

Foundation report cites top community needs

Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore, local United Way team up to issue joint survey

Transportation, alcohol and drug abuse, jobs, and the lack of affordable medical care, housing and child care are the top major needs on the Lower Eastern Shore, according to a new needs assessment report issued by the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore and the local United Way.

The report, "2001: A Community Project" is the second comprehensive needs assessment jointly undertaken by the Community Foundation and the United Way. The assessment's goal was to provide a baseline of information from a variety of local sources to identify local needs

Sixteen hundred surveys were mailed in 2001 to community leaders and individuals representing residential, nonprofit, government and business sectors in Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester counties. A statistically significant 28% responded to the survey.

"Both the Community Foundation and the United Way have already incorporated the information presented in this report in our community grantmaking and community investment strategies," said David Michaud, President of the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore. "It is our intent in producing this report to present the community with a tool to assist community leaders, nonprofit organizations, government agencies and residents in directing resources to help fulfill needs here on the Lower Shore."

The report also includes the top issues of major concern in the four sectors surveyed. Most residents cited alcohol and drug abuse, lack of affordable medical care, and inadequate public transportation as issues of major concern. Poverty and crime were found to be the top issues of moderate concern for most residents surveyed.

Most leaders or "key informants" cited inadequate public transportation, alcohol and drug abuse and teen pregnancy as the issues of major concern. Mental illness, crime and poverty were found to be the top issues of moderate concern to most key informants surveyed.

Nonprofits, government agencies and businesses were asked to identify areas of most significant need for future initiatives. Most nonprofits surveyed cited improving access to transportation, promoting good health and promoting education and schools as the top areas. Most government agencies surveyed cited creating jobs, preparing people for jobs, and economic development as the top areas. Most businesses surveyed cited promoting volunteerism, creating jobs, promoting education and economic development as the top areas.

Besides highlighting the issues of most concern, the report provides data on the community's perceptions on a broad range of needs. For a free copy of the report, contact the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore at (410) 742-9911. Reports are also being made available to public libraries in the tri-county area.