



United Way of Ocean County

**NEEDS PRIORITIZATION REPORT
2007**

**Approved by:
United Way Board of Directors**

**Submitted by:
Daniel Regenye, Chair**

NEEDS PRIORITIZATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report represents the successful completion of United Way of Ocean County's 2007 assessment of priority needs within Ocean County. This report is a compilation of inputs from the United Way of Ocean County Needs Prioritization Committee, as well as the findings contained in the following reports:

- **Ocean County Human Services Advisory Council, Priority Populations Plan, 2006**
- **Ocean County Health Department, MAAP Phase IV: Identification of Strategic Issues, 2007**
- **NJ 2-1-1 Partnership, Call Center Activity for First and Second Quarters of 2007**

The Needs Prioritization Committee met on October 11th and 18th, 2007. The Committee determined that given the scope and broad spectrum of community participants that provided inputs to the above mentioned reports, United Way of Ocean County should adopt the findings and recommendations in this Needs Prioritization Report.

The Needs Prioritization Report provides the framework that will help United Way of Ocean County and more specifically, our fund distribution volunteers, utilize our community's resources to meet the most critical needs. It is our expectation that United Way of Ocean County will use this valuable information to continue the climate of excellence envisioned by our volunteers and the community. We further hope that other community planning bodies and service providers will find it a useful tool in program planning and implementation.

We encourage you to review the report. Your support of these findings will help United Way of Ocean County make a lasting and meaningful impact on our community. As always, your comments are welcomed.

**Daniel Regenye
Chairperson**

Recommended Funding Priorities

Based on the data collected in these reports, the emphasis level and needs were determined and are listed below. In addition to the Human Service and Health Department reports, United Way of Ocean County reviewed the data collected by NJ 2-1-1 Partnership in Ocean County for the first and second quarters of 2007. The review revealed that out a total of 2,570 calls that were placed for help in Ocean County, health and medical received 221 calls, Housing received 544 calls, Mental Health received 204 calls and Temporary Financial Assistance received 621 calls. These findings are completely in line with the data found in the reports from Ocean County Dept. of Human Services and Ocean County Health Dept.

Priorities are reported and grouped by Emphasis Level with Level I being the highest priority and descending from there.

Emphasis Level I:

- **Housing**
- **Transportation**
- **Affordable Medical Care**
- **Information and Education about existing services**
- **Improved Access to Services (including programs that are sensitive to linguistic and cultural needs)**
- **Substance Abuse**
- **Abuse/Neglect & Violence Intervention/Prevention Programs**

Emphasis Level II:

- **Child Care**
- **Literacy, Educational & Vocational Opportunities**
- **Youth Development**
- **Emergency Basic Needs**

Emphasis Level I

1. Housing

Housing was identified as the most serious need in the County. It was identified as the number two need in the survey results and appeared on every focus group priority need list for each of the priority populations. The consensus among all of the results was that there is a serious lack of affordable housing across all populations in the County that creates hardship and limits self-sufficiency. Specialized housing, such as transitional, supportive, group, handicapped accessible, sponsored as well as shelters, was also a common theme among each of the priority populations.

2. Transportation

The lack of accessible transportation in Ocean County was the number two most serious need identified by the HSAC Planning Committee. Transportation appeared on all priority needs lists for all populations as a barrier to accessing services. Limited stops and service that allows people to get to work, medical appointments, or recreational activities, particularly in the southern part of the County was highlighted.

3. Affordable Medical Care

Affordable medical care was the third most serious need identified in the planning process. It not only appeared on the list of survey results, but was of particular concern to the Homeless and Low Income and Disabled Populations focus group participants. The lack of affordable medical care greatly limits these groups from accessing quality medical services.

4. Information and education about existing services

Information and education about existing services was the fourth overall County priority. Nearly all of the focus groups expressed a concern about the lack of information and education about existing services among both agencies and clients. Improved collaboration and communication was seen as a solution to the difficulty in accessing existing services.

5. Improved access to services (including programs that are sensitive to linguistic & cultural needs)

Improved access to services closely followed the need for information and education about existing services as an overall County priority need. The lack of access was defined in a variety of ways by each of the populations. Some of the definitions of limited access included: long waiting lists, cultural and linguistic barriers, program ineligibility, financial constraints, and funding shortages.

6. Substance Abuse

The need for substance abuse programs continue to be a County-wide issue that impacts all populations. Through the planning process, substance abuse was of particular concern to the Children and Families At-Risk and Mental Health Populations. The Children and Families At-Risk focus group identified the need for additional prevention and intensive outpatient programs for the youth population dealing with substance abuse. The Mental Health population emphasized the need for services for the dually diagnosed, which is currently being examined through the planning efforts of the Ocean County Mental Health Board.

7. Abuse/Neglect & Violence Intervention/Prevention Programs

The need for abuse/neglect and violence programs are a county wide need that impacts all populations and ages. The Children and Families At-Risk priority population includes individuals at particular risk of abuse, neglect and abandonment, including children in protective services, victims of domestic violence, new mothers, aging-out youth, children with behavioral health issues and juveniles and families in crisis.

Emphasis Level II

1. Child Care

Child care was ranked as the number one moderate need for Ocean County and sixth among survey respondents. Affordable child care is of particular concern to the Children and Families At-Risk and Homeless and Low-Income Populations. Long waiting lists were identified as the primary barrier, followed by evening child care and child care for children with behavioral health issues.

2. Literacy, Educational and Vocational Opportunities

Both survey respondents and the Homeless and Low-Income Populations focus group participants identified the need for educational and vocational job opportunities in Ocean County. Ocean County residents need improved job placement assistance, skills and opportunities in order to increase employment mobility and earning potential. Survey respondents acknowledged the need for literacy as the foundation for educational and vocational job opportunities.

3. Youth Development

Survey respondents expressed a need for more recreational facilities as well as affordable recreational activities. The Developmentally Disabled focus group identified the need for after-school programs, unrestricted recreational programs and more handicapped accessible recreation areas (such as parks) in the County. Coordinated case management & transition and independent living services for at-risk youth focus group placed particular emphasis on a variety of issues affecting the at-risk youth of Ocean County. The at-risk youth population is in need of more coordinated case management and transition and independent living services to help them move into adulthood. This particular group would greatly benefit from preventative programs that would assist them in completing their education, preparing for and securing employment and moving into an independent living situation prior to DYFS involvement.

4. Emergency Basic Needs

Government agencies, nonprofit agencies, and food pantries report a marked increase in the numbers of people needing emergency assistance for basic needs. According to 2000 census data 11% of families with pre-school age children in Ocean County live below the poverty level. According to 2000 census data 8% of seniors in Ocean County live below the poverty level.

