Employment

Education

Healthcare

Housing

Poverty

Safety

Food

Community

Elders

Adults

Youth

# SCAN

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**S**ervice
**C**ommunity
**A**ssessment of
**N**eeds

**Monroe County, Indiana**
*www.bloomington.in.us/~scan*

SCAN Steering Committee
Barry Lessow, Chair

## Introduction

This Service Community Assessment of Needs (SCAN) provides comprehensive, valid and reliable information about the human service needs and capacity of Monroe County. The last community assessment, SPAN/MC, was completed in 1998 using data collected in 1997. Changes in social service demand and capacity over the past five years required that the information be updated for use by funding organizations, program providers, local nonprofits and other community decision makers.

This project was a true collaborative effort. The SCAN Steering and Research Committees had representatives from all sectors – nonprofit, government and business– including local funding groups, social service agencies and other nonprofits, Indiana University, and research organizations. An advisory board with service provision and data collection experts assisted the Committees. The Indiana University Office of Community Outreach and Partnerships in Service-Learning dedicated an ACE (Advocates for Community Engagement) to the assessment team. Dozens of trained volunteers conducted open-ended structured interviews with community representatives.

The nonprofit organizations participating in this study represented social services, health care, education, recreation, youth development, arts and culture, environment, animal-related, faith-based, and community development. Input was also sought from government and business (for-profit) representatives.

The SCAN Steering Committee anticipates that this report could be useful to program developers, service providers, policy makers, community leaders, grant writers, researchers, funders, and the general public.

## Data Collected

The results of SCAN are based on data from a variety of primary and secondary sources including:
- Existing community data from local, state and national sources (e.g., the Census).
- Interviews and surveys with 125 key informants who represented a broad spectrum of agencies and organizations providing human services in Monroe County.
- Household telephone surveys conducted with the help of the Indiana University Public Opinion Laboratory.  Over 300 households answered questions about their experiences with housing problems, education, economic needs, social and public safety concerns, environmental quality issues and community strengths, and whether these presented a "major challenge", "minor challenge" or "no challenge" to them.
- Client interviews with individuals who may not have telephone service or speak English.  The household instrument was used with clients at several agencies in the community. Forty-two people participated, including one group of Spanish-speaking individuals.

## Analysis and Results

The numerical and narrative data were examined using the appropriate methods.  These results are presented here in ten *Community Challenges and Assets* sections, followed by a section on the challenges and strengths of local nonprofit organizations.

The complete version of SCAN includes the *Report* and the *Supplement.*  Each section of the *Report* contains:

- A description of the challenge or issue.
- Fast Facts and other references to pertinent statistics and secondary sources of information in the Statistical Supplement.
- Details about the scope and nature of the population(s) being affected, impact on the community, trends, and an analysis of the data from the various SCAN instruments and from secondary sources.
- Examples of existing community efforts.
- Starting points for further investigation, direction, action, and policy.

Charts and tables in each section of the full report show data from all the households responding to the telephone survey, and compare it to sub-groups including households without students, and households making a certain income level (below $15,000 and below $25,000).  These income levels are useful for discussions of service eligibility based on Federal measures for determining poverty.  Using more recent, complex measures of poverty (including that of the Indiana Coalition for Housing and Homelessness Issues [ICHHI]), the Research Committee developed a "low income" category for households that fell below a certain level of income based on their size and composition.

These sections are followed by an analysis and discussion of the human services nonprofit sector in Monroe County, examples of community indicators, and suggested goals and strategies.

The *Supplement* is a reference tool for policy makers and grant developers that contains maps, Census data and other useful statistics for Monroe and surrounding counties in the newly expanded Bloomington Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).  Each item includes the source and/or web address to allow the user to access the most current information, including any updates that may have occurred after SCAN was printed.  The on-line version of SCAN, available at www.bloomington.in.us/~scan contains links to these sites and a downloadable copy of the *Report* (including individual chapters) and this *Executive Summary*.

## Community Challenges and Assets–An Overview

Ten topical sections present the most prevalent and urgent areas of need identified by the participants of SCAN.  Several are key underlying contributors to low income, poverty and related challenges that are faced by nearly a quarter of the households in Monroe County.  All are significant for their impact on quality of life for Monroe County residents:

- Educational Attainment
- Employment
- Affordable Housing
- Health Care and
- Vulnerable Populations
- Meeting Basic Needs
- Household Economics and Poverty
- Youth Development
- Rights and Personal Safety
- Community Engagement

Addressing the challenges presented in SCAN is critical to achieving a higher quality of life for our community and will require an intentional, respectful and coordinated effort on the part of all individuals and all sector of our community – business, government, and nonprofit, including faith-based organizations.

Naturally, not every aspect of human service delivery emerged as an unmet need in this study. In many areas, human services are being delivered at a level sufficient to satisfy the most pressing needs. This is not to suggest that funding and other resources should be shifted from these functioning areas to areas that are presently underserved.  This could have severe consequences for programs that are working effectively.  On the other hand, current assets can only be stretched so far. In the face of declining resources from traditional funding sources, greater ingenuity, fresh resources and a long-term coordinated vision and community-wide plan will be required.

## Educational Attainment–Creating Opportunities & Removing Barriers

A lack of education and continued skill development beyond the high school level is directly linked to a lower income, which in turn, is one of the root causes of poverty and related challenges faced by individuals and families in our community.  Increased education is vital to "breaking the cycle" from one generation of a family to the next.  Effective partnerships among all three sectors – nonprofit human service providers, government and business - will be required to address the challenges and barriers.

- The 2000 US Census showed 25% of the adult population in the MCCSC School district and 39% of the RBBS School district with a high school degree or GED as their highest level of education.
- In 2002 the Monroe County public school graduation rate for 12th graders was 90.7% (Indiana 91.1%)
- A third of the survey households with an income level of $15,000 or below have not completed high school or the equivalent; 18% of households with an income level of $25,000 or below have not completed high school.
- Respondents with a lower level of educational attainment were twice as likely to report major problems paying for basic needs, including food, clothing, utilities and keeping the car running.  They also reported greater difficulty "finding a job that pays enough to meet the family's basic needs."

**The Challenge**
Our community has excellent formal and informal resources for post-secondary education, including strong technology-based learning options.  Adult Education programs offer language skills, basic skills, and GED programs to improve employability.
- Low-income adults who are interested in furthering their education often face barriers including difficulty obtaining financial aid or loans because of a poor credit history, finding transportation or affordable child care to allow them to attend classes, and accessing computers to take on-line classes at times that don't conflict with work and family responsibilities.
- The children or youth of parents in low-income households often have increased absenteeism from school, impacting their own educational attainment.  Some find themselves relocating frequently, changing schools and losing positive adult mentoring relationships.
- There are often waiting lists for GED and ESL programs. Providers of the Spanish-language GED programs estimate that they are meeting about 75% of the needs of teens and 20% of other Latinos.

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*Success Story: Award-winning programs at several social service agencies, including Middle Way House and Stone Belt Center have made adult education, together with job and life skills development, a core portion of their mission. Some provide consultation to businesses on supporting and integrating their clients into the workforce.*

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## Employment:   Supporting those Entering or Making a Transition

Economic resources and opportunities can be a key determinant of quality of life. Having a satisfying, well-paying job allows individuals and families to pay for basic needs like food, shelter and health care, or to take advantage of opportunities for additional learning, recreation and culture.

Insufficient earnings and the weak national, state and local economies have put a serious financial strain on many households. Local social service providers are reporting an increase in requests for basic needs assistance at a rate they cannot meet.  Many of the requests come from individuals who are employed, but can't keep up with the increased costs of living for their families.

Individuals who are looking for a job or trying to find a better-paying job may face difficulties. Many of the available positions are either higher-skill, higher-paying jobs for which they many not be currently qualified, or low-skill, low-paying jobs which still do not pay enough to make ends meet.  Many trying to enter or make a transition in the workplace might need support services, including technical and life skills development, technology training, help with overcoming language barriers, child care assistance, transportation, and more. Several social service agencies and other organizations in the community have excellent programs for employer and employee support services and business creation.

**The Challenge**
Low household earnings make it difficult for families to make ends meet, and contributes to a high local poverty rate.

- The Monroe County per capita personal income (annual, 2001) was $25,302, with a median household income of $33,311 (2000), ranking 87th (of 92) in the state [Indiana $41,567].
- In 2002, Monroe County had a total employment of 61,030; the July 2003 unemployment rate is 3.1% (Indiana, 5.4%).  Yet, our poverty rate (2000) is 18.9%; the highest in Indiana and roughly double the state average.   The poverty rate for children under 18 is 11.8%, placing us 35th highest in the state [Indiana 11.7%].
- For 29% of the survey respondents, "finding a job that pays enough to meet the family's basic needs" was a major or minor problem. Households defined as "low income" (by the ICHHI-type standards) indicated that 25% have a major problem and 38% have a minor problem.
- Among those who are not full-time students, 26% reported an income of $25,000 or less.
- Of those who were interviewed at the service provider locations, 70% had incomes below $15,000. Many of these individuals are dependent on social security and/or disability payments as their primary income.
- There is a lack of coordination among job development providers who serve different populations.
- Employee benefits, including affordable health insurance, are not available to all who need it.

*Success Story*: *Hire Potential Indiana is a business led entity designed to inform employers about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities and the resources available to them.  It is a collaboration among employers, state agencies and local providers, including Options for Better Living.*

## Affordable Housing

Housing in Monroe County, especially in Bloomington, continues to be a major expense for many individuals and families, requiring a disproportionately high percentage of their income for rent or mortgage payments. For Monroe County, 56.5% of rental households spend over 30% of their household income on rent.  Housing options in outlying areas of the county may be more modestly priced, but are further away from employment and critical services.

Other common housing needs include maintenance assistance and the installation of mobility-assistance devices such as grab bars and ramps; and assistance to families that are trying to move into a rental home or apartment, but do not have the additional initial money for a security deposit and advance rent.

**The Challenge**
- The 2002 median value of a house is $113,100; the median rent is $560.  Both place us 10th highest (of 92 counties) in the state.
- There are 20,095 persons in Monroe County below 100% of the federal poverty level (18.9%, 2000 Census); 37,734 below 200% of the federal poverty level (35.5%).
- Difficulty paying the rent or mortgage was one of the more common financial problems reported—30% for all survey households and 47% for survey households (non-student) making less than $25,000 a year.
- Social service agency clients are live in housing that needs major repairs (37%) and does not have enough room for the people who live there (28%).
- Paying for utility bills was a major problem for 20% of households with annual incomes of less than $25,000, and 33% of households with incomes below $15,000.
- There is a shortage of available housing stock for low-income individuals, with extended waiting periods for Section 8 housing and utility assistance.  Affordable housing is needed on established public transportation routes.
- Income eligibility guidelines limit the type and amount of assistance that Township Trustees and social service organizations can provide.
- Neighborhoods with traditionally affordable older housing stock have been rehabilitated to increase their desirability and, in turn, their value or rental and purchase cost.

*Success Story: Habitat for Humanity has an active program for affordable home ownership. It has expanded its homeowner education classes to include a long-term financial class and a 6-month class on finances.  To qualify for a Habitat home, families must be between 25% and 70% of the median income for Monroe County.*

*Success Story: The Housing and Neighborhood Development (HAND) Department of the City of Bloomington provides a number of affordable housing programs, including programs to do repairs to owner-occupied homes and rental units.  HAND also provides assistance for emergency repairs and to modify homes for accessibility issues, and budget and credit counseling for homeownership.*

## Health Care

Monroe County is fortunate to have excellent health care resources. Those individuals who can afford private healthcare or who have access to health insurance, Medicare or Medicaid, are able to utilize many of these services. But there are many individuals and families in the community who need health-related services, but cannot afford them. Many of the uninsured or underinsured who access services find they can't pay health-related bills, and thereby endanger their credit. The cost of insuring employees rose by as much as 35% for some employers in 2002.

**The Challenge**
- Many local providers feel strongly that access to health care and health education are needed to break the cycle of poverty, and call for a continuum of care to treat the whole patient. They also believe that the schools should be more active in health education.
- Including Medicare and Medicaid, close to 90% of those surveyed had health insurance. About 81% of those with incomes less than $15,000 had insurance. Of the provider clients surveyed, 47% had insurance. For those who did not have health insurance among the general respondent population, the primary reasons given were "cost" (48%), "not offered at work" (19%), and "personal choice" (16%).
- Even individuals with health insurance reported difficulties paying for needed physician's visits, prescription medications, dental care, vision care, and family counseling. For households with incomes below $25,000, and $15,000, meeting these expenses was even more of a challenge:

| Difficulty paying for… | Doctor's visits | Prescriptions | Dental Care | Vision Care | Family Counseling |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| All Households | 22% | 25% | 23% | 23% | 12% |
| Households, inc < $25,000 | 44% | 46% | 41% | 44% | 30% |
| Households, inc < $15,000 | 52% | 62% | 62% | 58% | 40% |

- Anxiety, stress and depression were an issue for 37% of the general households surveyed, 50% of those making less than $25,000, 57% of those earning less than $15,000 and almost three-quarters (73%) of the provider clients surveyed.

Other challenges for community health include:
- Providing services to those suffering with mental health conditions, many of whom are living without needed counseling, psychiatric services, medications or other supports.
- Meeting the needs of substance abusers through prevention and treatment.
- Helping the elderly, those suffering from mental health conditions, and others pay for prescriptions .
- Expanding resources for adult day care and respite care, geriatric case management and services to help elders remain independent.
- Instituting more health and wellness programs, and expanding free/reduced dental & vision care.
- Providing more free and reduced clinics, including prenatal care.

*Success Story*: A bright spot in the area of health care access is the enrollment of many local children in the Hoosier Healthwise program, managed by the City of Bloomington Community and Family Resources Dept.

## Vulnerable Populations

Some populations in the community share common characteristics that make them more susceptible to "falling through the cracks". Three such groups are the elderly, people with disabilities, and young children. All three groups are vulnerable to financial constraints, a lack of available resources and services, and insufficient public awareness of their situations. All three often find it difficult to advocate for, or provide for all of their needs themselves, and must rely on others for at least some support services. Each group, in turn, also faces unique challenges.

Other at-risk populations in our community include the children and families experiencing poverty, the growing number of Spanish-speaking individuals, those suffering from mental health issues, teens, individuals who are HIV positive and are dealing with AIDS, and transients.

### The Challenge
*THE ELDERLY* may find themselves facing new challenges including fighting a chronic disease or acute illness, becoming socially isolated and lonely, and trying to live on a fixed income. Many are forced to leave lifetime residences that are now too large and challenging for them to take care of, or do not have the physical accommodations that would allow them to stay instead of moving in with family or friends, or to an institution.

About 9% percent of Monroe County's population is over 65 (11,074 in 2000); 8% of those surveyed reported having an elderly person as part of their household.

Needed services include an emergency home repair program, in-home help with housekeeping and meal preparation, nutrition advice, and assistance with home modification for elderly with disabilities. More hot lunches are needed for the homebound. Affordable medications are also an issue, as is prescription delivery in outlying areas.

Many elderly can no longer drive and need transportation services to shop for food and household needs, access health services, and engage in community activities.

*Success Story: Area 10 Agency on Aging serves the elderly and disabled, providing in-home services and some transportation through the Rural Transit System. The agency also advocates for the needs of the elderly in Monroe and Owen Counties and runs the Endwright Center where senior citizens have the opportunity to participate in exercise programs and social activities.*

*INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES* vary in their need for support services to achieve and maintain independence. Services can be costly, and many agencies and consumers are struggling with tightening budgets.  Current gaps in service include the need for additional in-home assistance and transportation. There are a lack of advocates to help with finances, appointments, doctors, and transportation. To deal with cost and resource constraints, agencies may rely heavily on volunteers who already have busy schedules. Also, people with disabilities are still often hampered by public discomfort and misunderstanding of their capabilities.

- Of those with a disabled household member, 4% found finding transportation for that person to be a major problem; about 10% reported it to be a minor problem. Slightly more than 20% said that finding

services for a household member with a disability was a major problem; 13% said it was a minor problem.  Transportation was a greater challenge for low-income individuals.

- Families who are providing care for a person with disabilities need respite services for a at least several hours a week. At this time, few families are able to access such services.
- Some people with disabilities are not receiving the medical services they need due to a lack of funding or mechanisms for helping them gain access.

*Success Story: People and Animal Learning Services (PALS) is a therapeutic horse back riding program for children, teens and adults with physical, mental, and cognitive disabilities. It collaborates with other providers, and offers a limited number of scholarships.*

*YOUNG CHILDREN* need good nutrition, health care and positive learning experiences from birth.  Children born into a family already struggling with unemployment, stretched resources, stress and depression, and even substance abuse are often at risk for hunger, inadequate health care, lack of stimulating play and learning activities, unstable surroundings, and even neglect or abuse in severe cases.  It is critical for parents with young children who are trying to improve their education or re-enter the workforce to have access to quality, affordable child care.

- Finding reliable, quality, affordable child care is one of the greatest barriers to women obtaining and keeping a job, or furthering their education.  Day care makes it possible for both parents to work, thereby increasing the family's economic well-being. The recent state fiscal crisis has led to cuts in the voucher programs that many relied on to help pay for day care.
- About 38% of respondents had difficulty finding affordable day care for the children in their household.  Finding day care during the work hours needed was more of a challenge; 53% reported this as a minor problem.
- Finding transportation to get children in the household to day care is a challenge with 77% reporting this as a minor problem.

*Success Story: The Monroe County Step Ahead Council works with Child Care Services and other community organizations to provide health and development screening for young children.*

*Success Story: Several area churches have collaborated on a volunteer program to provide in-home "helping-hand" type services, companionship and shopping assistance to home-bound elderly.*

## Meeting Basic Human Needs–Emergency Shelter, Hunger & Clothing

Shelter, food and clothing are basic human needs. Individuals or families may need emergency shelter as a result of a natural disaster or fire, a family crisis, or homelessness. Individuals experiencing homelessness often have a history of multiple, accumulated problems that can include chemical addictions, mental illness and emotional health issues, physical health issues, a lack of education, and limited job skills. A shortage of affordable housing creates an even greater challenge for the homeless.

There is a well-coordinated network of agencies serving hunger in the community, although the need is growing as more families are struggling to make ends meet. Many children in the local schools are eligible for the free and reduced lunch program, but may experience hunger during the summer months.

A number of resources exist to supply individuals and families with basic clothing at little or no cost. Several faith-based groups and social service provide vouchers to local thrift shops.

**The Challenge**
- Local emergency sheltering organizations believe that only about 20%-25% of the need is being met, and there is a waiting list. The community does not have enough facilities for emergency family shelter.
- In 2002, the Community Kitchen provided 128,281 meals including over 11,000 summer breakfasts; one third of the meals were provided to children under 18. The poverty rate for children under 18 in Monroe County is 11.8% (35th highest in the state).
- The need for food assistance is strongly related to income. Survey households making less than $25,000 had a problem paying for food (39%) and 23% had sought emergency or supplemental food assistance. Households making less than $15,000 had a greater problem paying for food (43%) and 34% had sought emergency or supplemental food assistance.
- Additional free food pantries and targeted food pantries are needed, including pantries to serve the elderly. These additional pantries must be evenly distributed geographically, since many individuals in need of food have transportation limitations.
- When asked if finding money to buy needed clothing and shoes was an issue, 5% of the general population surveyed said it was a major problem; 16% said it was a minor problem. But, about half of the "low income" households have difficulty paying for needed clothing and shoes.

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*Success Story*: *The Hoosier Hills Food Bank (HHFB) distributes food to almost 100 provider agencies, food pantries and soup kitchens, including Community Kitchen and Monroe County United Ministries. The HHFB Meal Share food recovery program recaptures usable food from area restaurants and institutions like Indiana University and Bloomington Hospital. Mother Hubbard's Cupboard redistributes organic, natural foods along with nutrition information and garden education.*

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*Success Story*: *The Shalom Center was started as a partnership among social service providers and the faith community to provide homeless individuals with a place to build job skills, and have a physical address, telephone number and email address while seeking employment.*

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## Household Economic Issues and Poverty

A growing number of individuals and families in Monroe County are facing economic challenges. Many of our families are financially well-off, but there is a growing gap between the "haves" and "have-nots". About a quarter of our population is either living in poverty or is at serious economic risk. There are a variety of reasons that families find themselves in poverty -- high housing costs, lack of adequate education or job skills, illness, or disrupted family situations. Other challenges may include mental health issues, physical disabilities, or addictions to alcohol and illegal drugs. However, the situation that most community members find particularly disturbing is the increasing numbers of employed two-parent families struggling to make ends meet.

Local township trustees and community social service agencies reported increases in the demand for supplemental food and help with utilities, clothing, medical bills and rent. "Finding a job that pays enough to make ends meet," and "paying for rent or mortgage" were the two most prevalent economic challenges for families identified through SCAN. This was followed closely by paying for prescription medications and dental and vision care, even among families with health insurance. Many families who could benefit from some additional support are not eligible for services because their incomes are not low enough to qualify under the federal eligibility guidelines of "poverty".

**The Challenge**
- The median household income (2000) for Monroe County is $33,311, placing us low (87th of 92 counties) in the state. We had 401 families receiving TANF in 2001 (16th in state), and 4,423 Food Stamp recipients (17th in state).
- Finding a job that pays enough to meet basic family needs was a problem for 29% of the respondents. For households with incomes below $25,000, 44% found this to be a problem.
- About 30% of the respondents had difficulty paying the rent or mortgage; this was significantly higher for households with lower incomes (47% for those earning less than $25,000).
- For 22% of the households, paying the utility bills was a challenge; it was difficult for 46% making less than $25,000.
- About 17% of the households had difficulty paying for food; this was the case for 39% of those earning less than $25,000.
- Households earning less than $25,000 needed emergency or supplemental food assistance (23%), had difficulty paying for clothing and shoes (47%), and found it challenging to keep the car running (58%).
- Around 45% of those making less than $25,000 had a problem affording needed legal help.
- About 25% had challenges finding affordable day care.

> ***Success Story:*** *A variety of social service providers, the City and County, other government agencies and the township trustees' offices provide assistance to families experiencing poverty. Some agencies, like the Salvation Army and MCUM, provide services on a sliding fee scale basis. The IRIS Manual contains a comprehensive listing by service area. First Call for Help [334-8393] is a telephone referral hot line for individuals needing assistance.*

# Youth Development

Monroe County is fortunate to have a wealth of productive opportunities and resources available to young people outside of school. These include formal after school activities, recreational activities and classes at local agencies, libraries, parks, museums, and music and art centers. Indiana University and Ivy Tech provide cultural enrichment opportunities as well. The school corporations and the Chamber of Commerce have school-to-work programs and internships that provide some students with valuable work experience. Many faith-based organizations also have youth development activities. Through the Lilly Endowment, CAPE is sponsoring asset-building projects by a number of community youth-serving agencies.

Research shows that youth who are involved in activities with caring adult role models and mentors are more likely to complete school, do better academically, make healthier life choices, and engage in fewer destructive activities.  Education and participation in productive activities can help "break the cycle" of persistent poverty.  Special efforts should be made to reach out to youth and families in crisis, to those who are underserved, to those who are at-risk, and to remove or mitigate barriers to participation and achievement.

**The Challenge**
- Not all youth are able to access these opportunities equally because of associated costs, transportation problems, or parents who do not have time to take them to classes, lessons or sports.
- Youth living in households experiencing socio-economic ills may suffer from a lack of basic necessities (food, sleep), or be subject to the effects of anxiety, stress, and other unhealthy behaviors and choices.
- Truancy, involvement with the juvenile justice system, and other self-destructive behaviors can further alienate youth from the people and activities that could help them follow a more productive course.
- Lower-income families had problems finding affordable after-school programs for children (34%) and recreational activities for teenagers (29%).
- Many youth-serving agencies felt that they would benefit from enhanced communication among their organizations.
- There is a shortage of affordable after-school activities and tutoring, especially between the hours of 3 pm and 6 pm.
- Some would like to see more activities for youth ages 13 - 18, including apprenticeship and internship opportunities with businesses and the arts community.

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*Success Story*: The YMCA provides youth activities and educational opportunities that promote a healthy lifestyle and a positive attitude, as well as preschool services and health-related parenting classes.

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*Success Story*: The Boys & Girls Club offers a range of supervised after-school activities including tutoring and access to computers for homework and skill building.

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# Rights and Personal Safety

The level of respect that citizens have for each other can be reflected in a variety of behaviors. Data was collected on the occurrence of neighborhood property crime and vandalism, and the availability of legal assistance. Individuals were also asked about their perceptions of community issues including domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, and protecting civil rights.

Key informants frequently discussed the need to address the large backlog of individuals awaiting trial, and to provide alternative forms of providing justice and sentencing. Many believed that mediation services could help deal with some court cases more effectively and efficiently. Some issues, especially family matters, could be settled outside of court, saving tax dollars and court time.

**The Challenge**
- Domestic violence and sexual assault were both perceived to be an issue by about 10% of the general households and 19% of those with incomes below $15,000.
- Child neglect was perceived to be an issue by 11% of the general households and 29% of those with incomes below $15,000.  About 10% of the respondents thought the under-reporting of child abuse was a problem.
- Teenage pregnancy was perceived to be a problem by about 10% for general households and those with incomes below $15,000.
- The 42 provider clients that were interviewed at the four social service agency locations tended to perceive the three areas listed above as greater community issues than did the general public.
- There is insufficient legal help available for low income individuals. There are some free legal services, but they cannot keep up with the demand.

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*Success Story: The Rise, administered by Middle Way House, provides a safe place for victims of domestic violence to rebuild their lives and develop employment skills.*

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# Civic Engagement and Voluntarism

Recent studies (United Way of America, 2000) have looked at ways to measure a community's "state of caring" through factors like voluntarism, charitable giving and active participation in civic activities. Questions about volunteering, neighborhoods and community strength were included in SCAN.

Efforts within the community have build a sense of neighborhood and have increased acceptance of the unique contributions of all area residents.

### The Challenge

- The community scored well on questions related to promoting good relations among all citizens, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity or culture, and encouraging participation in the political process. Lower scores were found on measures of how well individuals and various community groups work cooperatively on community concerns.  About 40% of those responding believe that community leaders do not exhibit respect for each other.
- While 99% of the respondents believe it is important for a community to have a vision and set of common goals, only 51% believe that Monroe County has one.
- About 69% of survey respondents considered themselves to be part of a neighborhood, 29% did not.
- Only 36% of the individuals completing the survey reported that they regularly volunteered.  The 64% who do not regularly volunteer provide a variety of reasons for not doing so. The main reason given is "lack of time" (46%).
- Interestingly, just over 45% of the clients regularly do volunteer work, more than the general household populations surveyed (36%).
- Continuing efforts are needed to work with the growing Spanish-speaking population to deal with poverty, cultural needs, integration, education issues and health services for individuals without insurance or documentation.

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*Success Story*: The faith-based community provides a variety of services to support culturally-diverse populations and low-income families. The downtown churches house the Hispanic Center (Trinity Church), a Family Resource Center (First Presbyterian Church), and the Shalom Center and Middle Way FoodWorks (First United Methodist Church).

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*Success Story*: The Bloomington Volunteer Network is recruiting volunteers who are bilingual.  The Monroe County Public Library has been adding Spanish-language materials and including Spanish speakers in the VITAL program.

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# The Human Services Nonprofit Sector in Monroe County

**What We Found**
The use of operational policies and technical tools is an indicator of the management capacity of nonprofits. Organizations were asked to indicate if they had or used 23 different policies and tools, ranging from formal board and personnel policies to technology access. Where possible, the full report compares local data with a statewide study (Gronbjerg, 2003).

1. Organizations are using information and communication technology to streamline data management, and communicate internally and externally more efficiently. A majority of the organizations surveyed currently have access to email (94%), computers for key staff (93%), direct Internet access for key staff (90%), and a website (85%). Bloomington nonprofits appear to be much more technology oriented on every measure than other nonprofits in the state.

2. Local nonprofit organizations are using formal policies in management and decision making. Local organizations were strong in most areas, with the exception of formal volunteer recruitment and training programs, and Board assessment and succession.

3. A majority of nonprofit organizations have sound reporting practices and use audited financial statements and written annual reports.

**The Challenges Facing Nonprofits**
Organizations were asked to respond to a list of 20 potential organizational challenges in planning their activities or managing key aspects of their operations, and rate each as a "major challenge", "minor challenge" or "no challenge". In the full report, the items have been grouped by category, with comparative data from the 2003 statewide survey provided for comparison if available.

1. Demand for services has increased. Most organizations, 60%, reported a moderate or significant increase. Many organizations expressed severe frustration over the growing need seen in the community, due in part to current local and national economic conditions.

2. Availability of some funding sources has decreased. At the same time need is increasing, there is an accompanying difficulty accessing needed resources, as federal and state dollars have declined. Finding adequate funding was the number one challenge for nonprofits. More than 70% of the organizations said funding was a major challenge; 21% said it was a minor challenge.

3. Retaining staff and long-term volunteers is difficult. High staff turnover is a challenge for many agencies (a major challenge for 23% of the organizations). Contributing factors can include heavy work loads, a stressful work environment, low compensation, limited opportunities for advancement, and a lack of professional development opportunities.

4. Participation in partnerships and networks is important, but can be time consuming. Participation in community groups, partnerships, coalitions and similar networks can be important to serving clients more effectively and building professional skills and experiences, but it can also be a significant draw on resources, both human and financial. About two thirds of the organizations reported staff and volunteers spending at least some time on these activities; slightly more than half devoted some financial resources.

5. It is difficult for many directors to engage in effective public relations. Most do not have the time or the training. Public relations is seen as a major challenge for 30%, and a minor challenge for 58% of the participating organizations.

6. Many individual organizations lack the time or resources for strategic planning, networking, and evaluating program outcomes. These activities are critical to the long-term success and health of an organization, but many report operating in "survival mode". Time for strategic planning is a major challenge for 26%, and a minor challenge for 49%.   About 75% of the respondents view outcomes measurement as a major or minor challenge.

7. The community, including decision makers, are not always aware of the mission, services and program provided by nonprofits. While some members of the community are familiar with local human services, many others lack a working knowledge of agencies and the services they provide.

8. There is a need for more networking and true collaboration among providers. In addition to the benefits of improved communication, effective networking and collaboration could help to reduce competition while improving efficiency and helping resources go further. In some cases, this would require relinquishing "turf" in the interests of developing long-range holistic solutions to the community-wide issues identified in SCAN.

- About 85% of the participating organizations find being involved in big picture planning a challenge and 93% can't find enough time to work on broad changes impacting their service area.
- While many nonprofits reported an increased level of cooperation among organizations in the last 5-10 years, much of it out of necessity, a lack of cooperative efforts are reported between social service agencies and some key areas, including faith-based and government entities. Agencies also see a need for cooperative training in fundraising, sharing examples of best and poor practices, sharing event plans to avoid scheduling conflicts, and reducing unnecessary competition for the same grants.
- Increased cooperation could help to build awareness of common issues facing local providers and clients. "There is no main forum or quarterly meeting to put all of the providers at the table."
- Organizations could also benefit by sharing professional development opportunities.

**The Human Service Community in Monroe County – Goals and Strategies**
Having a high quality of life in Monroe County is directly dependent on the existence of a coordinated and comprehensive human service network.   In the face of growing local demand and declining state and federal funding, it is imperative to use the information contained in SCAN and related studies to develop and implement a comprehensive, long-range human service plan that is consistent with a vision for our community.

Individuals representing all sectors of our community must continue to work together to develop effective means of communicating, building respect, exchanging quality information, optimizing available resources and capacities, and planning and cooperatively implementing programs and services that are consistent with community needs and goals.

**Copies of the Service Community Assessment of Needs [SCAN]
Report and Supplement are also available online at
www.bloomington.in.us/~scan.**

**For more information about SCAN, contact
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