A Needs Assessment of the Social Environment in Bradley County, Tennessee

United Way

United Way of Bradley County

JULY 2007

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TENNESSEE AT CHATTANOOGA

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*NOTE: A PDF version of this report is available at **www.utc.edu/socwk***

ABSTRACT

In 2007, Bradley Memorial Hospital was sold and Bradley County United Way was the recipient of a generous gift of over $19 million from the sale of the hospital. Interest from those proceeds will be used to meet the needs of the community. As a result, Bradley County United Way wanted to identify priority areas for funding in the community and contracted with the Social Work Department at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga to complete an assessment of the social environment of Bradley County. The goals of the needs assessment were to:

1. identify emerging and future trends in Bradley County
2. assist United Way in establishing priority needs areas to fund,
3. provide information about the health and quality of life issues in Bradley County,

The guiding principles for this project focused primarily on using community themes and a strengths assessment to answer the questions: "What is important to our community?" "How is quality of life perceived in our community?" and "What assets do we have that can be used to improve and strengthen the health and social services environment in our community?" This type of assessment tends to result in a better and more authentic understanding of community issues and concerns, perceptions about quality of life, and a map of community assets.

In completing this project we reviewed county and state Census data, public health data, and Safe Schools project data. We interviewed eight key informants familiar with the different aspects of health and social services in the county

We conducted a focus group with older adults and individuals with disabilities and we administered the public survey in person at the housing authority office in order to ensure that a sampling of groups that are rarely heard in such assessments were included. Finally, we conducted an in-depth focus group with social service providers.

We developed a public survey that was administered both online and through the newspaper. We developed an in-depth survey of social service providers that included collecting an inventory of existing social services in order to create a draft directory.

The assessment identifies some immediate and future priority areas for the improvement of the health and quality of life in the county.

The immediate identified priorities are:

1. A need to concentrate resources on where the needs are the greatest. This effort must include leadership from private business, the larger health and mental health systems, schools and universities, and other institutions and organizations equally concerned about the future health and quality of life of Bradley County residents.

2. Need to strengthen the affordability of and accessibility to healthcare, particularly those who "fall between the cracks".

3. Need to identify innovative strategies to reduce the potential for redundancy in social services by strengthening the natural networks already in place and where identified, bringing individuals, programs, and organizations together.

4. Need to identify and provide resources to address the needs of diverse individuals and families in the healthcare,

educational, and social service systems with a particular focus on strengthening families.

Future identified priorities may include:
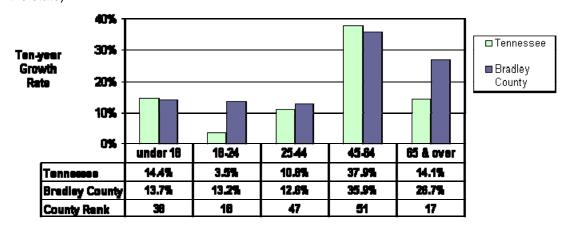
1. Developing strategies for more meaningful ways to include consumers of health and social services in the resource-allocation decision-making process.

2. Identifying promising interventions, programs, and services in the local social environment and implementing an evaluation to assess the effectiveness of these promising innovations as compared to more standard delivery of services.

3. Creating a long-term, sustainable, and active network representative of the diverse healthcare and social service organizations in the county with the shared goal of strengthening the social environment.

CRITICAL TRENDS

Aging Families

Persons 65 years old and over, represent 12.8% of the population of Bradley County as compared to 12.6% of the overall population in the state of Tennessee.

Fifty-one percent of persons over the age of 65 in Tennessee are grandparents living in household with one or more own grandchildren under 18 years (7.3% of all the children in the state).

	under 18	18-24	25-44	45-64	65 & over
Tennessee	14.4%	3.5%	10.8%	37.9%	14.1%
Bradley County	13.7%	13.2%	12.8%	35.9%	28.7%
County Rank	38	18	47	51	17

Source: http://www.tennesseeanytime.org/local/bradley.html

Education

The high school dropout rate has steadily decreased; in 1990 the dropout rate was 35.6% as compared to 26.7% in 2000. Likewise more individuals were achieving a college degree; in 1990 approximately 11.9% of the Bradley County population had a college degree as compared to 15.9% in 2005. Data from 2005 indicate that Bradley County public schools met all of the federal benchmarks for the No Child Left Behind initiative. However, this data does not represent inclusion of non-english proficient students at the elementary school level of inclusion Hispanic student and students with disabilities at the high school level. As the county population continues to become more diverse it is expected these trends will be reflected in future data.

Source: US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service; TN Department of Education

Poverty

Persons living below the poverty line represented13.9% of the population of Bradley County as compared to15.0% of the overall Tennessee population. In 2005, per capita income was $18, 108 in Bradley County which was lower than the overall state population per capita income of $19, 393.

Source: US Census

Diversity
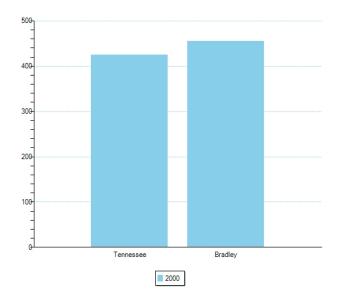
Representative of national trends, Bradley County is becoming more racially diverse as evidenced by the 2005 Census Data. Between 1990 and 2000, the growth rate of the Latino population in Tennessee ranked fourth in the country (www.nclr.org).

	Bradley County	State
White persons, percent	93.6	80.7
Black persons, percent	4.2	16.8
American Indian and Alaska Native persons, percent	0.3	0.3
Asian persons, percent	0.8	1.2
Persons reporting two or more races, percent,	1.1	1.0
Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, percent	3.0	3.0

Healthcare

Bradley County had more emergency room visits than the state average which suggests an area of need in terms of access to healthcare services.

ER Visits per 1,000 Population
Tennessee and Bradley, 2000
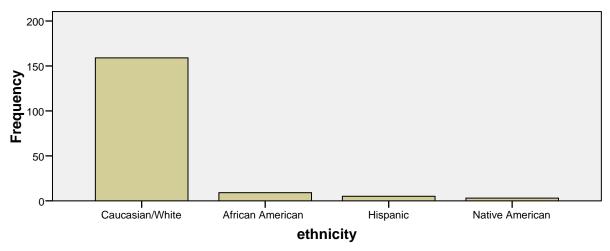
Source: http://health.state.tn.us/data.htm
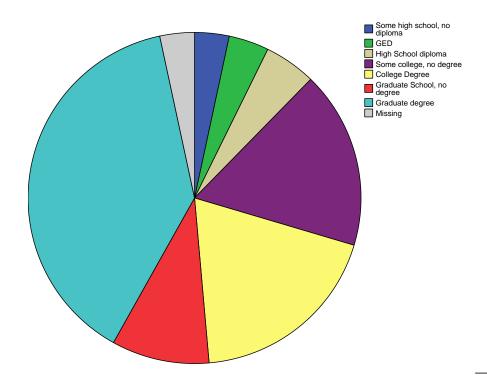
DEMOGRAPHICS OF COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONDENTS

The respondents were almost evenly divided between male and female with the female population only slightly higher at 53.1%. The average age of the participants in the public survey was 46, with the youngest being 15 and the oldest 84. Most participants (88.8%) were Caucasian/white and over half of them reported having a college education.

Ethnicity of Respondents
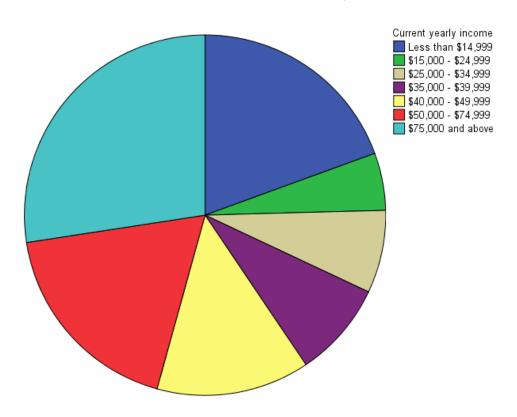
Education of Respondents
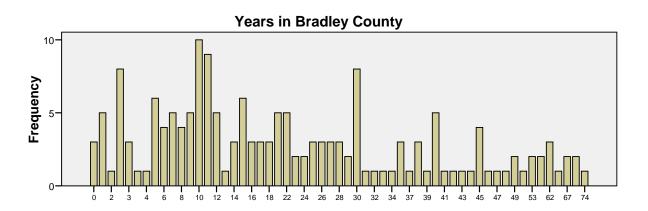
Seventy percent of the respondents reported working fulltime with income levels high at both ends of the spectrum: 19.4% made less than $14,999 and 27.4 made $75,000 or above.

Reported Income of Respondents in Public Survey

Respondents reported residency in Bradley County that ranged from less than a year to seventy-four years. The average years of residence reported was ten.

Number of Years Respondents Resided in Bradley County

AREAS OF CONCERN

Based on the experience of the focus groups five areas of concern stood out and were made a part of the survey. These were: affordable healthcare, affordable housing, after-school programs for children/youth, services for people with disabilities, and adult education/literacy programs. Respondents of the public survey were to rank these five needs according to their importance. Affordable healthcare stood out with fifty-seven percent of the respondents choosing this as extremely important. Adult education fell to the bottom of the list as only 3.9% of the respondents thought it to be extremely important.

Area of Concern	Ranking	%
Healthcare	*Extremely Important (1)*	*69.4*
	Very Important	18.4
	Important	7.5
	Somewhat Important	2.7
Affordable Housing	Extremely Important	14.3
	Very Important (2)	*47.6*
	Important	17.7
	Somewhat Important	10.9
After-School Programs	Extremely Important	7.5
	Very Important	15.0
	Important (3)	*41.5*
	Somewhat Important	22.4
Services for Disabled Community Residents	Extremely Important	4.8
	Very Important	11.6
	Important	21.1
	Somewhat Important (4)	*44.2*
Adult Education/Literacy Services	Extremely Important	4.8
	Very Important	6.8
	Important	12.2
	Somewhat Important	19.7
	Somewhat Not Important (5)	*56.2*

The questionnaire used in the Bradley County United Way Needs Assessment survey asked residents questions about their satisfaction with their community and its desirability as a place to live. The questionnaire presented the respondents with a list of 43 needs/problems. For each need/problem, respondents were asked to indicate how serious they thought each need or problem was in Bradley County. The questionnaire was released in the Bradley County newspaper and made available to clients of agencies of the United Way in Bradley County. One hundred and seventy-nine surveys were returned and the data from these was used for this report.
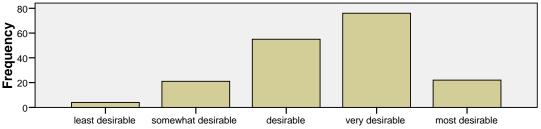
Community

Five questions on the survey were concerned with the opinions of residents to the overall friendliness of the people of Bradley County and the willingness of people to work for the good of the community. The questions touched on issues of tolerance for people of different races and cultural backgrounds as well as tolerance for people with different viewpoints or lifestyles. The role of religion in the daily lives of people in Bradley County was included. And finally, the question of how much access to health and social services should illegal immigrants have in Bradley County was explored.

Friendliness

Overall, Bradley County was viewed by the respondents as being a very desirable community in which to live based on the criteria given in the survey. Over forty-two percent reported that the community's friendliness, the way people respect and help one another, and the willingness of people to work for the good of the community were positive attributes of the community.

Friendliness of Community

Religious Importance

The importance of religion in daily life in Bradley County was viewed by forty-five percent of the respondents to be very important. Only ten percent found religion to be unimportant in the daily lives of people in Bradley County.

Religious Importance in Daily Life
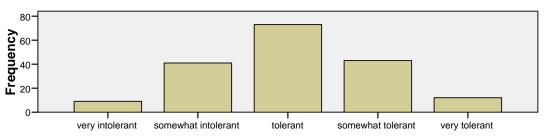
Importance of religion in daily life
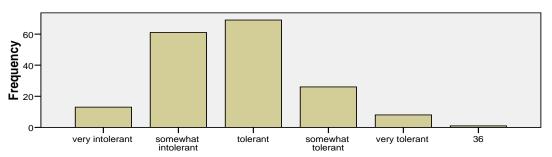
Tolerance

The respondents believed the people of Bradley County were basically tolerant of different races and cultures but thirty-four percent reported that people with different viewpoints or lifestyles were not tolerated as well.

Tolerance

Tolerance for different races or cultural backgrounds
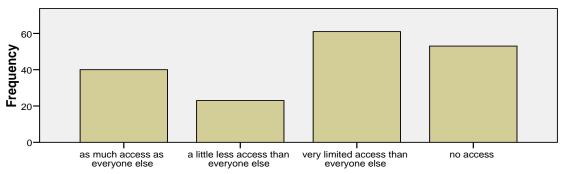
How tolerant of people with different viewpoints or lifestyles

Immigrant Access to Services

The question of access to health and social services for illegal immigrants was mixed. Thirty-four percent reported that very limited access should be extended to illegal immigrants while twenty-two percent felt that illegal immigrants should have the same access as everyone else. And twenty-nine percent reported that no access to health and socials services should be given to illegal immigrants under any circumstances

Illegal Immigrant Access to Services
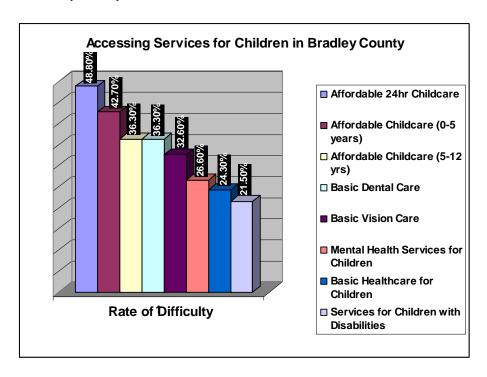
How much access should illegal immigrants have to health and social services

EASE/DIFFICULTY IN ACCESSING SERVICES

The community survey contained twenty-seven categories of social services that respondents were to rate on the ease or difficulty in obtaining access to these services. These categories ranged from mental health services for children and families to transportation for medical needs. For this report services were grouped according to these categories: children, adults, counseling/ social service programs, and other.
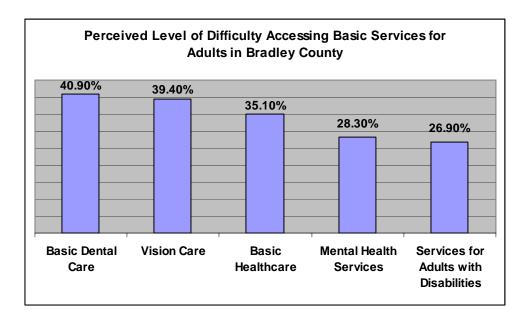
Children

Respondents rated the perceived ease or difficulty in accessing the following services for children in Bradley County:
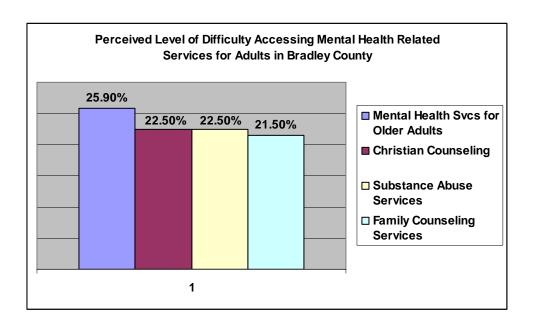
Adults
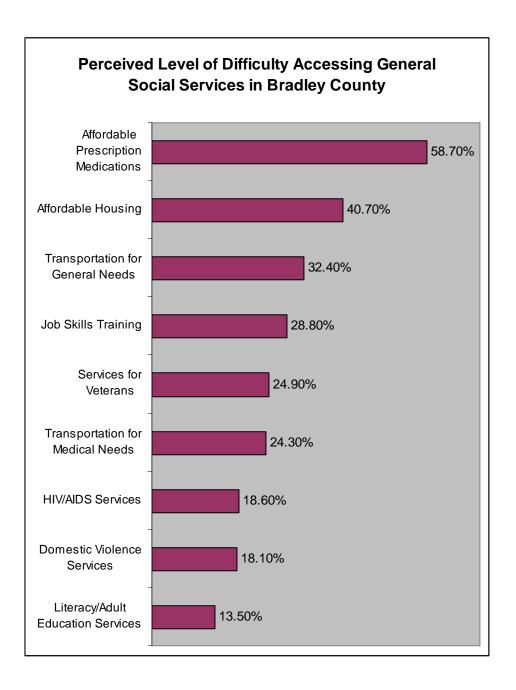
Respondents rated the perceived ease or difficulty in accessing the following basic services for adults in Bradley County:

Perceived Level of Difficulty Accessing Basic Services for Adults in Bradley County

Basic Dental Care	Vision Care	Basic Healthcare	Mental Health Services	Services for Adults with Disabilities
40.90%	39.40%	35.10%	28.30%	26.90%

Respondents rated the perceived ease or difficulty in accessing the following mental health-related services for adults in Bradley County:

Perceived Level of Difficulty Accessing Mental Health Related Services for Adults in Bradley County

Mental Health Svcs for Older Adults	Christian Counseling	Substance Abuse Services	Family Counseling Services
25.90%	22.50%	22.50%	21.50%

1

Respondents rated the perceived ease or difficulty in accessing the following general social services for adults in Bradley County:

Perceived Level of Difficulty Accessing General Social Services in Bradley County

Service	Percentage
Affordable Prescription Medications	58.70%
Affordable Housing	40.70%
Transportation for General Needs	32.40%
Job Skills Training	28.80%
Services for Veterans	24.90%
Transportation for Medical Needs	24.30%
HIV/AIDS Services	18.60%
Domestic Violence Services	18.10%
Literacy/Adult Education Services	13.50%

NEEDS OF CHILDREN

Respondents were asked to rate the following needs of children in Bradley County:
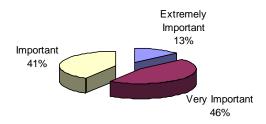
1. Basic healthcare
2. After-school programs
3. Services for children with disabilities

Basic healthcare ranked at the top with eighty percent reporting this need to be extremely important for children in Bradley County. Ranked second was after-school programs, with forty-six percent ranking this need as very important and last were services for children with disabilities with fifty-two percent giving this need a ranking of important.
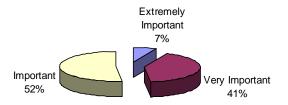
Basic Healthcare for Children

Very Important
13%

Important
7%

Extremely
Important
80%

After-School Programs for Children

Extremely
Important
13%

Important
41%

Very Important
46%

Services for Children with Disabilities

Extremely
Important
7%

Important
52%

Very Important
41%
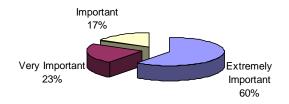
NEEDS OF SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES

Respondents were asked to rate the following needs of single parent families in Bradley County by level of importance from extremely important to important:
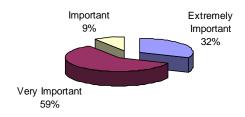
1. Affordable housing
2. Childcare
3. After-school programs

Affordable housing ranked at the top with sixty percent reporting this need to be extremely important for single parent families in Bradley County. Ranked second was childcare with fifty-nine percent ranking this need as very important and last were after-school programs with seventy-three percent giving this need a ranking of important.
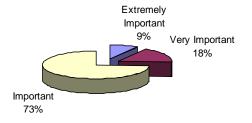
**Needs of Single Parent Families:
Affordable Housing**

Important
17%

Very Important
23%

Extremely
Important
60%

**Needs of Single Parent Families:
Childcare**

Important
9%

Extremely
Important
32%

Very Important
59%

**Needs of Single Parent Families:
After-School Programs**

Extremely
Important
9%

Very Important
18%

Important
73%
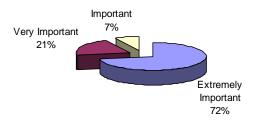
NEEDS OF WOMEN

Respondents were asked to rate the following needs of women in Bradley County by level of importance from extremely important to important:
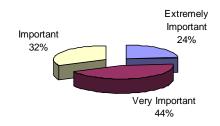
1. Domestic Violence programs
2. Affordable childcare
3. Adult education and literacy

Affordable childcare ranked at the top with seventy-two percent reporting this need to be extremely important for women in Bradley County. Ranked second were domestic violence programs, with forty-four percent ranking this need as very important and last were adult education/literacy programs with sixty percent giving this need a ranking of important.
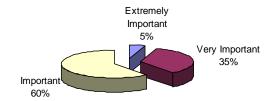
Needs of Women:
Affordable Childcare

Important
7%

Very Important
21%

Extremely
Important
72%

Needs of Women:
Domestic Violence Programs

Extremely
Important
24%

Important
32%

Very Important
44%

Needs of Women: Adult Education/Literacy

Extremely
Important
5%

Very Important
35%

Important
60%
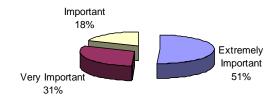
NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Respondents were asked to rate the following needs of people with disabilities in Bradley County by level of importance from extremely important to important:
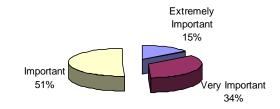
1. Transportation
2. Wheelchair accessible sidewalks
3. Job training

Transportation ranked at the top with fifty-one percent reporting this need to be extremely important for people with disabilities in Bradley County. Ranked second was wheel-chair accessible sidewalks, with thirty-four percent ranking this need as very important and last were job training programs with thirty-one percent giving this need a ranking of important.
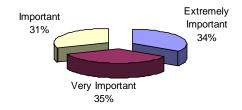
Needs of People with Disabilities: Transportation

Important
18%

Extremely
Important
51%

Very Important
31%

Needs of People with Disabilities: Wheelchair Accessible Sidewalks

Extremely
Important
15%

Important
51%

Very Important
34%

Needs of People with Disabilities: Job Training

Important
31%

Extremely
Important
34%

Very Important
35%
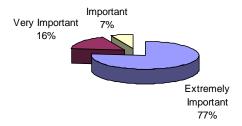
NEEDS OF SENIOR CITIZENS

Respondents were asked to rate the following needs of senior citizens in Bradley County by level of importance from extremely important to important:
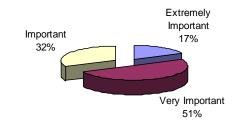
1. Affordable prescriptions
2. Respite services
3. Transportation

Affordable prescriptions ranked at the top with seventy-seven percent reporting this need to be extremely important for senior citizens in Bradley County. Ranked second were respite services for caregivers, with fifty-one percent ranking this need as very important and last was transportation with sixty-two percent giving this need a ranking of important.
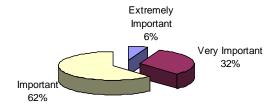
**Needs of Senior Citizens: Affordable Prescriptions**

Important
7%

Very Important
16%

Extremely
Important
77%

Needs of Senior Citizens: Respite Services

Extremely
Important
17%

Important
32%

Very Important
51%

Needs of Senior Citizens: Transportation

Extremely
Important
6%

Very Important
32%

Important
62%
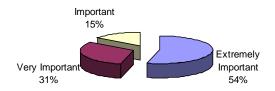
NEEDS OF MINORITY GROUPS

Respondents were asked to rate the following needs of minority groups in Bradley County by level of importance from extremely important to important:
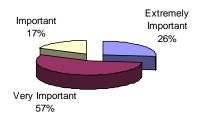
1. Basic healthcare
2. Affordable housing
3. Acceptance from larger community

Basic healthcare ranked at the top with fifty-four percent reporting this need to be extremely important for minority groups in Bradley County. Ranked second was affordable housing, with fifty-seven percent ranking this need as very important and last was acceptance from the larger community with sixty-seven percent giving this need a ranking of important.
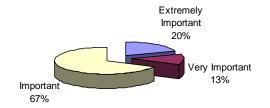
Needs of Minority Groups: Basic Healthcare

Needs of Minority Groups: Affordable Housing

Needs of Minority Groups: Acceptance from Community

SUPPORT FOR UNITED WAY FROM RESPONDENTS

The majority of respondents (83.7%) reported giving a monetary donation in support of United Way while 11.7 percent reported currently serving as a United Way board member. Less than twenty percent (19.6%) of respondents reported serving as a volunteer for United Way while 30.9 percent reported serving as either a board member or volunteer for United Way in the past.

QUALITATIVE DATA RESULTS

INTERVIEWS WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Eight community stakeholders representing diverse sectors of the social environment were interviewed to obtain their perspectives on issues specific to Bradley County. The results from these interviews are grouped under the following categories:

- Positive/less positive aspects of living Bradley County
- Two key issues that could impact the quality of life in Bradley County during the next five years
- Kinds of social services needed right now to improve quality of life
- Importance of affordable healthcare
- Importance of affordable housing
- Importance of after-school programs
- Importance of services for people with disabilities
- Importance of adult literacy/education services and programs
- Opportunities available in the social environment
- Ways to improve effectiveness of social services

Positive aspects of living Bradley County

- Closeness, like a "big" family, caring, rises to occasion to meet needs (physical/social)

- Cognizant of needs – willing to be "out of the box" to meet needs as a community; especially within mental health, realize needs in community and schools

- Multicultural board – effort to work with other cultures/see needs within; faith-based groups

- So many great community amenities – size, people, services, schools, Lee University, location

- Genuine, caring, concern, strong Christian environment

- Location – outdoors (rivers, mountains, South, temperature, all 4 seasons)

- Christian atmosphere – community spirit caring, good place to raise family/employment

- facilities/partners collaborate services

- Down-to-earth hometown atmosphere, talk to anyone on street, so many programs offered at Health Dept. (see more that could be offered)

- know more people – feel more part of community, safe/low crime, close to other areas (major cities)

- I think the best part of Bradley County is the people and the school system. We work with wonderful people who really, truly care about children.
- friendly place to live; not too big or too small; growing (maybe more jobs); good schools (when I grew up here); beauty of area/quality of life

- Wholesome atmosphere to raise family; excellent blending of small-town feel with access to big city; access to multiple recreational activities; diverse industrial/professional job market – provides a certain amount of economic stability.

- Community of leaders willing to try to bring in change (environmental/social change especially with children)

- Growth of diversity (especially with institutions of higher learning)

Less positive aspects of living in Bradley County

- Some of the elected leadership wants to maintain a small-town mentality – not as forward-thinking, lack innovation

- Some close-mindedness local officials within school system

- Location/reputation of certain schools, dividing line, huge poverty level

- Severe need and lack of mental health

- DCS (family systems is good) lag – takes an army to get someone out to check

- Shortage of people $$$$ (not shortage of willingness)

- Decisions of County Commission on education/infrastructure not progressive

- Politics in general – not conducted very well; lack of focus on education in %

- Increased population – roads, traffic, education, more advanced medical care needed (not good reputation – better reputation at Memorial/Chattanooga hospitals)

- Overcrowded schools – taken out reading, art, music rooms

- Development out Mouse Creek

- No dental for adults (can give antibiotics but can't treat problem)

- Can't get treatment from dentists in area on discounted fee

- Not enough services for indigent

- No urgent care – walk-in clinics but have to have $$

- Need more comprehensive services – need more providers (down to one doctor at Health Dept.) – agreement with hospital on reduced rate but [some] still can't pay; [Health Dept.] needs $$$ for services/people

- the frustration that comes with the lack of financial support for education. It has gotten better. However, we are becoming more proactive. It's slow progress- but it's progress.

- Representation of minorities; wonder about that – not many minorities at United Way meetings – are they invited or do they not show up?

- Lack of good public transportation system

- Racism that still exists (some opposition to diversity)

Two key issues that could impact the quality of life in Bradley County during the next five years (responses centered around three key issues)

HEALTHCARE/MENTAL HEALTH

- Healthcare crisis, insurance – trying with Cover TN – families without insurance

- Teenage use of marijuana – 20% of seniors have used in last 30 days
- *Substance abuse*

- Meth lab seizure - #2 in TN and in top 10 in country

- Lack of access to mental health services

- South slow to see value in mental health – fewer use/lack of people accessing

- Dental/eye clinic every 2 years (same people still don't have care; 500 people in 2 days)

- One key issue is the great need for more mental health services for children and for their families. We see more children at a younger age who have issues-behavioral issues. We have students who have become uncontrollable, who are disruptive in the classroom.

- Emphasis on positive mental health development, unmet mental health needs (especially with children)
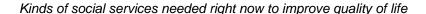
EDUCATION

- High dropout rate – don't have education to get jobs/job training (needs); lack parenting skills

- School systems don't have resources to cope with all issues (especially mental health) stress ($$, relationships)

- Lack of funding for County schools

- Educated workforce – when not enough $$, poor get hurt

- Talks need to stop about consolidation of City/County (consolidation should not happen)

- Graduation/dropout rates; join workforce – later in life realize need for diploma

- Also related to economic development – need more educated workforce/training

POPULATION CHANGES

- Immigration – need to come to understanding if immigrants as people

- Not being able to handle increased population [transportation, healthcare, social services, education]

- Population growth

- Industry leaving – job opportunities

- Provide services, language barriers (healthcare/housing)

- Like everywhere in Southeast: immigration – many immigrant families around here

- REALLY important for people to understand each other

Kinds of social services needed right now to improve quality of life

- Need sufficient funding – could meet needs

- Churches should meet the needs in their community (First Baptist – food, clothes, textbooks, etc.)

- Mental health; appropriate housing; learning financial/job skills/parenting, family systems (mental health/medical) to stop cycles

- Public/Private/Non-profit work together to provide safety net

- Childcare – [like] Boys and Girls Club have units within neighborhood (don't have to be bused)

- Youth options/mentoring options for poor

- Job-training/training-to-work

- Juvenile justice system – people could use more resources/more help

- Substance abuse programming; used to have Bradford – left void

- Have mental health providers but no specialty in substance abuse

- Combined treatment/prevention programs

- United Way used to give food – including "good" perishable items – need this again

- Resources to help elderly on Medicare

- Health Dept. offers medication through primary care

- Often people will decide what meds to take or who in the family will get meds because they can't afford it

- Mental health services for children and their parents. There is also a need for programs that could be held after school- to give children appropriate programs in which to participate- to help at-risk children- to build self esteem, to build on basic reading/writing skills, and to help children choose appropriate leisure activities.

- Parenting [classes] don't know how to handle

- Free clinic – physical/mental/dental – Holistic treatment facility

- Inpatient/Outpatient alcohol and drug treatment (Pine Ridge offers some inpatient)

- Education services – Language/translation – assimilation & access to services, jobs/training

Importance of affordable healthcare

- Affordable healthcare important to all of us but especially children and elderly (concern for those "riding" off government but healthcare should be available to those that are working or seniors/children)

- Very important (barriers: $$$, legislation (state, federal) – political gains)

- #1 – extremely important (TennCare – safety net for poor but working poor get hit most – work but have minimal benefits)

- Healthcare costs going up 20% as compared to 2-3% cost of living

- Very important ("Healthcare system" is barrier; Huge national issue)

- Major problem (Cost is barrier – especially important for working people not making enough to afford insurance)

- Top of list (Xrays, testing, some meds Health Dept. can't cover – gap in funding)

- I think affordable healthcare is very important. We need to make sure that children can get health services as needed. There also needs to be health education to help students and parents know what to do in order to stay healthy. The basic needs of Health and dental services are very important. Some of the

barriers might be- accessibility, ability to get to the healthcare services, knowing what services are available.

- Important (Good Samaritan Clinic could be bolstered – physicians, meds (501C3); no need to reinvent wheel – improve/building on what's there)

- Insurance affects mental health services – No insurance or insurance not covering mental health

Importance of affordable housing

- Important (barriers: $$$, people learning how to manage finances/responsibilities, how to obtain and maintain training skills to break cycles – independence)

- Not as important (there are rentals available; empty units in Cleveland Housing Authority; low housing cost and low taxes – affordable enough to refinance to 15 year mortgage but can't get into CHA if you have a record)

- Not as serious of an issue (existing [issue] but finding housing is much better here than other places)

- Not enough Section 8 (funding barrier – need more public housing in better neighborhoods or improve public areas)

- Issues with young mothers (short notices/transitional [Section 8]; shelter doesn't take care of complete needs (only open at night))

- I am not sure about the housing situation in our county. Having shelter is a basic need. As a citizen, I really don't know if this is a problem in our community. I should know, but I don't. I would think barriers might be just the cost of housing as well as the availability of low-cost housing.
- Some living out of cars/motels – how widespread?
- Important – need clean, healthy housing

- Children/women in domestic violence shelter (have 6 weeks to find place) – place to go for women who are isolated from finances

Importance of after-school programs

- Good programs (YCAP, churches, First Baptist, North Cleveland Church of God, Lee) – could be more/join forces with existing programs. Barriers: Building mentoring, $$$, staff.

- Very important – improve quality of life (have to go to neighborhoods (In City, Blythe Bower – Lay Street). Logistics is hard with transportation unless it took place at school (but then need funding from County Commission)

- Relatively important (not many barriers; [maybe] accessibility

- Not a big issue (several [programs] available in Bradley Co./churches)

- After school programs are EXTREMELY important. I am sure that there is a need for programs for after school for middle school and high school students. The lack of funding and appropriate, available facilities would be barriers. Transportation to and from the programs could also be a barrier.

- Very important; young kids and high school age CRITICAL to keep them in school – excited about education when they are young

- Very important (BRI offers anger management, parenting; 3-5pm What happens during that time?)

Importance of services for people with disabilities

- Most services can be met here or in Chattanooga – SETHRA met needs – mobile

- Need more support groups (have groups for the more "popular" disabilities like mentally retarded) but not for those not as well-known. Barriers: $$$, legislation issues (No Child Left Behind), transportation.

- Don't know much – doesn't rate on radar screen
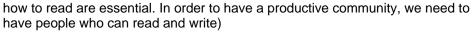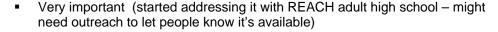
- Important; Bradley/Cleveland Services – lots of people on waiting list (federal programs have frozen enrollment – enrolled only 5 in 2 years; [Need] Funding for current programs and [have] no new services)

- Need transportation for bed-ridden clients; SETHRA available but require 24 hour notice and ambulance requires TennCare, Medicare, or private $$

- Very important (barriers would be availability of appropriate programs depending on the special needs of each individual. Funding and staffing those programs could also be issues. Matching the right resource or program to the right need could also be difficult. Just knowing what is available to individuals in our community could be a great help. I'm not sure we are educated enough on what is available as a community)
- Don't know about need or what is available

- Very important – [Need] better integration into community for the disabled – children see and understand they are not "different"

Importance of adult education/literacy programs

- If educational systems doing were doing their job – wouldn't need adult ed.

- Pressure to advance [in employment]

- In support of reading/education [programs/services]

- No high school diploma – limits life

- Don't know much – doesn't rate on radar screen

- Important, but [have] access to all levels of adult education – REACH, Cleveland State, Lee University; not many barriers

- Very important. (REACH high school to those who have dropped out of school to make up credits and graduate. Programs to teach people how to read are essential. In order to have a productive community, we need to have people who can read and write)

- Very important (started addressing it with REACH adult high school – might need outreach to let people know it's available)

Opportunities available in the social environment

- Bring together schools, churches (diversity), economic support – base (government) incentives for companies to move in

- United Way needs support collectively of churches (I am a strong supporter of United Way); churches [should] support community

- Representatives/Congressmen getting more involved with Safe Schools

- Schools empty – capital unused

- Intellectual capital

- Good things in place/working that need to be funded more (applaud United Way for Boys & Girls Club and thoroughness in looking at agencies)

- [Need] central figure serving as local leader to point the way (almost 100,000 [in county], but believe we are small-town)

- [Have] gangs, drugs, violence that are big-city problems but don't want to admit/address (United Way poised to tackle these issues – pioneers for progress in Bradley County)

- [Need] "organized," "managed" umbrella agency (possibly United Way) for collaboration/resources (like Chamber of Commerce for businesses – full-time people organize resources, support/recruit business – good model)

- Funding

- Politicians (national and local) need to be more aware of conditions of citizens

- Forums, meeting places to talk and discuss important issues. Town hall meeting, panel discussions at community schools could be very effective in helping everyone understand what the real issues are. Getting everyone to talk to each

other and understand each other's needs help us to become more understanding and tolerant of each other (BICC community forum – good thing)

- People getting together just to talk and ask questions about concerns and needs (without being on defensive) – make strides

- Everyone has own agenda – need to get past "agendas" (people are passionate about what they believe i.e. raise taxes)

- [Need to] all be on same page and "hear" each other

- [People are] starting to think and talk about how education is funded/how political system work

- Things have always been done same way (especially County Commission) – elected to NOT spend $$$/NOT raise taxes

- Need to talk to community leaders so they will know problems before they erupt

- Issue of illegal immigrants – frustrated – government should take opportunity to integrate community (look at as "opportunity" instead of defamation of Bradley County)

- Education in community – get across to citizens value of education to future

- Churches under-utilized – don't necessarily pull together ([Need] clearinghouse for benevolence)

Ways to improve the effectiveness of social services

- Services/organizations need to be funded at higher levels to provide needed quality services

- More millionaires per capita in TN: [Need to] See benefit in giving to social services – be involved in and see results in community

- Central clearinghouse for services in Bradley County

- More collaboration between people providing services (United Way)

- Don't know that people are aware of what is available in Bradley Co. (social services) – don't know where to start

- Takes somebody to say let's get together and talk about it – starting conversation (everyone working on one little problem gets frustrated)

- Summit (like BICC is doing)

- I would like to see all agencies to continue to work together even more than they are now. I especially want to see more help with mental health issues with children. Utilizing the expertise of educators and the professionals in the juvenile justice programs could be great when teamed up with mental health providers. All of the Bradley County Schools have business partners and faith based

partners. Getting together and finding out what each entity needs from the other in order to produce productive citizens would be very beneficial. The Safe Schools/Healthy Students Community grant has been a great step in that direction. There is only one more year left of those monies. I would like to see us be able to sustain those partnerships and offer help to students and families- even when the grant funds are no longer available.

- Prioritize what the needs really are/General understanding of what is being done so we can help each other more

- United Way booklet [used to be] published & sent out – now what is out there?

- People have become complacent in their situation – if they knew what was out there that weren't stigmatized, they might take advantage

- Lot of good services out there – need funding to keep them going and education to let community know

- Meeting with other groups of people that are involved in social services (e.g. Inter-agency Council)

- Directory (should streamline with United Way directory) [of] resources available

- Need balance between getting enough help and dependence

- [Community partners] getting more involved

- Funding

- Private/Non-profit board members can make it or break it – if not effective, they cease to be

- Have to have people that care in public positions

- Bringing back community-based mental healthcare; mental health is stretched – can't provide quality

- Community partners can help fulfill needs

- Need expanded strategic plan – NEEDS ASSESSMENT throughout County (build strengths found)

- Partner to develop grants

- Keep from duplication efforts – use resources more efficiently

- Screening – doing well

FOCUS GROUP DATA

The social service provider focus group identified the following characteristics of a healthy community:

1. Education
2. Healthcare
3. Safe community
4. Jobs
5. Accessible resources with all working together
6. Network of support for children, youth, and adults
7. Meeting basic needs of food, shelter
8. Provide healthy after-school activities

The community assets the focus group identified focused on three areas or sectors:

SOCIAL	ECONOMIC	OTHER
• Faith-based programs	• Healthcare access	• Schools/education
• Basic transportation	• Industry/jobs	• Resource networking
• Variety of social service agencies	• Charities	• Higher education
• Diversity/multicultural	• Good industrial base	
• Strong religious community Giving community	• Good business foundations to develop	
• Safe Schools		
• People		

The focus group identified community needs in four areas/sectors:

SOCIAL	HEALTH	DIVERSITY	OTHER
• Respite care	Dental care	Services for other nationalities	Quality affordable childcare
• Emergency care for children	Mental health services	Cultural education	Transportation
• Affordable	TNCare providers	Insurance	Homeless services

transitional housing	Home-based long-term care for the elderly	Translators	Activities for teens
• Counseling for indigent	Adult dental services	ESL training	Literacy education
• Affordable after-school care	Medical care for the homeless	Acceptance	Church involvement in the community
• Intensive in-patient/out-patient mental health services for adolescents			

When asked for "one wish" the small groups in the focus group identified four wishes:

1. Large <u>free</u> multi-service clinic for all ages (volunteer run)

2. Sliding scale community health and wellness center

3. Living wages for all

4. Networking/clearinghouse for all social services

The focus group identified potential disadvantages/limitations with achieving this wish list included:

1. Tracking process (for individuals who receive services)

2. Limited resources (particularly within faith-based groups)

3. Lack of [public] awareness of general needs

The focus group discussed potential avenues for obtaining the wish list:

- Faith-based engagements

- Education/marketing

- Ministerial association/network/communicate (D. Silverstein)

- Bradley Initiative for Church and Community

- DCS & Headstart?

- Health Council/ Advisory Boards

- Safe Schools-Healthy Initiative

The focus group also identified an extensive list of diverse groups in the community that potentially need services:

Hispanics	Children in state care
Ukrainians	Individuals with disabilities
Indians	Same-sex couples
Seniors	Mixed race couples
Russians/Eastern Europeans	Large families
Single parents	"deserving vs. undeserving" groups
Grandparents/relative caregivers	Non-committed families
Returning college students	Homeless families
Working mothers	Illegal immigrants

The focus group identified the following primary challenges in addressing services for these diverse groups:

- How diverse groups are valued/contributions to the community

- Stereotypes (perceived and felt)

- Cultural competence (understanding different kinds of families)

- Fear (What will I [individually] do? What will I [individually] and we[collectively] have to give up?)

CONCLUSIONS

Bradley County, like the rest of Tennessee, has experienced changes during the past five years in terms of population growth, migration of immigrants, industry outsourcing, and an increasing aging population. The education rate has steadily increased since 2000 and while more residents have a college degree, the county rate of 15.9% remains lower than the state rate of 19.6%. The rate of people living below the poverty line (13.9%) is slightly lower than the state rate of 15.0%.

Bradley County residents generally feel a strong sense of community identity and demonstrate a spirit of caring. Residents also feel a strong connection to the churches in the community, an appreciation of the location in terms of natural beauty, and agree that it is good place to raise a family. Residents also feel that the institutions of higher learning, Lee University and Cleveland State College, contribute to a higher quality of life in the overall community.

As evidenced by the focus group findings and the interviews with the key stakeholders, the challenges facing Bradley County center around the issues of affordable and accessible healthcare and the increasing diversity of county residents which necessitates changes in healthcare, education, and social services as well as overall community perceptions and attitudes.

Education Environment

The services provided to children and their parents in the first five years of life are a key to breaking the cycle of poverty and underemployment. Such programs as Head Start have demonstrated their effectiveness in long-term school success and success in adult life.

The Safe Schools Project in Bradley County baseline data from 2005-2006 found that 48.3% of all Bradley County Schools students felt there was a teacher or some other adult who really cared about them; 49.9% felt that a teacher or some adult was available to listen to them. This data also found that 49.1% of students felt that disruptive student behavior in classes was a small problem; 46.9% also felt that students being depressed was a small problem.

Early diagnosis and treatment of learning and developmental disorders improve outcomes, but such efforts are more likely to be delayed among low-income children. Research has found, as our focus groups and stakeholders stated, that "low- and moderate-income parents cannot afford to stay at home, nor can they afford high-quality day care and preschool care without assistance. Yet, enriched, high-quality day care and preschool programs are ideal locations

for facilitating parental education, preventive, and early intervention services" (*Montgomery County Needs Assessment, 2006).*

Both Lee University and Cleveland State College are valuable resources in the community but several focus group members and stakeholders felt these potential resources are underutilized or overlooked at times by decision-makers.

Healthcare Environment

Recent research shows that 34% of adults in Tennessee are uninsured which results in a much higher emergency room usage than the national average. There are 514 emergency room visits per 1000 persons in Tennessee as compared to the national average of 387 visits (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2005).

Tennessee ranks 48th for low birth weight babies; one of the worst in the nation. In general, rates were higher in urban areas in Tennessee. Overall, the low birth weight rate for urban counties was 10.1 percent compared to 8.3 percent for rural counties. Bradley County had a low birth weight of 8.0%.

Social Environment

The changing demographics of Bradley County are representative of trends at the state and national level. While the

county remains more than 90% White, its Hispanic population has significantly increased during the past decade and trends indicate this population continuing to grow. Service providers have lagged in adapting to these demographic shifts. Many of these new immigrants, just as many African Americans do, feel disenfranchised in the county's health and social service system.

While rarely expressing their dissatisfaction directly to providers of services, many feel excluded and unwelcome.

Research suggests that these feelings and perceptions contribute to disparities in accessing appropriate services which has social and economic consequences for the larger community. The focus group participants suggested that work needs to be done to break down isolation in diverse population groups. There is a need to collectively find ways to address the issues relative to citizens vs. non-citizens that will break down the barriers to creating social capital in the community.

Affordable housing and public transportation were ranked as important issues, but not as important as healthcare, education, or social services. Public transportation did rank slightly higher than affordable housing. The Cleveland Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization has developed a

long-range transportation strategic plan that includes as one of the goals a focus on making transit "accessible and useful to most potential users" (March, 2006).

The dense concentration of churches in the county (over 200) and the strong sense of religiosity among county residents has resulted in a mix of outcomes in the social environment. Faith-based groups, services, programs, and organizations have a strong presence in the community and are generally perceived in a positive way. However, there is some agreement that the general public relies too heavily on faith-based groups to address significant social issues such as poverty and affordable healthcare. This over-reliance has unintentionally resulted in less innovative planning or problem-solving strategies which could potentially result in more sustainable, well-funded services and programs.

Founded in 1998, the Bradley Initiative for Church and Community (BICC) aims to bring individuals, churches, community groups, and institutions together to "dialogue concerning the felt needs of Cleveland Bradley County" (www.bicc-inc.org). Through a listening interview process in 2005, BICC found that there is a sense of disunity in the community which "fell into three categories: denominationalism, racism, and socioeconomic classism" (www.bicc-inc.org). In response to these findings, this organization has

made progress towards increasing the communication and networking between social services and faith-based organizations.

A five year strategic plan developed by Bradley County/City of Cleveland, Tennessee includes increasing workforce development efforts and improving the urban transportation system. These economic efforts, if successful, will impact positively on the overall community quality of life.

However, monetary resources alone are not sufficient for assuring success. Civic engagement, a clear shared vision for the future and the will to address difficult problems are equally essential. Despite all of its current and potential resources, Bradley County has all of the health and social problems that plague most communities in the United States and has struggled with effectively addressing them.

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These conclusions suggest there appear to be three fundamental challenges are present in the social environment of the county:

1. *Financial pressures and demands for efficiency have narrowed the focus of social service agencies and reduced their ability to respond*

effectively to the complex needs of those that they serve.

As many of the stakeholders we interviewed as well as focus group members observed in frustration, social service agencies, under pressure to "make their numbers," must narrow the scope of their efforts. The more socially complex the needs, the less likely they are to be reimbursed or budgeted for and the more likely they will be left unaddressed. More individuals and families fall into the gaps in an increasingly fragmented network of health and social services.

2. *Financial pressures, changes in policy, and demands for efficiency have significantly reduced and limited affordable and accessible healthcare services resulting in more residents with little or no health insurance.*

Both focus group members and stakeholders agreed that accessible and affordable healthcare for all ages is a significant challenge in Bradley County as it is nationwide. Hospitals concentrate on reducing lengths of stay and the costs of admissions, and fewer employers offer affordable health insurance options. TennCare funding and eligibility has changed and the working poor "fall between the cracks." Dental care is basically non-existent for

both children and adults. The healthcare services that are available are stretched thin with waiting lists and limited resources to address complex needs.

3. *Increased diversity of the county, particularly the migration of Hispanic residents has challenged the healthcare, social services, and education systems and the overall tolerance of the community towards those individuals and families who are perceived as different.*

The changing diversity of the county is inevitable as migration patterns are changing nationwide. Bradley County has experienced a significant increase in the Hispanic population as well as Eastern European population. These changes have caused some strain on health, education, and social services systems in terms of being culturally responsive. On a personal level, community residents are being challenged to reconsider what diversity means to them and how this concept can be better incorporated into their personal and professional lives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Bradley County United Way is committed to strengthening the quality of life in this community, particularly in the areas of healthcare and social services. They
want to invest in evidence-based programs and services that work in addressing local community needs and help to prevent or at least alleviate them.

The evidence suggests that it takes sustained and coordinated investments to help those trapped in the shadows, in a cycle of disadvantage. These groups have multiple, complex, and sometimes long-term needs that that cross professional, bureaucratic and governance boundaries.

Two long-term goals have emerged from this needs assessment process: (1) increasing the quality of life for all county residents over the next five years, and (2) increasing the ability of healthcare, social service, and educational systems in developing services that are effective, culturally responsive, and economically sound.

The immediate identified priorities are:

1. A need to concentrate resources on where the needs are the greatest rather than on needs that may receive the most political and local attention. This effort must include leadership from local government, private business, the larger health and mental health systems, schools and universities, and other institutions and organizations equally concerned about the future health and quality of life of Bradley County residents.

Possible Action Steps:
- *The Bradley Initiative for Church and Community (BICC) has demonstrated potential for building an infrastructure to address this priority; explore the feasibility for utilizing this entity to address this priority.*
- *If it is not feasible for BICC to address this priority, collaborate with BICC to develop a coalition to address this priority. Consider utilizing expertise and resources by partnering with Lee University and Cleveland State Community College in this process.*

2. Need to strengthen the affordability of and accessibility to basic healthcare services, particularly those who "fall between the cracks" which are increasingly becoming identified as the working poor.

Possible Action Steps:

- *Identify potential funding partners at local, state, and national levels; Center for Non-Profits in Chattanooga may be a resource partner for this process.*
- *Develop a needs list/proposal to present to potential funders that demonstrates the economic benefits of accordable and accessible healthcare services.*
- *Collaborate with Lee University and/or Cleveland State College to develop a Healthcare/Social Services Summit to bring organizations together with potential funders (private business, foundations, etc.) to present proposals ideas/discuss needs and priority funding areas.*
- *Develop strategies to include the needs of diverse individuals, families, and groups in services offered and seek funding sources specifically addressing these groups.*

3. Need to identify innovative strategies to increase funding sources, reduce the potential for redundancy in social services by strengthening the natural networks already in place and where identified, bringing individuals, programs, and organizations together.

Possible Action Steps:

1. *Merge the inventory developed through this needs assessment with existing directory of services to create a comprehensive directory. Seek local business or private funding support in order to update on an annual basis to reduce redundancy.*
2. *Use directory to identify gaps in services, redundancy in services, and evidence of services for diverse individuals, families, and groups.*
3. *Collaborate with the Center for Non-Profits in Chattanooga to present daylong training on developing proposals for diverse funding sources.*
4. *Collaborate with Lee University and/or Cleveland State College to develop a Healthcare/Social Services Summit to bring organizations together with potential funders (private business, foundations, etc.) to present proposals ideas/discuss needs and priority funding areas.*
5. *Create a long-term strategic plan to develop a clearinghouse for all social services and faith-based agencies.*
6. *Develop strategies to include the needs of diverse individuals, families, and groups in services*

offered and seek funding sources specifically addressing these groups.

4. Need to identify and provide resources to address the needs of diverse individuals and families in the healthcare, educational, and social service systems with a particular focus on strengthening families.

Possible Action Steps:

1. *Use directory to identify gaps in services, redundancy in services, and evidence of services for diverse individuals, families, and groups.*

2. *Collaborate with individuals or organizations with expertise to develop a series of trainings on working with diverse populations. Partner with the local Multicultural Council to develop this resource.*

3. *Identify "best practices" nationwide for working with diverse individuals, families, and groups and develop a resource guide for individuals working in healthcare, educational, and social service systems. Partner with the local Multicultural Council to develop this resource.*

<u>Future identified priorities may include:</u>

1. Developing strategies for more meaningful ways to include consumers of health and social services in the resource-allocation decision-making process.

Examples:
- *Include a consumer representative on agency and organizational boards.*
- *Develop a Consumer Council representative of various groups receiving healthcare, educational, and social services.*
- *Partner with local TV, radio, and newspaper to develop Public Service Announcements utilizing consumers regarding specific services, programs, organizations.*

2. Identifying promising interventions, programs, and services in the local social environment and implementing an evaluation to assess the effectiveness of these promising innovations as compared to more standard delivery of services.

Examples:
- *Develop an evaluation model for promising interventions, programs,*

and services. Evaluate these programs in comparison with standard programs over the course of a calendar year.

- *Develop a "best practices" model of service delivery and "test" for a 6-month period of time in terms of effectiveness and economic soundness.*

3. Creating a long-term, sustainable, and active network representative of the diverse healthcare and social service organizations in the county with the shared goal of strengthening the social environment.

APPENDIX

United Way of Bradley County

NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROJECT PUBLIC SURVEY

Thank you for taking time to complete an important survey about the social environment in Bradley County. This survey is part of a needs assessment project currently underway through a partnership between Bradley County United Way and the Social Work Department at the University of TN at Chattanooga.

Your honest and detailed responses will be helpful to United Way in assessing areas of need and areas for potential funding. All survey responses are anonymous.

This survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Filling out this survey indicates your voluntary agreement to participate.

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1. Please rank the following areas of concern (identified from focus groups/public forums) on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = extremely important and 5 = somewhat not important.

    _____ Affordable healthcare

    _____ Affordable housing

    _____ After-school programs for children/youth

    _____ Services for people with disabilities

    _____ Adult education/literacy programs

2. Overall, how would you rate the friendliness of people, the way people respect and help one another, and the willingness of people to work for the good of the community in Bradley County?

<div align="center">

1   2   3   4   5

Least desirable   **Most desirable**

</div>

3. In your opinion, how tolerant do you think people are in Bradley County for people of different races or cultural backgrounds?

<div align="center">

1   2   3   4   5

Very intolerant   **Very tolerant**

</div>

4. In your opinion, how tolerant do you think people in Bradley County are for people with different viewpoints or lifestyles?

<div align="center">

1   2   3   4   5

Very intolerant   **Very tolerant**

</div>

5. In your opinion, how do residents of Bradley County view the role of religion in daily life?

<div align="center">

1   2   3   4   5

Very important   **Not very important**

</div>

6. In your opinion, how much access to health and social services should illegal immigrants who live in Bradley County have ?

<div align="center">

1   2   3   4   5

</div>

As much access as everyone else   **No access at all**

7. For the following items, rate how easily it is for community residents to obtain the following services (Rate on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 extremely difficult to access and 5 very easy to access).

	Extremely Difficult to Access	Somewhat Difficult to Access	Can Usually Access	Easy to Access	Very Easy to Access	Don't have experience and/or knowledge
Mental Health Services (children & families)						
Mental Health Services (adults)						
Mental Health Services (older adults)						
Christian or faith-based Counseling Services						
Substance Abuse Services						
Basic healthcare for children						
Basic healthcare for adults						
Basic dental care for children						
Basic dental care for adults						
Basic vision care for children						
Basic vision care for adults						
Affordable prescription medications						
Adult literacy/education programs						
Job skills training						
Domestic Violence Services						
HIV/AIDS Services						
Family counseling services						
Services for Children with Disabilities						

Services for Adults with Disabilities					
Services for Veterans					
Services for Victims of Elder Abuse					
Affordable Housing					
Transportation Services for general needs (grocery store, etc.)					
Transportation Services for medical needs (appointments etc.)					
Affordable child care (for children aged 5 – 12)					
Affordable child care (infants – children aged 5)					
24-hour child care (for infants to children aged 12)					

8. What do you feel are the most important needs of children in Bradley County right now (please rank the following items in order of how important you feel each one is; 1 = extremely important, 2 = very important, and 3 = important)?

_____ Basic healthcare

_____ After-school programs

_____ Services for children with disabilities

9. What do you feel are the most important needs of single-parent families in Bradley County right now (please rank the following items in order of how important you feel each one is; 1 = extremely important, 2 = very important, and 3 = important)?

_____ Affordable housing

_____ Childcare

_____ Adult literacy/education programs

10. What do you feel are the most important needs of women in Bradley County right now (please rank the following items in order of how important you feel each one is; 1 = extremely important, 2 = very important, and 3 = important)?

_____ Domestic violence services

_____ Affordable childcare

_____ Adult literacy/education programs

11. What do you feel are the most important needs for people with disabilities in Bradley County right now (please rank the following items in order of how important you feel each one is; 1 = extremely important, 2 = very important, and 3 = important)?

_____ Transportation

_____ Wheelchair accessible sidewalks

_____ Job-training services

12. What do you feel are the most important needs of senior citizens in Bradley County right now (please rank the following items in order of how important you feel each one is; 1 = extremely important, 2 = very important, and 3 = important)?

_____ Respite care/sitter services for family caregivers

_____ Affordable prescriptions

_____ Transportation

13. What do you feel are the most important needs of minority groups in Bradley County right now (please rank the following items in order of how important you feel each one is; 1 = extremely important, 2 = very important, and 3 = important)?

_____ Basic healthcare services

_____ Affordable housing

_____ Acceptance from the larger community

14. Have you ever given money to Bradley County United Way?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

15. Are you a current Bradley County United Way board member?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

16. Are you a current Bradley County United way volunteer?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

17. In the past, have you ever served as a Bradley County United Way board member or volunteer?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

This last section asks for information about you.

18. What was your age at your last birthday? _____

19. Are you: ☐ Female   ☐ Male

20. What is your ethnicity?
- ☐ Caucasian/White
- ☐ African-American
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Native American
- ☐ Asian American

21. What is the highest level of education you have earned?
- ☐ Some high school, no diploma
- ☐ GED
- ☐ High school diploma
- ☐ Some college, no degree
- ☐ College degree
- ☐ Graduate school, no degree
- ☐ Graduate degree

22. What is your current employment status?
- ☐ Full-time
- ☐ Part-time

□   Consultant
□   Retired
□   Full-time at-home parent/caregiver
□   Unemployed at present

23. How many years have you lived in Bradley County? _____

24. What is your current yearly income?
□   Less than $14, 999
□ $15, 000 - $24, 999
□ $25, 000 - $34, 999
□ $35,000 - $39, 999
□ $40, 000 - $49, 999
□ $50, 000 - $74, 999
□ $75, 000 and above

BRADLEY COUNTY UNITED WAY/UTC NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROJECT

<u>KEY STAKE HOLDER INTERVIEW GUIDE</u>

Sample Letter/Email to Key Stakeholder:

Date

Dear _____

Bradley County United Way and the Social Work Program at the University of TN at Chattanooga is in the process of doing a needs assessment to identify strengths and potential limitations within the social services environment of Bradley County. Given your role in the community, you have much to add in the way of valuable information for this process.

I am contacting you to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet with and hear your opinion about social services in Bradley County. I understand your time is important; the actual interview should take no longer than 30 minutes of your time.

Stacey Tucker, a doctoral student at the University of TN Knoxville will be conducting the interviews.

At your earliest convenience, please contact me either via email or at 479-1786 to arrange a time for the interview. We would like to complete all the stakeholder interviews by July 4, 2007.

We look forward to hearing from you,

Michael Cole

KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Briefly, tell me about your organization/role.

2. How long have you been a resident of Bradley County? What do you like best/least about living in Bradley County?

3. In your opinion, what are two key issues that could affect (either positively or negatively) the quality of life for Bradley County residents in the next five years? Why are these issues key?

4. In your opinion what kind of social services are needed <u>right now</u> that would improve the quality of life for everyone in our community?

5. In your opinion, do you feel that community agencies work together to solve problems or do agencies individually address problems? What are the benefits and limitations of collaboration versus individual problem-solving?

6. How important of an issue do you think <u>affordable healthcare</u> is in our community? What are some of the barriers to affordable healthcare here?

7. How important of an issue do you think <u>affordable housing</u> is in our community? What are some of the barriers to affordable housing here?

8. How important of an issue do you think <u>after-school programs for children/youth</u> is in our community? What are some of the barriers to having programs like this here?

9. How important of an issue do you think <u>services for individuals with disabilities</u> is in our community? What are some of the barriers to having services like this here?

10. How important of an issue do you think <u>adult education/literacy</u> is in our community? What are some of the barriers to having this type of service here?

11. What are specific opportunities within the social/political environment of Bradley County that, if used, could have a positive impact on the quality of life for community residents?

12. How might the social services system be more effective in improving the quality of life for residents of Bradley County? How might community partners help?

Thank you for your time and opinion.

SOURCES

Five Year Economic & Community Development Strategic Plan. Bradley County/City of Cleveland, Tennessee.

Long-Range Transportation Plan draft ready for public view (2006, March). Cleveland Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization.

2005-2006 Baseline Data. Safe Schools/Health Students Initiative (Bradley County Schools).

Bradley Initiative for Church and Community. www.bicc-inc.org

An Independent Assessment of the Health, Human Services, Cultural and Educational Needs of Montgomery County. (2006, October).

http://www.tennesseeanytime.org/local/bradley.html

US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service;

TN Department of Education

US Census

www.nclr.org

http://health.state.tn.us/data.htm