

UNITED WAY OF BLAIR COUNTY

IMPACT FUNDING:

A COMMUNITY PLAN

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EVOLUTION OF OUR PLAN

One simple phrase, "Nothing has changed", started United Way of Blair County's Board of Directors looking at the possibility of change. It was time for us to research another way to invest our donors' contributions. We began by visiting other United Ways that had begun Impact Funding, researched the process of change and interviewed United Ways about their processes. Then we looked inward. Was United Way of Blair County ready for a change? Could the staff and the Board of Directors commit the time to drastically change the way we have done business? After all our research, it was decided that United Way of Blair County would move forward. United Way of York County Maine had the same characteristics as Blair County, the same size metro and similar community; and their process fit our community. We decided to follow their lead. In 2002, our journey to Impact Funding began.

There were multiple reasons for us to move toward Impact Funding. Channeling money from workplace campaigns to agencies had not sufficiently addressed our communities' problems. As mentioned in the previous paragraph the problems of Blair County had remained the same for years. Services were being provided but there had been no impact on the issues. The changing economic environment had increased social needs. Over the past several years, Blair County has lost major industrial jobs. United Way of Blair County was seen as a funder of agencies. We needed to become a community convener to bring together a variety of resources to address our community's needs. In light of our relationship with our volunteers, businesses and other human service organizations we were in a position to bring people and organizations together to address critical needs. With all this said, the primary reason for change was our donors were asking us to change. They want to see their contributions making a difference. They want their contributions directed to "Results That Matter."

As we began to develop our plan, we met with our member agencies during the summer of 2002. We let them know that United Way of Blair County would be moving to Impact Funding and would be developing Requests for Proposals (RFP) for future dollars. We talked about what Impact Funding meant and why we decided to change. We held two meetings to listen to their concerns and list their questions, so that as we proceeded, we could respond to them.

Change brings with it many questions. To begin answering these questions and mapping out our future, the Board of Directors met with Dr. Chuck Kormanski of Kormanski Consulting and Dr. Bill Engelbret of Penn State Altoona for a retreat Saturday, April 12, 2003 at the Sheetz Conference Center. From this retreat ten, (10) concerns were identified:

- It will be a challenge educating the community about our new direction.
- We will need to educate ourselves internally so that we can make the process work.
- We will need to develop strategies for raising funds.
- We will need to distribute our dollars for greater impact.
- We will need to ensure that United Way can measure the impact.
- It will be a challenge to create a new image.
- We will need to determine the needs of the community (not just the monetary needs).
- We will need more commitment from business leaders.
- We will need to obtain more media coverage.
- It will be a challenge to create and sustain a culture of change.

From this point, a New Direction Committee was formed to begin our strategic plan for Impact Funding. The first decision to be made was how to determine the community needs. A list of Community Connectors was developed and these people were contacted and invited to several nominal group interviews. At these meetings they were asked to list what they thought the community issues were. The list was prioritized and ranked. A survey was developed based on the information collected at all of the nominal group interviews. This survey was a part of our 2003 campaign. After the original survey, a committee, with the help of Dr. Kormanski, revised the information.

March 31, 2004 was the deadline for collecting data from the survey. Dr. Bill Engelbret of Penn State Altoona compiled the data and presented it to the newly named and reorganized Community Building Committee (formerly the New Direction Committee). From information gathered, four Focus Areas were identified:

- Job Related Issues
- Meeting Emergency Needs
- Nurturing Children and Youth
- Strengthening Families

Each Focus Area was led by Community Leaders skilled in that area with a team of 15 -20 experts that had experience and knowledge of the area. The task of each team was to define and analyze information and data within these focus areas, to identify and to prioritize issues and to develop a plan of work.

After 2 long years, our mission and direction had changed. That beginning marked a long-term process that would grow and develop as we did. We expected to address the identified issues for the next 3 -5 years knowing that change doesn't happen overnight. To have a sustained change we knew it would take time.

OUR PLAN PRESENTS VISION AND FOCUS

Historically, United Way of Blair County has used the funded agencies as our filter to let us know how they would provide services for the community. Impact Funding redirects our focus to deal with specific areas of community concerns. We listened to our community and found that families, children and youth, jobs and emergency needs were critical to them.

United Way of Blair County's Community Plan provides a foundation of information and ideas on which to build future action for addressing community issues. We fully expect these ideas to grow and further develop. The issues addressed in our plan are complex and will require long-term attention. We expect to continue working on the strategies outlined here for at least the next three years. The results of our efforts will not be easily or quickly measured; but we are committed to tracking them, continually sharing our progress with the community and constantly re-evaluating our work.

THE COMMUNITY PLAN CONTINUES TO EVOLVE (2007 – present)

Beginning in early 2007, The Blair County Human Services Office and the United Way of Blair County invited other key community leaders to once again join and support an effort to conduct a countywide needs assessment. It was once again time to identify community assets, identify targeted needs, and develop an action plan to fill those needs with the ultimate goal of improving the lives of all people in Blair County. The results of that assessment were released to the public in January of 2009, and work groups met to develop a Community Plan based on the results of that updated needs assessment.

The effort of identifying local needs and bringing people together to develop a plan will be an on-going community effort. All three local hospitals joined the needs assessment effort, and the partners formalized themselves as the Healthy Blair County Coalition. A new assessment was conducted in 2013. Groups were formed to develop plans to address the identified needs. United Way of Blair County worked with those workgroups and our Community Building Committee made slight modifications to our Community Plan in light of initial findings.

In July 2015, the Healthy Blair County Coalition (of which United Way of Blair County continues to be a part) began the process of gathering data once again for an updated assessment. Data was collected through a variety of methods including a random household survey, key informant survey, community economic needs assessment survey, service provider survey, associations survey, faith-based survey, healthcare provider interviews, and secondary indicator data. Data was collected through December 2015 and analyzed by the Healthy Blair County Coalition Data Analysis Sub-Committee. Based on the data collected, the updated Community Health Needs Assessment was finalized and published in June 2016. Primary need areas remain consistent with the needs identified in 2013.

The Community Building Committee of the United Way of Blair County considered its current plan, the focus areas of United Way Worldwide and the findings of the most recent needs assessment and refined their plan to focus on the following vision/focus areas:

INCOME:

"We envision a Blair County where individuals and families attain financial independence and sustainability."

MEETING EMERGENCY NEEDS:

"We envision a Blair County where there is a safety net for those experiencing emergencies."

EDUCATION:

"We envision a Blair County where community members of all ages will have access to educational opportunities and experiences."

HEALTH:

"We envision a Blair County where community members of all ages are physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy."

INCOME

VISION

"We envision a Blair County where individuals and families attain financial independence and sustainability."

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT #1 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

ISSUE: Awareness

There are many resources, activities and programs available in our community that provides education and training opportunities. However, the awareness of these initiatives to the general public is limited at best.

Current Key Finding:

- Blair County has abundant resources, activities, and programs available that provide education and training opportunities.

Desired Objectives:

- A. Increase public awareness and utilization of community/county resources for job training and education.
- B. Facilitate job training and education initiatives to match the economic vision with current and future job trends of the county.

Initial Strategies:

- A. Develop strategies and initiatives to involve local, state, and federal government officials in training and retraining programs.
- B. Establish initiatives that bring together business leaders and workforce, development professionals to enhance collaboration for planning resource acquisition and program effectiveness.

ISSUE: Lack of education and training on basic budgeting practices for children and adults

Current Key Findings:

- There are limitations on access per program.
- Utilities and health issues impact budgets.
- Some people are refused budget counseling.

Desired Objective: All children and adults in Blair County are provided with basic budgeting courses.

Initial Strategies:

- A. Identify who provides basic budgeting and publicize the programs.
- B. Develop a universal curriculum for youth and adults.
- C. Provide incentives for attending training.
- D. Be inclusive of rural areas.
- E. Identify those in need of budget counseling.
- F. Develop a plan for those in severe need (bankrupt).
- G. Develop a comprehensive plan linking clients with agencies and agencies with other agencies.

MEETING EMERGENCY NEEDS

VISION

“We envision a Blair County where there is a safety net for those experiencing emergencies.”

PRIMARY SERVICE RECIPIENTS: Anyone experiencing a crisis or emergency situation

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT #1 BASIC NEEDS

ISSUE: Lack of 24/7 emergency shelters and education on availability.

Current Key Findings:

- Shelters in Blair County are full.
- Days spent in shelters are limited to 30.
- Service is often segmented by gender.
- Service is segmented by need.
- There is limited accessibility for people with disabilities.
- There is limited access based on client's history, i.e. criminal background.

Desired Objective: Blair County will have a sufficient number of "accessible" emergency shelter beds 24/7 for men, women, and children.

Initial Strategies:

- A. Educate and promote to the community and agencies what is available.
- B. Secure funding for new shelters or expand existing shelters.
- C. Ensure that all shelters are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) approved.
- D. Ensure that there is accessible emergency/crisis transportation.
- E. Provide a network for gaining access to necessary household items following a disaster.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT #2

ACCESS TO SERVICES: Information & Referral, Affordability/Access, 24/7 Response, Physical Access/Barriers

ISSUE: Lack of education and communication on how to access emergency services, with special focus on which agency should be called first.

Current Key Findings:

- In some situations a person has to have termination notices or eviction notices before they can receive help.
- Clients have to be "at the bottom" before they can find help.
- Confidentiality can be a hindrance when agencies try to help.
- Clients call multiple agencies getting frustrated trying to find the "right fit."
- Agencies themselves don't know what services other agencies provide.

Desired Objective: The one-call information center (PA 2-1-1) will provide resources and maintain an updated website/database that Blair County residents can use to find help so that providers/agencies can coordinate and refer services accurately and in a timely manner.

Initial Strategies:

- A. Coordinate and keep up-to-date service data from "help agencies" and advocate for dollars to fund the

- technology for coordination (2-1-1 system).
- B. Continue to educate the public and agencies about the information system.

ISSUE: Safe Shelter

Safe shelter is a place where individuals who leave home due to a family conflict can go for a brief stay. It is easily accessible and provides supervision and security until such time as they can return home or find a safe, alternate, longer-term living arrangement.

Current Key Findings:

- Over 1,000 youth were provided with non-residential services at the teen shelter from 2006 to 2015.
- Over 4,000 hours of group counseling was provided at the Teen Shelter from 2006 to 2015.
- There were over 3,000 teen hotline calls from 2006 to 2015.
- Reasons for youth seeking shelter were family/child conflict, issues with step-parents, parent refusing housing and homelessness.
- From July 2015 through June 2016, 181 individuals were provided shelter at the Family Shelter (57 men, 71 women, and 53 children).
- From July 2015 through June 2016, 621 individuals were turned away from the Family Shelter due to the shelter being full and another 270 individuals were turned away because they did not meet the criteria for admission to the shelter.

Desired Objective:

- A. Assure that runaway and/or homeless youth or youth and adults at risk due to family conflict have access to the services and support they need.

Initial Strategies:

- A. Fund programs that provide conflict resolution skills to youth and adults at risk and their families.
- B. Fund programs that support runaway and/or homeless youth or youth/adults at risk due to family conflict.

**ESSENTIAL ELEMENT #3
DISASTER/EMERGENCY SERVICES**

This element is defined as follows: Education/Training, Preparedness/Response/Recovery, Emergency Response Services, 911/211, Technology/Contacting, Police/Fire/Ambulance/Trauma. There needs to be collaboration at all tiers and needs to improve second-tier response.

ISSUE: Lack of awareness of the process to identify individuals with special needs in emergency situations (medical, age, disability).

Current Key Findings:

- HIPPA regulations prevent emergency personnel from knowing if there are people with medical problems, disabilities or elderly in homes.
- There continues to be a lack of knowledge about available emergency services.

Desired Objective: All people with special needs in Blair County will be able to be identified/notified in an emergency.

Initial Strategies:

- A. Have a media blitz to encourage people who will need special assistance in an emergency to register with the Emergency Registry Enrollment Program.

- B. Work with the existing disaster/emergency plans and 911.
- C. Collaborate with agencies to create a HIPPA-compliant release of information to list people with special needs.
- D. Coordinate with agencies who work with individuals who may be at risk.

ISSUE: Disaster Response

Desired Objective: All people will have access to food, shelter, and clothing in times of disaster.

Initial Strategies:

- A. Fund programs that provide food, shelter, and clothing to those experiencing disasters/emergencies..

EDUCATION

VISION

“We envision a Blair County where community members of all ages will have access to educational opportunities and experiences.”

PRIMARY SERVICE RECIPIENTS: All Blair County residents.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

We seek to make this vision a reality through these essential elements for residents of all ages:

- Children and youth have an ongoing relationship with a caring adult/older youth that promotes healthy beliefs and clear standards
- Safe places and activities where people of all ages can learn and grow
- Appropriate life-skills and job training opportunities

We have initially identified key aspects to assure access to educational opportunities and experiences for all individuals in Blair County. They are:

- Mentoring
- After-school activities
- Safe neighborhoods
- Childcare
- Appropriate life skills
- Job training opportunities

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT #1

CHILDREN AND YOUTH HAVE AN ONGOING RELATIONSHIP WITH A CARING ADULT/OLDER YOUTH THAT PROMOTES HEALTHY BELIEFS AND STANDARDS.

ISSUE: Mentoring

Mentoring is the purposeful creation of a caring relationship between an individual (other than a parent) and a child or youth that promotes healthy beliefs and standards by sharing new or mutual interests, taking part in activities together and/or providing ongoing support.

Current Key Findings:

- Behavioral Health Rehabilitative Services (BHRS) including Therapeutic Staff Support, Mobile Therapy, and Behavioral Specialist Consulting (offered by several providers in Blair County) served 991 youth in 2015.
- The Roaring Spring First Church of the Brethren offers a mentoring program for children and youth between the ages of 11-18 who are members of their congregation. Thirty-four youth are currently enrolled in this program.
- According to the results of the 2015 Pennsylvania Youth Survey, 21.1% of Blair County students (grades 6, 8, 10, and 12) reported being teased, called names, etc.
- Youth involved in Big Brothers/Big Sisters Program are less likely to be involved with drugs.

Desired Objectives:

- A. Increase the number of children and youth who are matched with an appropriate mentor.
- B. Create and/or expand mentoring opportunities throughout Blair County.

Initial Strategies:

- A. Fund mentoring programs with special attention given to programs that:
 - i. Extend existing programs to geographic areas within Blair County where need is identified, and/or
 - ii. Create a new mentoring program. or
 - iii. Fund programs which incorporate opportunities for children and youth to make a contribution to their community.
- B. Increase knowledge of and interest in mentoring for the purpose of recruiting mentors and identifying "mentees".

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT #2

SAFE PLACES AND ACTIVITIES WHERE YOUNG PEOPLE CAN LEARN AND GROW.

ISSUE: After-school activities (Elementary to High School)

After-school activities are critical for the positive emotional, social, mental and physical development of children and youth. These activities are especially important for children who may be left home alone without adult supervision. After-school activities may be school or community based and sponsored by individual schools, districts or community organizations. After-school includes activities that occur following a school day, during school vacation periods, including weekends or during the summer months.

Current Key Findings:

- According to the 2013 census, one in nine children age 5-14 spends after-school hours in a home without parents. 4.5 million children spend an average of 6.5 hours per week alone.
- Juvenile crime peaks right after school lets out, from approximately 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm.
- Research shows that due to transportation issues and the availability of facilities centrally located, schools should be increasingly utilized for after-school programs.

National surveys reveal that after-school programs:

- Contribute to raising students' self-confidence, increase aspirations and improve social skills.
- Improve academic performance and reduce "retain-in-grade" and special education needs.

In Blair County:

- According to the 2015 Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS), only 44.3% of Blair County students in grades 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th viewed their schoolwork as meaningful and important. Only 41.2% of students reported that they enjoyed being in school during the past year. 84% of students report that they feel safe at their school.
- According to the 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment and the PAYS 2015, Blair County has seen a decline in the percentage of youth engaging in alcohol, inhalants, cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, hallucinogens, methamphetamines, and ecstasy for lifetime use but an increase in use of marijuana and prescription drugs. Additionally, 54.3% of Blair County youth in grades 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th reported that they did not think youth who drank alcohol would be caught by police. 38.2% of youth think alcohol would be easy to get. In 2014-15, "1,621 individuals 12 years of age and older received drug and alcohol services and 2,159 individuals 12 years of age and older received treatment."
- The number of after-school activities varies widely in communities across the county. According to the PAYS 2015, 73.5% of Blair County students in grades 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th report participating in school-sponsored activities. 51.9% of students report participating in family-sponsored activities or hobbies, and 35.8% report participating in faith-based activities.
- According to the PAYS 2015, 21.1% of Blair County students in grades 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th reported being bullied (teased, called names, etc.). This rate of reported bullying is higher than the statewide reported percentage of 16.9%. The 2016 Blair County Community Health Needs Assessment reported results of the household survey as follows: 49% of respondents considered bullying a major/moderate issue in Blair County with approximately 27.5% reporting having children who were bullied or harassed.

Desired Objective: Increase the number and variety of after-school programs and/or increase participation in after-school programs throughout Blair County.

Initial Strategy:

- A. Fund proposals that
 - i. Expand current programming, or
 - ii. Implement new after-school programs.

ISSUE: Safe neighborhoods

Safe neighborhoods provide a secure, non-threatening environment where children and youth can play together and develop meaningful relationships within their community which promote healthy beliefs and behaviors.

Current Key Findings:

- According to the results of the 2016 Blair County Community Health Needs Assessment, “only slightly more than one-third (of survey respondents) gather together formally or informally to participate in activities” within their neighborhoods. “69% of survey respondents feel they have little or no opportunity to affect how things happen in their neighborhood.”

Desired Objective: Initiate and/or maintain programs and services that develop and sustain safe neighborhoods.

Initial Strategies:

- A. Fund initiatives/programs that support and sustain safe neighborhoods.

ISSUE: Childcare

Childcare that is accessible, affordable, plentiful and of high quality is vitally important for the thousands of children in Blair County whose parents or guardians work.

Current Key Findings:

- The number of licensed, quality childcare slots is significantly less than the number required by families in Blair County.
- The cost of childcare is prohibitive to many families. According to the 2016 Blair County Community Health Needs Assessment, 17.8% of respondents reported difficulty finding or affording care for their children. Support to assist families with their childcare expenses is limited and misses many families who truly need assistance.
- Childcare is not available in many geographic areas of the county where it is needed.
- Availability of childcare outside of traditional working hours (9 am -5 pm) and for some populations is very limited - infant care, shift care, night care and sick care are difficult to access.

Desired Objectives:

- A. Increase the number of licensed, quality childcare slots throughout Blair County.
- B. Increase the number of children from low and moderate-income families who receive subsidized childcare.

Initial Strategy:

- A. Fund one or more qualified non-profits to continue a current childcare program to create new childcare options or to expand the availability of childcare that provide developmentally appropriate curriculum in all areas of Blair County.
- B. Fund subsidized childcare slots for low and moderate-income families in one or more licensed childcare centers.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT #3 APPROPRIATE LIFE SKILLS

ISSUE: Life Skills

Appropriate life skills are vitally important for children, youth, and all members of the community to become productive well-functioning members of society who are vested in their family, school and community. These life skills include but are not limited to: Communication, Healthy Relationships, Self Sufficiency, Civic Awareness and Cultural Appreciation.

Current Key Findings:

- It is important for our children, youth, and all members of the community to comprehend the concepts and practices which enhance the health and well-being of themselves and others.
- Children, youth, and all members of the community need to demonstrate physical skills that lead to life-long participation in activities for fitness, enjoyment, and a sense of accomplishment.
- Children, youth, and all members of the community need to demonstrate a variety of social and decision-making skills that promote healthy, responsible, active living.

Desired Objective: Support efforts to develop life skills of our children, youth, and all members of the community in Blair County.

Initial Strategy:

- A. Fund existing or new programs that provide education and/or training to our children, youth, and community members of all ages in the following areas: Communication, Healthy Relationships, Financial Management, Home Management, Self-Sufficiency, Decision Making, Personal Hygiene, Parenting, Job Readiness, Literacy, Education, Civic Awareness, Cultural Appreciation and other related life skills.

ISSUE: Parenting and Relationship Skills

Programs and services should be offered to assist parents in learning the skills necessary to support their family members and increase their potential to improve their lives.

Current Key Findings:

- According to the 2016 Blair County Community Health Needs Assessment, “the teen birth rate for Blair County stands at 32, which is higher than for Pennsylvania at 27 (birth rate per 1,000 population). There were 89 teen births (ages 19 and under) in Blair County in 2013” (PA Department of Health).
- According to the 2016 Blair County Community Health Needs Assessment, the latest Reach and Risk Report indicates that Blair County children are at moderate-high risk of school failure. Risk factors such as living in economically stressed families, poor or no pre-natal care for the mother, parents with low educational levels, abuse and neglect, and entering a poorly performing school system lead to higher risk of being behind when entering school and higher risk of failing in school. Data indicates that 7,227 children fall into this high-risk category.
- 21.3% of youth (according to the PAYS 2015) report a willingness to use alcohol (“would like to try or use it” or “would use it any chance I got”).
- According to the PAYS 2015, 11.7% of Blair County students surveyed (6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grades) reported changing homes once or twice within 12 months, and 5.2% reported changing homes three or more times in the past three years.
- According to the PAYS 2015, 13.7% of Blair County students surveyed (6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grades) reported being worried they would run out of food at home due to money issues and 6.4% reported they had skipped meals because their family did not have enough money for food.

Desired Objectives:

- A. Increase measurable parenting skills through offering "best practice" parenting programs.

- B. Decrease the risk factors and increase the protective factors as described in the Pennsylvania Youth Survey – Blair County (<http://www.pccd.pa.gov/Juvenile-Justice/Pages/PAYS-for-2015---County-Reports.aspx>).
- C. Enhance the family's ability to support and nurture their members.

Initial Strategies:

- A. Offer mentoring and parenting programs in easily accessible areas.
- B. Include life skills training where there are already opportunities for parent communication.
- C. Support "best practice" and research-based programs that develop parenting and relationship skills.

HEALTH

VISION

“We envision a Blair County where community members of all ages are physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy.”

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

We seek to make this vision a reality by supporting the following essential elements for strong families and their individual members:

- A safe, supportive and stable nurturing environment in which families can thrive and grow.
- Physical, mental, and emotional health.
- Community involvement and social interaction.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT #1

A safe, supportive, and stable nurturing environment in which families can thrive and grow.

ISSUE: Violence and Abuse

Programs should address the prevention of family violence by and between adults as well as the support of programs, services and initiatives which assist victims and their families.

Current Key Findings:

- According to the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare as reported in the 2016 Blair County Community Health Needs Assessment, “the latest child abuse statistics (2014) indicate 432 reports of child abuse in Blair County with 56 being substantiated (13%). The total substantiated reports per 1,000 children is at 2.2% which is higher than the state percent at 1.2%.”
- 3.73% of the Blair County population (data found in 2016 Blair County Community Health Needs Assessment) reports being married with the spouse absent and 11% report being divorced. The divorce rate is higher than the state percentage of 9.59%.
- According to the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare as reported in the 2016 Blair County Community Health Needs Assessment, “there are 1,521 children in Blair County receiving in-home services through the child welfare system and 220 in foster care placement.”

Desired Objectives:

- A. Reduce the number of families in Blair County who are affected by violence and abuse.

Initial Strategies:

- A. Fund programs and initiatives that reduce the rate of violence and abuse in Blair County that are substantiated by community indicators.
- B. Support public education programs and forums around the objectives of the community organizations who are addressing this issue.

ISSUE: Lack of affordable, quality care for older adults. Families taking care of older members need to know about the services and supports that are available to them during time periods when they are working or needing time for other activities so that their older family member may have quality and safe respite care.

Current Key Findings:

- 2016 demographic data according to Claritas (January 2016) and reported in the 2016 Blair County Community Health Needs Assessment, 20.13% of Blair County's population is over 65. This is higher than the Pennsylvania percentage of 17.39%.

Desired Objectives:

- A. Increase family knowledge of how to choose adult care.
- B. Increase availability of affordable, quality care for older adults.

Initial Strategies:

- A. Review information on "best practices" for addressing the needs of older adults and implement those practices.
- B. Support community organizations addressing this issue.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT #2
Physical, mental, emotional health

ISSUE: Substance Abuse

Substance abuse is a serious problem in Blair County requiring prevention, intervention and treatment programs to address all forms of substance use disorders among adults and youth in our community and to support those with addictions and their families.

Current Key Findings:

- Substance abuse is considered a major health problem in Blair County.
- The continuum of treatment that exists in Blair County is: outpatient; psychiatric services; intensive outpatient; crisis stabilization; aftercare shelter and extended care. There are limits to the treatment that is available, especially for those who are uninsured.
- According to the 2016 Blair County Community Health Needs Assessment, data from our largest hospital emergency room indicated 1,840 cases from January 1, 2013 – April 30, 2015 that included a drug and alcohol reference. Approximately 442 of those cases presented as overdose/possible overdose.
- Blair Drug and Alcohol Partnerships (BDAP) reported (as documented in the 2016 Blair County Community Health Needs Assessment) that over 9,043 individuals in Blair County have substance abuse issues with only 7%-10% seeking services. "The demand rate in Blair County exceeds the national average."
- Blair HealthChoices data (as reported in the 2016 Blair County Community Health Needs Assessment) "shows an increase from 2012-2013 to 2014-2015 of individuals eligible for medical assistance and receiving drug and alcohol services. 2,159 individuals 12 years of age and older received treatment in 2014-2015.

Desired Objectives:

- A. Reduce the incident rate of substance abuse in Blair County.

Initial Strategies:

- A. Review and research SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) and CSAP (Center for Substance Abuse Prevention) website for "best practice" approaches at: www.samhsa.gov/capt.
- B. Support and initiate a variety of programs and initiatives that reduce the rate of substance use disorder in adults and youth in Blair County that are substantiated by community indicators.
- C. Support and initiate public education programs and forums around the need for a continuum of care of treatment for substance use disorders.
- D. Develop programs that respond to the needs identified in Blair County.
- E. Collaborate with the county and community organizations already planning for or addressing this issue.

ISSUE: Lack of available and affordable physical, mental, and dental care. Initiatives, programs and services which increase the availability, affordability and accessibility of physical, mental and dental care treatment to those who cannot afford to provide it for themselves and for whom no other assistance is available.

Current Key Findings:

- 5,628 individuals received Medicaid-paid outpatient mental health services in 2015, according to data provided by Blair HealthChoices.
- Medicare and Medicaid eligible persons in Blair County have limited access to medical and dental care.
- Blair County is designated as a Health Professional Shortage area for dental care. “In Pennsylvania, there are only 37.7 dentists for every 100,000 Pennsylvanians compared to the national average of 64 dentists for every 100,000 people. In Blair County, we are below the state average at 31.4 for every 100,000 people” (2016 Blair County Community Health Needs Assessment).
- According to a 2013 Pennsylvania Department of Health report (as documented in the 2016 Blair County Community Health Needs Assessment), only 22% of Blair County dentists accept Medicaid or Medicare. 89% accept private insurance.
- “Data taken from the 2016 County Health Rankings Report indicate 11% ages 18-64 in Blair County are without health insurance which is comparable to Pennsylvania. Without health insurance, people do not have the means to pay for office visits, diagnostic tests, or prescription medications” (as reported in the 2016 Blair County Community Health Needs Assessment). Additionally it was reported that between 15%-37% of the Household Survey respondents used a hospital emergency room for routine health care.

Desired Objectives:

- A. Increase the capacity of the free dental clinics to provide services to persons of low income who are under or un-insured.
- B. Increase the capacity of the free health clinics to offer health services to persons of low income who are under or un-insured.
- C. Increase the availability of pharmaceuticals for persons who are unable to afford the prescriptions necessary to treat health problems.

Initial Strategies:

- A. Provide services, supports, and funding to the free clinics that exist in the county.
- B. Review availability of health services to mothers, infants and children; i.e. WIC.
- C. Work with the hospitals or any other appropriate health care organization addressing this need, to identify areas of financial and treatment needs.

ISSUE: Lack of awareness of availability of meal programs and food pantries.

Current Key Findings:

- There is limited availability and locations.
- Senior citizens can use Meals on Wheels.
- Schools provide meals, but it is on a limited basis and does not cover weekends and holidays.
- Meals are available during Thanksgiving and Christmas, but not on other holidays.
- Food donations to the local pantries are seasonal.

Desired Objective: All residents of Blair County will have access to nutritious meals every day.

Initial Strategies:

- A. Identify those agencies that provide meals and inform the community through various media and other modalities.
- B. Research other available resources.

- C. Expand the current services to meet the need.
- D. Develop better linkages with the religious community.
- E. Increase the outreach to the homebound/disabled with transportation to centers that provide meals.
- F. Identify and develop creative ways to meet all family nutrition needs.

ISSUE: A healthy lifestyle promotes physical, cognitive, social, emotional well-being for all community members, and healthy development of children birth to age 5.

Current Key Findings:

- All childcare providers must have 6 hours of training each year to meet Department of Welfare standards.
- In Blair County, Penn State Cooperative Extension, Nurse Family Partnership and WIC provide low-income homemakers resources to help address critical issues including hunger, infant mortality, prenatal nutrition and poverty.
- Early Intervention Program provides developmental and cognitive screenings for developmentally challenged children 0-3 years of age. Services are provided based on a 40% developmental delay.
- Family Resource Center provides programs for children of all developmental stages ages birth through Kindergarten start, regardless of delay.

Desired Objectives:

- A. Increase programs that offer developmental screenings for all socio-economic levels.
- B. Develop healthy lifestyle programs; i.e., nutrition, exercise, recreation, cultural arts, etc.

Initial Strategies:

- A. Fund programs that offer developmental screenings for all socio-economic levels.
- B. Fund healthy lifestyle programs; i.e., nutrition, exercise, recreation, cultural arts, etc.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT #3
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

ISSUE: Lack of opportunities for community involvement and social interaction. There is a need for initiatives, programs and services that provide families and their members low or no cost opportunities to play/socialize together, volunteer, join groups and engage with others in meaningful community activities.

Current Key Findings:

- The availability of low or no-cost activities for families is not widely known.
- Involvement, engagement and connection with others are a widely accepted measure of a family's/person's overall health status.

Desired Objective: Increase the number of opportunities for family social interaction.

Initial Strategies:

- A. Promote and support low or no-cost "family-fun" activities and opportunities that are planned in community areas where the family lives.
- B. Support organizations that offer affordable, accessible family programming, which provides socialization and physical activities in combination with the gaining of education and knowledge on topics relative to family nurturing and safety.
- C. Offer education on creating healthy lifestyles.
- D. Research and offer "best practices" educational programs that are targeted toward building character, including the topics of respect, responsibility, honesty and caring.
- E. Consider supporting, enhancing and expanding existing local community efforts that offer after school and family oriented activities.
- F. Support and implement school and church-based activities and programs based on the need identified by the families in those areas.
- G. Examine areas in the social service organization where families could volunteer their talents and time.