don't know

3. Do you vote in most elections? **CHECK ONE.**

☐₁ YES

☐₂ NO

4. How much opportunity do you have to affect how things happen in your neighborhood? **CHECK ONE.**

☐₁ Much opportunity

☐₂ Some opportunity

☐₃ Little opportunity

☐₄ No opportunity

B. Community Challenges and Issues

Please write the City, Borough, Municipality, or Township where you live: _____

People experience challenges and issues sometimes in the community where they live. Here is a list of common issues. For each one, please describe whether you believe it is not an issue, is a minor issue, is a moderate issue or is a major issue for people in your community. **CHECK ONE NUMBER IN EACH ROW.**

Community Issue	Not an Issue	Minor Issue	Moderate Issue	Major Issue	No Opinion/ Don't Know
<u>Economic Issues</u>					
1. Unemployment or under-employment	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
2. Poverty	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
3. Lack of jobs	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
<u>Educational Issues</u>					
4. Illiteracy	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
5. Unsafe school environment	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
6. Overcrowded classrooms	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
<u>Environmental Issues</u>					
7. Water or air pollution	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
8. Noise or other pollution	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
<u>Health Issues</u>					
9. Alcohol and/or drug abuse	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
10. Mental illness or emotional issues	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
11. Lack of affordable medical care	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
12. HIV/AIDS	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅

Community Issue	Not an Issue	Minor Issue	Moderate Issue	Major Issue	No Opinion/ Don't Know
<u>Housing Issues</u>					
13. Shortage of affordable housing	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
14. Substandard housing	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
15. Overcrowded housing	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
<u>Leisure Activity Issues</u>					
16. Shortage of recreational facilities (swimming pools, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
17. Lack of cultural activities (concerts, museums, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
<u>Safety Issues</u>					
18. Crime	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
19. Gangs	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
<u>Social Issues</u>					
20. Teen pregnancy	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
21. Racial or ethnic discrimination	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
22. Family violence, abuse of children or adults	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
23. Lack of affordable care for children	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅

Community Issue	Not an Issue	Minor Issue	Moderate Issue	Major Issue	No Opinion/ Don't Know
<u>Transportation Issues</u>					
24. Inadequate public transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
25. Poor road and/or traffic conditions	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
<u>Other</u>					
26. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅

C. Household Challenges and Issues

Here is a list of questions about challenges and issues for which people and families often look for help. These challenges and issues affect people of all ages. The questions ask whether any one of the following has been a challenge or an issue for you or anyone in your household over the past 12 months. If it has been a challenge or an issue, please describe it as either a minor issue, moderate issue, or major issue.

CHECK ONE NUMBER IN EACH ROW.

Household Issue	Not an Issue	Minor Issue	Moderate Issue	Major Issue	No Opinion/ Don't Know
<u>Economic Issues</u>					
1. Not having enough money for food	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
2. Not having enough money to buy needed clothing and shoes	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
3. Finding it difficult to budget	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
4. Not being able to find work	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
<u>Educational Issues</u>					
5. Difficulty in reading well enough to get along	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅

Household Issue	Not an Issue	Minor Issue	Moderate Issue	Major Issue	No Opinion/ Don't Know
6. Children being unsafe at school	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
<u>Environmental Issues</u>					
7. Experiencing air or water pollution	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
8. Experiencing noise or other pollution	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
<u>Health Issues</u>					
9. Not having enough money to pay the doctor, buy prescription medications, or get medical insurance	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
10. Having a lot of anxiety, stress, or depression	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
11. Experiencing an alcohol and/or drug issue	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
12. Children or teenagers experiencing behavior or emotional issues	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
<u>Housing Issues</u>					
13. Not having enough room in your house for all the people who live there	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
14. Living in housing that needs major repairs	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅

Household Issue	Not an Issue	Minor Issue	Moderate Issue	Major Issue	No Opinion/ Don't Know
15. Not having enough money to pay for housing	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
<u>Leisure Activity Issues</u>					
16. Not being able to afford recreational activities	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
17. Not being able to afford entertainment activities (music, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
<u>Safety Issues</u>					
18. Experiencing household crime	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
19. Experiencing household threats from gangs	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
<u>Social Issues</u>					
20. Not being able to afford legal help	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
21. Not being able to get care for a person with a disability or serious illness, or for an elder	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
22. Not being able to find or afford care for children	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅

Household Issue	Not an Issue	Minor Issue	Moderate Issue	Major Issue	No Opinion/ Don't Know
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Transportation Issues

23. Not being able to get transportation for a person with a disability or an elder	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
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Other

24. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
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D. The following questions will help us be certain we have included a valid sampling of people.
CHECK ONE NUMBER FOR EACH QUESTION WITH NUMBERED ANSWERS.

1. What is your postal Zip code? _____
2. How many adults 65 years of age or older, including yourself, live in your household?
ENTER NUMBER _____
3. Which of the following, including yourself, live in your household?
 - ☐₁ Two or more adults without children
 - ☐₂ Two or more adults with at least one child (age 17 or younger)
 - ☐₃ One adult with at least one child (age 17 or younger)
 - ☐₄ One adult living alone
4. What is your age group?
 - ☐₁ 19 or younger
 - ☐₂ 20 - 34
 - ☐₃ 35 - 54
 - ☐₄ 55 - 64
 - ☐₅ 65 - 74
 - ☐₆ 75 or over

5. Are you...

☐₁ Male

☐₂ Female

6. Race and Ethnicity

6a. Are you of Spanish/Hispanic origin or descent?

☐₁ Yes

☐₂ No

6b. What do you consider to be your primary racial or ethnic group?

☐₁ American Indian

☐₂ Asian or Pacific Islander

☐₃ Black or African American

☐₄ White

☐₅ Other, please specify: _____

7. Counting income from all sources (including all earnings from jobs, unemployment insurance, pensions, public assistance, etc.,) and counting income from everyone living in your home, which of the following ranges did your household income fall into last year?

☐₁ Less than \$5,000

☐₂ \$5,000 - \$9,999

☐₃ \$10,000 - \$14,999

☐₄ \$15,000 - \$19,999

☐₅ \$20,000 - \$24,999

☐₆ \$25,000 - \$34,999

☐₇ \$35,000 - \$49,999

☐₈ \$50,000 or above

8. Does anyone in your household receive public assistance such as Temporary Assistance for Need Families (TANF), food stamps, or Supplemental Security Income (SSI)?

☐₁ Yes

☐₂ No

END HERE

THANK YOU

Appendix B : Key Informant Cover Letter and Survey



Blair County Needs Assessment Partnership

423 Allegheny Street, Suite 443
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
(814) 693-3112

February 1, 2008

Name
Organization
Address
City, State Zip

Dear Name,

As part of the effort to build a better community in Blair County, we are asking a sample of community leaders to complete the enclosed survey. **COMPASS II** is a community-building tool that builds on the strengths of local individuals, associations, and organizations to promote broad participation in the continuous improvement of community life. Because it uses an asset-based approach to community building, the product of this process will be more than simply a list of community “needs.” The ultimate goal is to form plans to combine our assets with our needs, making Blair County a stronger community. One component of the COMPASS II project includes a Key Informant Survey. The project is being managed by the Blair County Needs Assessment Partnership. A group of nationally-known nonprofit, foundation and educational groups collaborated to produce the survey questions.

We are contacting you because you are a valued leader in the community and because we believe your insight will help improve our community. The Key Informant Survey is designed to obtain your opinions and ideas about local strengths and issues. We encourage you to complete the survey no later than February 29, 2008 and return it to the Blair County Needs Assessment Partnership via **e-mail**; Ccrum@blairco.info, **FAX** 693-3144 or by **mail** to Cathy Crum, Blair County Needs Assessment, 423 Allegheny Street, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648.

Please be assured that the information gathered will be treated with complete confidentiality. The results of all surveys will be combined. No ideas or opinions will be attributed to you or your organization. Your participation is, of course, voluntary. We prefer that you answer all questions so we may have an accurate and thorough response. We appreciate any feedback you are able to provide. If you have any questions, please feel free to call Cathy Crum at the Blair County Human Services Office at 693-3112.

Sincerely,

Jean Johnstone
Chair
Needs Assessment Partnership

This project is funded in part by the United Way of Blair County and the Blair County Human Services Office.



Blair County Needs Assessment Partnership

423 Allegheny Street, Suite 443
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
(814) 693-3112

COMPASS II Key Informant Survey

A. Community Strengths

Communities have strengths that help people make their community a better place to live. Here is a list of common strengths. For each one, please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree that the strength exists in your community. (CHECK ONE NUMBER IN EACH ROW)

Community Strength	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion/ Don't Know
1. Your community is one where leaders from business, labor, government, education, religious, neighborhood, non-profit and all other sectors come together and work productively to address critical community issues.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
2. Your community is one that actively promotes positive relations among people from all races, genders, ages, and cultures.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
3. Your community is one where people and organizations from all geographic regions get together to address mutual concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
4. Your community is one where all religious groups come together to address pressing social concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

Community Strength	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion/ Don't Know
5. Your community is one where associations in neighborhoods from various parts of the community share strategies and work together.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
6. Your community is one that actively supports and strengthens connections between families, neighborhoods, and the whole community.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
7. Your community is one that actively promotes participation in the political process from all races, genders, ages and cultures.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
8. Your community is one in which there exists a great deal of mutual respect among leaders from all sectors of the community.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
9. Your community is one where leaders from all sectors of the community share common goals and uphold a common vision for the community.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

B. Community Challenges and Issues

People experience challenges and issues sometimes in the community where they live. Here is a list of common issues. For each one, please indicate whether you believe it is not an issue, is a minor issue, is a moderate issue or a major issue for people in your community. (CHECK ONE NUMBER IN EACH ROW)

Community Issue	Not an Issue	Minor Issue	Moderate Issue	Major Issue	No Opinion/ Don't Know
<i>Economic Issues</i>					
1. Unemployment or underemployment	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
2. Poverty	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
3. Lack of jobs	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
<i>Educational Issues</i>					
4. Illiteracy	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
5. Unsafe school environment	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
6. Overcrowded classrooms	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
<i>Environmental Issues</i>					
7. Water or air pollution	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
8. Noise or other pollution	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
<i>Health Issues</i>					
9. Alcohol and/or drug abuse	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
10. Mental illness or emotional issues	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
11. Lack of affordable medical care	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
12. HIV/AIDS	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅

Community Issue	Not an Issue	Minor Issue	Moderate Issue	Major Issue	No Opinion/ Don't Know
<i>Housing Issues</i>					
13. Shortage of affordable housing	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
14. Substandard housing	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
15. Overcrowded housing	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
<i>Leisure Activity Issues</i>					
16. Shortage of recreational facilities (swimming pools, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
17. Lack of cultural activities (concerts, museums, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
<i>Safety Issues</i>					
18. Crime	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
19. Gangs	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
<i>Social Issues</i>					
20. Teen pregnancy	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
21. Racial or ethnic discrimination	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
22. Family violence, abuse of children or adults	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
23. Lack of affordable care for children	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅

Community Issue	Not an Issue	Minor Issue	Moderate Issue	Major Issue	No Opinion/ Don't Know
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Transportation Issues

24. Inadequate public transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
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25. Poor road and/or traffic conditions	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
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Other

26. _____	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅
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C. Priorities

(WRITE IN THE APPLICABLE NUMBER FROM THE LEFT-HAND MARGIN ABOVE.)

1. Which of the above issues do you believe is the *most* serious in your community? _____
2. Which of the above issues do you believe is the *second* most serious? _____
3. Which of the above issues do you believe is the *third* most serious? _____

D. Comments and Suggestions

1. Please share briefly any comments you may have on community strengths and challenges and issues.

2. Please share briefly any suggestions you may have concerning how current community resources might be redesigned or redirected to be more effective.

E. Key Informant Characteristics

The following questions will be used solely for statistical purposes. Your answers will be combined all other responses to get a better understanding of the survey participants as a whole. Your answers will remain confidential. (CHECK ONE NUMBER IN EACH QUESTION)

1. Are you . . .

- ☐₁ Male
☐₂ Female

- 2a. Are you of Spanish/Hispanic origin or descent?

- ☐₁ Yes
☐₂ No

- 2b. Please indicate what you consider your primary racial or ethnic group:

- ☐₁ American Indian
☐₂ Asian or Pacific Islander
☐₃ Black
☐₄ White
☐₅ Other. (Please specify) _____

3. Which of the following categories describes your primary occupation?

- ☐₁ Executive, administrative, or managerial
☐₂ Professional
☐₃ Technical
☐₄ Sales
☐₅ Administrative support, for example, clerical, secretarial
☐₆ Service
☐₇ Industrial
☐₈ Homemaker

☐₉ Not employed

☐₁₀ Other. (Please specify) _____

4. Please identify your current membership on any non-profit boards of directors, naming each organization separately:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Thank you for your time and comments.
We appreciate your willingness to share your views
about your community's strengths, challenges and issues.
We value your opinion

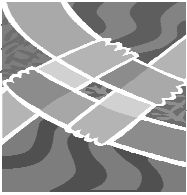
Appendix C

Sample Facilitator's Guide

<p>Facilitator introduction, thank you, and purpose (1 – 2 minutes)</p>	<p>“Hello, My name is _____. I would like to start by thanking each of you for taking time to come today. We will be here for about an hour and a half. We are holding this focus group as part of an effort to build a better community. I am a member of the Blair County Needs Assessment Partnership. We are gathering ideas and opinions regarding this community’ strengthens and issues. We already conducted a variety of surveys and are now having focus groups and community meetings.”</p> <p>“I’m going to lead our discussion. My job is to ask you questions and then encourage and facilitate a discussion. I also would like to introduce (name of recorder) and (name of receptionist). The recorder will be writing down and helping me summarize the discussion but will not list the name of any individual and his/her comments.”</p>
<p>Ground rules (1 minute)</p>	<p>“To allow our conversation to flow more freely, I would like to ask you to follow some basic rules.”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please talk one at a time and avoid side conversations. 2. There are no wrong answers just different opinions. Say what is true for you, even if you are the only one that feels that way. 3. Everyone’s participation is valuable so I hope you will share your ideas and concerns. 4. Let’s keep focused on the questions.
<p>Introduction of participants (4-7 minutes)</p>	<p>“Before we start talking, let’s go around the room and please give me your name and affiliation.” Are you an agency person or consumer (if applicable)?</p>
<p>Questions (60 minutes)</p>	<p>Ask each person to write down on an index card his/her responses to the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do you believe are major strengths in our community? 2. What do you believe are major challenges and issues in our community? 3. What are major strengths in our community that pertain to (persons with disabilities, elderly, youth, or persons dealing with violence toward families/children)?

	<p>4. What are major challenges and issues that pertain to (persons with disabilities, elderly, youth, or persons dealing with violence toward families/children)?</p> <p>Then take each question one at a time and ask each person to share their response. The recorder will write down responses and indicate those that have been mentioned more than once.</p> <p>Lastly, ask participants to respond verbally to the following question.</p> <p>1. How can the challenges you listed be addressed by the community resources?</p> <p>“In concluding this discussion, are there any final comments you want the Needs Assessment Partnership to know?”</p>
Closing the session (2 minutes)	<p>“Again, I want to thank you for coming and sharing your ideas. Your comments have given me lots of valuable information to include in our report.”</p>
Preparing for the Report	<p>Common elements of focus group reports includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Background of participants (i.e. who, how many, etc.) 2. Major points and themes that emerged. 2. Participants’ reactions to questions 3. New questions that arose. 4. Interpretations or conclusions that seem true?

Appendix D: Business Cover Letter and Survey



Blair County Needs Assessment Partnership

423 Allegheny Street, Suite 443
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
(814) 693-3112

October 10, 2007

Dear Chamber Member:

Blair County, like most counties in Pennsylvania, is taking an extended look at ways to better utilize our assets to impact community needs. To determine the breadth of those assets, The Chamber is joining a number of local organizations to survey businesses, service providers, associations, labor unions and individuals on specific asset categories. Once completed, the survey information will be made available to those agencies that can then set strategies to assure that the county more effectively uses its diminishing sources of income.

The survey that accompanies this letter takes only a few minutes to complete. The questions ask for specific responses that will be compiled into a database for purposes of ascertaining volume and trends. This information will **not** be used to solicit your business or to encourage you to participate in projects or programs undertaken by any of the participating organizations. In fact, we are not asking you to identify yourself or your business anywhere on the survey.

A self-addressed, stamped envelope is included in this mailing so that there is no cost to you or your business beyond the time that it takes to complete the survey. We encourage you to complete the survey no later than **November 1, 2007**. As you can imagine, the organizations involved with this asset mapping project understand the importance of helping Blair County get a better handle on what resources are available here. We greatly value your input and hope that you will become part of this process by sharing your opinions.

Please address any questions that you have regarding the survey to Joe Hurd at the Chamber. You may call him at 943-8151 or E-mail him at jhurd@blairchamber.com.
Thank you for your help!

Sincerely,

Jean Johnstone
Chair
Needs Assessment Partnership

Joe Hurd
Executive Director
Blair County Chamber of Commerce

This project is funded in part by the United Way of Blair County and the Blair County Human Services Office.

Blair County Compass Business Survey

Id #: _____

1. Mission and/or purpose of your company and its philanthropic interest:

2. Number of employees in local community: _____

3. Charitable contribution provided by your company last year (estimate): \$ _____

4. Volunteer hours contributed by your company last year (estimate): _____

5. Does your company allow time off for volunteer work? (Check One)

- ☐₁ Yes
☐₂ No
☐₃ Would Consider

6. Does your company offer an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)? (Check One)

- ☐₁ Yes
☐₂ No
☐₃ Would Consider

7. Does your company offer child care services to employees? (Check One)

- ☐₁ Yes
☐₂ No
☐₃ Would Consider

8. Does your company provide meeting space to community groups? (Check One)

- ☐₁ Yes
☐₂ No
☐₃ Would Consider

9. Does your company donate materials or lend company equipment for the benefit of community projects and initiatives? (Check One)

- ☐₁ Yes
☐₂ No
☐₃ Would Consider

Continued on Reverse side

10. Are employees with specific skills made available to help community groups, for example, a strategic planner who helps a community-based group develop a strategic plan? (Check One)

☐₁ Yes

☐₂ No

☐₃ Would Consider

11. Does your company make a special effort to purchase goods/services from local companies? (Check One)

☐₁ Yes

☐₂ No

☐₃ Would Consider

12. Does your company make a special effort to hire people who are transitioning from welfare to work? (Check One)

☐₁ Yes

☐₂ No

☐₃ Would Consider

In what other ways has your company helped to improve local quality of life in the last year? (BRIEFLY DESCRIBE)

13. Does your company partner with other organizations or partner with those that benefit the community?

☐₁ Yes

☐₂ No

13b. (If yes to above, please list with whom?)

14. How would your company *most* like to, or how does it plan to, be more involved in improving the community? (BRIEFLY DESCRIBE)

Continued on Next Page

15. For each of the following community initiatives or projects related to health and human services *or* community and economic development in distressed areas, please check the appropriate box(es).
(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

Community Initiative/Project	A. Is your company involved in the following...	B. Is your company interested in becoming involved in...
a. Preparing people for jobs	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
b. Increasing availability of and access to jobs	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
c. Fostering entrepreneurship	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
d. Promoting economic development in distressed areas	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
e. Promoting commercial revitalization in lower income areas	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
f. Fostering commercial real estate improvement in lower income neighborhoods	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
g. Expanding business and industrial development in distressed areas	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
h. Promoting educational reform	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
i. Promoting good health	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
j. Increasing affordable housing and home ownership	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
k. Promoting youth development	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
l. Increasing availability of recreation opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
m. Promoting arts and culture	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
n. Increasing neighborhood safety	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
o. Fostering racial harmony	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
p. Promoting volunteering	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
q. Fostering community networks	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
r. Connecting neighbors who need help with those who can help	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
s. Building neighborhood trust	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
t. Improving access to transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
u. Beautifying community spaces	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
v. Designing a plan for community renewal	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
w. Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂

Community Initiative/Project	A. Is your company involved in the following...	B. Is your company interested in becoming involved in...
x. Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂

THANK YOU

Appendix E: Association Cover Letter and Survey



Blair County Needs Assessment Partnership

423 Allegheny Street, Suite 443
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
(814) 693-3112

Date

Name

Organization

Address

City, State Zip

Dear Name,

As part of the effort to build a better community in Blair County, we are writing to request your assistance in gathering information and developing a stronger understanding of the ways in which citizens and associations are engaged in this effort. **COMPASS II** is a community-building tool that builds on the strengths of local individuals, associations, and organizations to promote broad participation in the continuous improvement of community life. Because it uses an asset-based approach to community building, the product of this process will be more than simply a list of community “needs.” The ultimate goal is to form plans to combine our assets with our needs, making Blair County a stronger community. One component of the COMPASS II project will include surveys of labor unions, businesses, service providers, associations, faith-based organizations, and individuals. The project is being managed by the Blair County Needs Assessment Partnership.

Your association has been selected to participate in this project because your experience and viewpoint is critical to understanding the talents and skills of individual community members and the impact on Blair County. Enclosed is a short survey designed to gather information about the activities your organization is participating in that benefit our community. We encourage you to participate in this study so that we can accurately determine the assets being provided by associations in Blair County. Only one person representing your association needs to complete the survey; however, if your association has more than one group, each group should submit a survey (i.e. a different survey from each neighborhood watch group). We encourage you to complete the survey no later than _____ and return it to the Blair County Assessment Partnership to Cathy Crum at the Blair County Human Service Office, 423 Allegheny Street, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648.

Please be assured that the information gathered will be treated with complete confidentiality. Your participation is, of course, voluntary. We would prefer that you answer all questions so we may have an accurate and thorough response. We appreciate any feedback you are able to provide. If you have any questions, please feel free to call Cathy Crum at the Blair County Human Services Office at 693-3112.

Sincerely,

Jean Johnstone
Chair, Needs Assessment Partnership

This project is funded in part by the United Way of Blair County and the Blair County Human Services Office.



Blair County Needs Assessment Partnership

423 Allegheny Street, Suite 443

Hollidaysburg, PA 16648

(814) 693-3112

COMPASS II Association Survey

Date: _____

Name of Association: _____

Contact Person: _____

Street Address: _____

Room/Suite Number: _____

City: _____ **State:** ____ **Zip Code:** ____

Phone: () _____ FAX: () _____

E-mail: _____

Web Site Address: _____

Note: If your association has more than one local location, include the additional location(s) at the end of the survey.

Mission, purpose and/or goal of your association:

For each of the following community initiatives or projects related to health and human services *or* community and economic development in distressed areas, please check the appropriate box(es).
(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

Community Initiative/Project	A. Your Association is Currently Leading or Participating in	B. Your Association Would Like to Become a Leader or Participant in
a. Preparing people for jobs	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
b. Increasing availability of and access to jobs	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂

Community Initiative/Project	A. Your Association is Currently Leading or Participating in	B. Your Association Would Like to Become a Leader or Participant in
c. Fostering entrepreneurship	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
d. Promoting economic development in distressed areas	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
e. Promoting commercial revitalization in lower income areas	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
f. Fostering commercial real estate improvement in lower income neighborhoods	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
g. Expanding business and industrial development in distressed areas	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
h. Promoting educational reform	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
i. Promoting good health	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
j. Increasing affordable housing and home ownership	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
k. Promoting youth development	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
l. Increasing availability of recreation opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
m. Promoting arts and culture	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
n. Increasing neighborhood safety	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
o. Fostering racial harmony	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
p. Promoting volunteering	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
q. Fostering community networks	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
r. Connecting neighbors who need help with those who can help	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
s. Building neighborhood trust	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
t. Improving access to transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
u. Beautifying community spaces	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
v. Designing a plan for community renewal	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
w. Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
a. Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂

How would your association *most* like to, or how does it plan to, be more involved in improving the community? (BRIEFLY DESCRIBE)

List the types of volunteer activities your association provides.

Other Local Location(s)

Street Address:

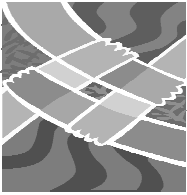
Room/Suite Number: _____

City: _____ **State:** ____ **Zip Code:** _____

Phone: () _____ FAX: () _____

THANK YOU

Appendix F: Service Provider Cover Letter and Survey



Blair County Needs Assessment Partnership

423 Allegheny Street, Suite 443
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
(814) 693-3112

9/20/07

Name
Organization
Address
City, State Zip

Dear Name,

As part of the effort to build a better community in Blair County, we are writing to request your assistance in gathering information and developing a stronger understanding of the ways in which service providers are engaged in this effort. **COMPASS II** is a community-building tool that builds on the strengths of local individuals, associations, and organizations to promote broad participation in the continuous improvement of community life. Because it uses an asset-based approach to community building, the product of this process will be more than simply a list of community “needs.” The ultimate goal is to form plans to combine our assets with our needs, making Blair County a stronger community. One component of the COMPASS II project will include surveys of labor unions, businesses, service providers, associations, faith-based organizations, and individuals. The project is being managed by the Blair County Needs Assessment Partnership.

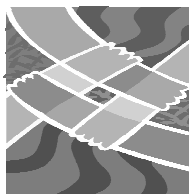
You have been selected to participate in this project because as a leader of a service organization, your experience and viewpoint is critical to understanding service providers’ impact on Blair County. Enclosed is a short survey designed to gather information about the activities your organization is participating in that benefit our community. A group of nationally-known nonprofit, foundation and educational groups collaborated to produce the survey questions. We encourage you to complete the survey no later than October 11, 2007 and return it to the Blair County Assessment Partnership via **e-mail**; Ccrum@blairco.info, **FAX** 693-3144 or **US mail**; Blair County Needs Assessment 423 Allegheny Street, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648.

Please be assured that the information gathered will be treated with complete confidentiality. Your participation is, of course, voluntary. We would prefer that you answer all questions so we may have an accurate and thorough response. We appreciate any feedback you are able to provide. If you have any questions, please feel free to call Cathy Crum at the Blair County Human Services Office at 693-3112.

Sincerely,

Jean Johnstone
Chair
Needs Assessment Partnership

This project is funded in part by the United Way of Blair County and the Blair County Human Services Office.



Blair County Needs Assessment Partnership

423 Allegheny Street, Suite 443

Hollidaysburg, PA 16648

(814) 693-3112

Service Provider Survey

Date: _____

Name of Organization: _____

Contact Person: _____

Title: _____

Phone: () _____ FAX: () _____

E-mail: _____

Central Office Address: *(Note: If your organization has more than one local location, include the additional locations at the end of the survey.)*

Street Address: _____

Room/Suite Number: _____

City: _____ *State:* _____ *Zip Code:* _____

Phone: () _____ FAX: () _____

E-mail: _____

Web Site Address: _____

1. Mission and/or purpose of your organization:

2. Number of paid employees and volunteers: (ENTER NUMBERS)

1. Full-time employees: _____
2. Part-time employees: _____
3. Number of volunteers involved in providing services and programs: _____

3. Does your organization provide meeting space to community groups? (CHECK ONE)

- ☐₁ Yes
☐₂ No

4. Does your organization make materials and equipment, for example, duplicating machines or computers, available to community groups? (CHECK ONE)

- ☐₁ Yes
☐₂ No

5. Are employees with specific skills made available to help community groups, for example, a health expert who helps a community-based group assemble health information for a neighborhood newsletter? (CHECK ONE)

- ☐₁ Yes
☐₂ No

6. Does your organization reach out to purchase goods and services from enterprises in lower income areas, for example, enterprises that are part of community revitalization efforts? (CHECK ONE)

- ☐₁ Yes
☐₂ No

7. Does your organization reach out to hire people from distressed neighborhoods, for example, people who are trying to transition from welfare to work? (CHECK ONE)

- ☐₁ Yes
☐₂ No

8. For each of the following community initiatives or projects related to health and human services *or* community and economic development in distressed areas, please check the appropriate box(es). (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

Community Initiative/Project	A. Your Organization is Currently Leading or Participating in	B. Your Organization Would Like to Become a Leader or Participant in
a. Preparing people for jobs	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
b. Increasing availability of and access to jobs	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
c. Fostering entrepreneurship	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂

Community Initiative/Project	A. Your Organization is Currently Leading or Participating in	B. Your Organization Would Like to Become a Leader or Participant in
d. Promoting economic development in distressed areas	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
e. Promoting commercial revitalization in lower income areas	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
f. Fostering commercial real estate improvement in lower income neighborhoods	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
g. Expanding business and industrial development in distressed areas	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
h. Promoting educational reform	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
i. Promoting good health	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
j. Increasing affordable housing and home ownership	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
k. Promoting youth development	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
l. Increasing availability of recreation opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
m. Promoting arts and culture	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
n. Increasing neighborhood safety	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
o. Fostering racial harmony	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
p. Promoting volunteering	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
q. Fostering community networks	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
r. Connecting neighbors who need help with those who can help	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
s. Building neighborhood trust	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
t. Improving access to transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
u. Beautifying community spaces	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
v. Designing a plan for community renewal	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
w. Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂
x. Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂

9. How would your organization *most* like to, or how does it plan to, be more involved in improving the community? (BRIEFLY DESCRIBE)

10. Please estimate (or give precise dollar amounts of) income received by your organization for last year's budget from the following sources:

United Way organization(s)	\$	_____
<i>Federal and state governments</i>		_____ \$
<i>Local government(s)</i>		_____ \$
<i>Own fund-raising</i>		_____ \$
<i>Fees from clients</i>		_____ \$
Other	\$	_____
Total	\$	_____

11. Your organization is:

- ☐₁ A private, not-for-profit corporation
- ☐₂ A private, for-profit corporation
- ☐₃ A federal government agency
- ☐₄ A state government agency
- ☐₅ A city government agency
- ☐₆ A county government agency
- ☐₇ Unincorporated consortium of numerous groups
- ☐₈ Unincorporated organization
- ☐₉ Other (Please specify) _____

12. Geographic area served: (CHECK THE LARGEST AREA SERVED)

- ☐₁ Region
- ☐₂ County
- ☐₃ City
- ☐₄ Other municipality
- ☐₅ Neighborhood
- ☐₆ Other (Please specify) _____

13. Indicate accrediting bodies, state agencies, or others that provide certification or licenses. (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☐₁ Council on Accreditation
- ☐₂ Department of Social Services
- ☐₃ Health Department
- ☐₄ Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities
- ☐₅ Medicaid
- ☐₆ Medicare
- ☐₇ Other (Please specify) _____

14. Enter the approximate number of people using your services and programs in each category in the last year:

- Children (under 13 years old) _____
- Youth (13-19 years old) _____
- Adults _____
- Elders _____
- Others (Please specify) _____

15. (A) Check the number to the left of each service (health and human service) and/or program (community and economic development program in a distressed area) that your organization offers, and (B) Enter the total number of people using each of those services and/or programs in the last year.

A. Services and Programs

- ☐₁ Financial assistance and basic material needs (including shelter)
- ☐₂ Family economic self-reliance
- ☐₃ Economic development in distressed areas
- ☐₄ Neighborhood revitalization
- ☐₅ Housing for lower-income people
- ☐₆ Employment opportunities for lower-income people
- ☐₇ Entrepreneurship
- ☐₈ Child care
- ☐₉ Recreation
- ☐₁₀ Arts and culture
- ☐₁₁ Education
- ☐₁₂ Physical health services
- ☐₁₃ Home health care
- ☐₁₄ Homemaker or chore service
- ☐₁₅ Congregate or home-delivered meals

B. Total Number Served

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 8. _____
- 9. _____
- 10. _____
- 11. _____
- 12. _____
- 13. _____
- 14. _____
- 15. _____

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₆ Nutrition counseling | 16. _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₇ Respite care for people with physical disabilities | 17. _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₈ Adult day care for people with physical disabilities | 18. _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₉ Youth development | 19. _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₀ Family strengthening | 20. _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₁ Family planning | 21. _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₂ Counseling (mental health) | 22. _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₃ Respite care for people who are cognitively or emotionally impaired | 23. _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₄ Adult day care for people who are cognitively or emotionally impaired | 24. _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₅ Substance abuse services | 25. _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₆ Household violence (related services) | 26. _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₇ Delinquency prevention | 27. _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₈ Crime prevention | 28. _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂₉ Legal services | 29. _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₀ Transportation | 30. _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₁ Information and referral | 31. _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₂ Community organizing | 32. _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₃ Planning and coordinating services | 33. _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₄ Other (Please specify) _____ | 34. _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₃₅ Other (Please specify) _____ | 35. _____ |

Other Local Location(s)

Street Address: _____

Room/Suite Number: _____

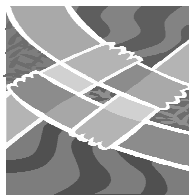
City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip Code:** _____

Phone: () _____ FAX: () _____

(Add sheets if necessary)

THANK YOU

Appendix G: Faith Community Cover Letter and Survey



Blair County Needs Assessment Partnership

423 Allegheny Street, Suite 443
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
(814) 693-3112

Date

Name

Organization

Address

City, State Zip

Dear Name,

As part of the effort to build a better community in Blair County, we are writing to request your assistance in gathering information and developing a stronger understanding of the ways in which faith-based organizations are engaged in this effort. **COMPASS II** is a community-building tool that builds on the strengths of local individuals, associations, and organizations to promote broad participation in the continuous improvement of community life. Because it uses an asset-based approach to community building, the product of this process will be more than simply a list of community “needs.” The ultimate goal is to form plans to combine our assets with our needs, making Blair County a stronger community. One component of the COMPASS II project will include surveys of labor unions, businesses, service providers, associations, faith-based organizations, and individuals. The project is being managed by the Blair County Needs Assessment Partnership.

While it is clear that the faith communities are a vital resource in our county, it is important that we have an accurate assessment of the depth of services being provided. Enclosed is a short survey designed to gather information about the activities your congregation is participating in that benefit our community. A group of nationally-known nonprofit, foundation and educational groups collaborated to produce the survey questions. We encourage you to participate in this study – your experience and feedback is critical to understanding the impact of the faith communities in Blair County. We encourage you to complete the survey no later than _____ and return it to the Blair County Assessment Partnership to Cathy Crum at the Blair County Human Service Office, 423 Allegheny Street, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648.

Please be assured that the information gathered will be treated with complete confidentiality. Your participation is, of course, voluntary. We would prefer that you answer all questions so we may have an accurate and thorough response. We appreciate any feedback you are able to provide. If you have any questions, please feel free to call Cathy Crum at the Blair County Human Services Office at 693-3112.

Sincerely,

Jean Johnstone
Chair
Needs Assessment Partnership

This project is funded in part by the United Way of Blair County and the Blair County Human Services Office.



Blair County Needs Assessment Partnership

423 Allegheny Street, Suite 443
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
(814) 693-3112

Compass II: Blair County Faith Community Survey

Name of Congregation _____ **Date:** _____

Contact Person: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip code:** _____

Phone: () _____ **Fax:** () _____

E-mail: _____

Web Site Address: _____

1. Enter the approximate number of people in your congregation in the following categories:

- Children (under 13 years old) _____
- Youth (13-19 years old) _____
- Adults _____
- Elders (65 + years old) _____

2. Please indicate the methods through which your congregation provides services and programs to both members and the community at large in the following areas

Services & Programs	Financial donations	Meeting space	Forum to educate/promote	Volunteers	Direct service/support
Financial assistance and basic material needs (including shelter)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neighborhood revitalization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arts and culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homemaker or chore service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Congregate or home-delivered meals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Services & Programs	Financial donations	Meeting space	Forum to educate/promote	Volunteers	Direct service/support
Food pantry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adult day care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family strengthening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Counseling (mental health)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Substance abuse services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Household violence (related services)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delinquency prevention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crime prevention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information and referral	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community organizing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning and coordinating services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elder visitation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ministering to the incarcerated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economic development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and wellness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Racial harmony	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Beautifying community spaces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Does your congregation have a youth group?

☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

If Yes, what ages participate? _____

4. Please estimate the number of dollars your congregation spent/donated in the past year in your local outreach and mission efforts.

\$ _____

5. Please list any other initiatives that your congregation is involved in that promote social justice or economic and community development.

THANK YOU!

Please return your completed survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.
If you have any questions, please call The Human Services Office at 693-3112

Appendix H: Matrix of Priority Issues and Supporting Data/Survey Results

Priority Issue - Safety	Surveys Results and Indicator Data
Crime	Ranked #1 community challenge on household survey (70%) Ranked #5 community challenge on Head Start survey (63%) Ranked #2 community challenge on key informant survey (79%) Ranked #1 community issue in youth focus group Common theme in family violence focus group Table 20: Reported Crimes in Blair County Figure 22: Comparison of Reported Crimes – Part 1 Figure 23: Comparison of reported Crimes – Part 2 Number of cases handled by the District Attorney’s Office (2000) Figure 26: Telephone Calls to the Push Out the Pusher Hotline
Children being unsafe at school and anti-social behaviors	Ranked #7 household challenge on household survey (19%) Ranked #4 community issue in youth focus group Common theme in youth focus group (14 out of 16 had been bullied) Common theme in persons with disabilities focus group Table 22: School Safety Report for Blair County Schools Table 23: Comparison of School Safety Annual Reports for Blair County and PA Table 24: Average Age of Onset of ATOD and Other Antisocial Behaviors
Family violence	Ranked #9 community challenge on key informant survey (66%) Common theme in family violence focus group Table 32: Rates of Reporting and Substantiation of Child Abuse in Blair County Table 33: Family Services, Inc. data on services to victims of violence

Priority Issue - Health	Surveys Results and Indicator Data
Alcohol and other drugs	Ranked #2 community challenge on household survey (69%) Ranked #2 community challenge on Head Start survey (67%) Ranked #1 community challenge on key informant survey (97%) Ranked #2 community issue in youth focus group Ranked #1 youth issue in youth focus group Common theme in family violence focus group Table 27: PA. Youth Survey – Students Reported Lifetime Use Table 28: PA Youth Survey- Students Reported Past 30 Day Use Table 21: Drug and Alcohol Related Reports for Blair County Table 25: Treatment Needs Assessment – Demand for Services Table 26: Treatment Needs Assessment – Primary Substance of Abuse
Lack of affordable medical care	Ranked #5 community challenge on household survey (57%) Ranked #4 community challenge on Head Start survey (64%) Ranked #5 community challenge on key informant survey (74%) Blair County Health Profile Data Percent of Blair County population participating in medical assistance program

Anxiety, stress, or depression	Ranked #1 household challenge on household survey (36%) Ranked #1 household challenge on Head Start survey (52%) Table 29: Suicide Statistics for Blair County Table 30: Summary of Student Assistance Program Data Table 31: Percent of Youth Reporting Symptoms of Depression
Not having enough money to pay the doctor, buy prescription medications, or get medical insurance.	Ranked #2 household challenge on household survey (31%) Percent of Blair County population participating in medical assistance program Figure 28: Babies Born to Mothers who Received Little or No Prenatal Care

Priority Issue - Economy	Surveys Results and Indicator Data
Unemployment/underemployment	Ranked #3 community challenge on household survey (59%) Ranked #3 community challenge on Head Start survey (66%) Ranked #4 community challenge on key informant survey (77%) Common theme in persons with disabilities focus group Common theme in family violence focus group Figure 14: Average Wage per Employee for Blair County Figure 15: Average Annual Unemployment Rate Table 17: Employment Status for Persons with Disabilities Figure 16: Employment Rate for Blair County
Lack of jobs	Ranked #4 community challenge on household survey (58%) Ranked #1 community challenge on Head Start survey (68%) Ranked #3 community challenge on key informant survey (78%) Ranked #1 issue in senior citizen focus group Common theme in persons with disabilities focus group
Poverty	Ranked #6 community challenge on household survey (51%) Common theme in persons with disabilities focus group Figure 18: Food Stamp Program - Percent of Blair County Population Participating Figure 19: Cash Assistance Program - Percent of Blair County Population Receiving Table 18: Percent of students enrolled in free/reduced lunch program Figure 20: Estimated Poverty Rate for Blair County Figure 21: Estimated Poverty Rate for Children in Blair County Table 19: Percent of Children under Five who are Low-income in Blair County Blair County Family Services, Inc. data on services to homeless
Finding it difficult to budget	Figure 13: Estimated Median Household Income for Blair County Ranked #3 household challenge on household survey (27%) Ranked #2 household challenge on Head Start survey (48%) Common theme in persons with disabilities focus group
Not being able to afford recreational or entertainment activities	Ranked #5 and 6 household challenges on household survey (21% and 20%)



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