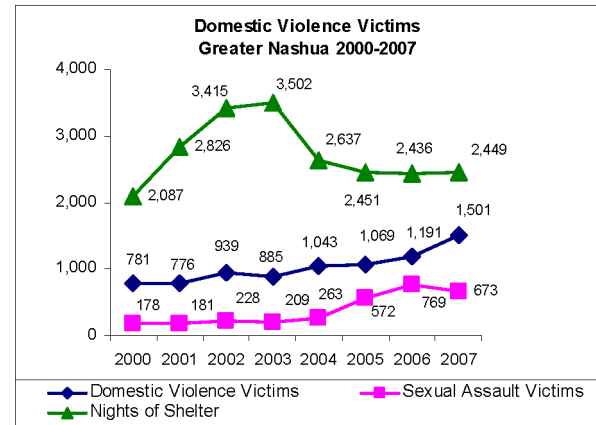


Issue #5: Domestic Violence

In 2007, 80 persons relied on the help of the local domestic violence shelter, up 33.3% from 60 in 2000. The number of nights of shelter for domestic violence victims increased 17.3% between 2000 and 2007 from 2,087 to 2,449 nights, respectively. The reported numbers of domestic violence victims in the region increased dramatically, nearly doubling (up 92.1%), from 781 to 1,501 between 2000 and 2007. Even more striking has been the increase in sexual assault victims (up 278.1%) from 178 in 2000 to 673 in 2007.



Source: Bridges

Issue #6: Other

Childcare

Based on a September 2008 survey of childcare centers in Nashua, an estimated 220 children were on waiting lists at 19 facilities. The average weekly cost at the childcare programs surveyed was \$246 for infant care (ages 6 weeks to 13 months), \$231 per week for young toddlers, \$224 for older toddlers, and \$205 for preschoolers (ages 3 to 5).

Public Transportation

Public transportation was rated as a major community concern in the region by 23% of the respondents to the Regional Household Survey, and by 43% of agency survey respondents. Trips on the Nashua Transit System's fixed route bus service, City Bus, increased 36% between 2000 and 2007. However, ridership on City Lift, the door-to-door transit service for the handicapped and disabled in Nashua, Merrimack, and Hudson, declined 22.2% during the same period.

Next Steps

United Way of Greater Nashua intends to work collaboratively with others to create a "community agenda", selecting a number of issues to focus on over several years and make a measurable impact. This work will involve developing new and innovative partnerships spanning the non-profit, for-profit, government, and faith sectors. As a result of the findings of past assessment reports, the first "community initiative", Workforce Housing, began in early 2005.

Community service organizations have used assessment reports as aides to prioritize their annual projects. Non-profit organizations have used assessment reports to help with strategic planning and to improve grant submissions. United Way of Greater Nashua has used assessment results to help set priorities for the use of contributions from the Community Campaign. Individuals, groups, agencies and collaboratives are again encouraged to use the findings of this report. Only through comprehensive collaboration can the necessary forces and resources be marshaled to impact the pressing issues of our area.

Community Assessment Steering Committee

Name	Organization	Name	Organization
Rolf Goodwin, Chair	McLane, Graf, Raulerson & Middleton, PA	Ray Lambert	Ocean Bank
Betsy Abrahams	The Youth Council	Richard Leavitt	Congregation Church of Amherst
Joy Barrett	Big Brothers Big Sisters	Bob Mack	City of Nashua Welfare
Cecile Carlton	Nashua School District	Germano Martins	NH Dept. of Health & Human Svcs.
Kathy Cowette	St. Joseph Hospital	John Mills	Anheuser-Busch, Inc.
Chris Dolloff	Cityside Management Corp.	Joel Patterson	Shaws Supermarket-Merrimack
Mariellen Durso	Nashua Area Health Center	Camille Pattison	Nashua Reg. Planning Commission
Paul Etkind	Nashua Public Health	Beth Raymond	Gateways Community Services
Tim Gendron	Bank of America	Doug Rupert	Wilton Resident
Suzanne Keller	Southern NH Medical Center	Lucy Saia	Home Health and Hospice Care
		Maryse Wirbal	Nashua Pastoral Care Center

Consultants and Facilitators

Focus group facilitators: Sharon Dalton, Shuk-Ming Tsang-Lui, and Yara Dasilva of Adult Learning Center; Daniel Reidy of UNH Cooperative Extension. Regional Household Survey Consultant: Carol Bowen, Bowen Marketing Research. Community Assessment Coordinator: Ray Peterson, United Way of Greater Nashua.

GREATER NASHUA MEASURES UP

The 2009 Community Assessment: Executive Summary



Introduction

As with earlier editions of Greater Nashua Measures Up, the community assessment report attempts to document and evaluate the health and well-being of residents living in the 11 communities of our area: Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, Hudson, Litchfield, Lyndeborough, Merrimack, Milford, Mont Vernon, Nashua, and Wilton. We use the World Health Organization's definition of health - a state of complete well-being, physical, social and mental, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The report's numerous data sources include a survey of 500 area residents about the issues they face. Data from other local surveys, the 2000 Census, and local and state government statistics, and input from non-profit agencies and recipients of program services also are included.

Greater Nashua Measures Up has been a collaborative effort of local volunteers and organizations (see committee list on back page). Southern New Hampshire Health System and St. Joseph Hospital have agreed to use the assessment as the basic information upon which they will build their institutional planning efforts. To find programs that address the needs identified in the assessment, call 2-1-1, the new free and confidential statewide information and referral service that connects callers to available health and human service programs.

2008 Survey/Focus Group Findings

The respondents to the Regional Household Survey were asked to identify issues they considered major problems in their community and for their families. While some issues, such as affordable medical insurance and medical care, ranked high as community and family concerns, others' rankings were significantly different. Social service providers also identified community issues of concern, which generally showed similarities with the household survey results.

Household Survey - Community			Household Survey - Family			Provider Survey - Community		
Rank	Issue	%	Rank	Issue	%	Rank	Issue	%
1	Affordable medical insurance	51	1	Affordable medical insurance	20	1	Housing people can afford	92
2	Housing people can afford	46	2/3	Affordable medical care	18	2	Affordable medical insurance	89
3	Affordable medical care	45		Affordable dental insurance	18	3	Affordable dental insurance	84
4	Affordable medications	42	4/5	Affordable medications	16	4	Affordable dental care	82
5	Affordable dental care	40		Affordable dental care	16	5	Affordable medications	79
6	Affordable dental insurance	39	6	Household budgeting	13	6/7	Affordable medical care	74
7/8	Affordable child care	28	7-10	Housing people can afford	11		Affordable child care	74
	Having enough money to meet everyday expenses	28		Having enough money to meet everyday expenses	11	8	Finding job w/medical benefits	61
9	Illegal drug use by youth	25		Find job w/medical benefits	11	9	Poverty	56
10	Public transportation	23		Job security	11	10/11	High levels of stress at home	51
							Affordable legal services	51

Members of two focus groups who had used local emergency and transitional services cited their inability to afford the expenses of everyday life -- housing, transportation, health care, dental services, car repair, clothing, and food -- as major concerns. These concerns are reflected in 2-1-1 call data from July 1 - December 31, 2008. Of the 720 calls from Greater Nashua residents, 39 percent were related to temporary financial support, such as town welfare, utility assistance, emergency food, and public assistance programs.

Trends

Population

- Growing throughout region, but fastest in outlying communities
- Becoming more diverse
- 65+ projected to grow at 5 times rate of general population over next 20 years

Health

- Cancer and heart disease are leading causes of death
- Alcohol and substance abuse, especially among teens, is major concern
- Birth rates among teen mothers in Nashua rising, above county & state rates

Economy/Basic Needs

- Unemployment in Greater Nashua and NH on the rise
- Unsheltered homeless decreasing, but emergency shelter/transitional housing use increasing
- Despite lower housing prices, rents remain high

Issue #1: Health Care Concerns

Insurance

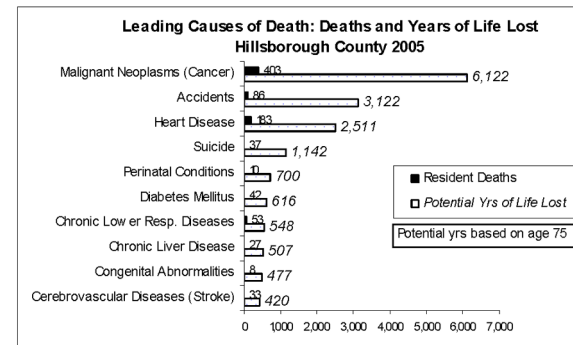
Three of the top 10 issues identified as major concerns in the community as well as four of the top issues reported as major personal or family concerns by respondents to the Regional Household Survey were related to medical care or the health care system. "Affordable medical insurance" ranked as the top community and family issue in the Household Survey, and as second greatest community concern among providers. In 2007, the Behavioral Risk Factor Survey found that 9% of Hillsborough County respondents had no health insurance coverage. Families and providers also viewed affordable dental insurance as a chief concern, and ranked it as the third most important issue.

Health Status

In 2007, the Behavioral Risk Factor Survey found that only one in 10 Hillsborough County residents contacted said that their current health status was fair or poor. Factors contributing to poor health status documented among county residents include:

- being overweight (38.3%)
- having no physical activity in past 30 days (19.5%)
- currently a smoker (17.8%)
- heavy drinking (5%)

The leading causes of death in Greater Nashua and the state are cancer, heart disease, chronic lower respiratory diseases, stroke, Alzheimer's disease, accidents, Diabetes Mellitus, influenza and pneumonia, and suicide. When considering the total potential years of life lost due to disease (based on a life expectancy of 75 years), the significance of cancer deaths becomes very apparent. Cancer claimed almost twice the potential years lost as the next cause of death, accidents (6,122 to 3,122 lost years).

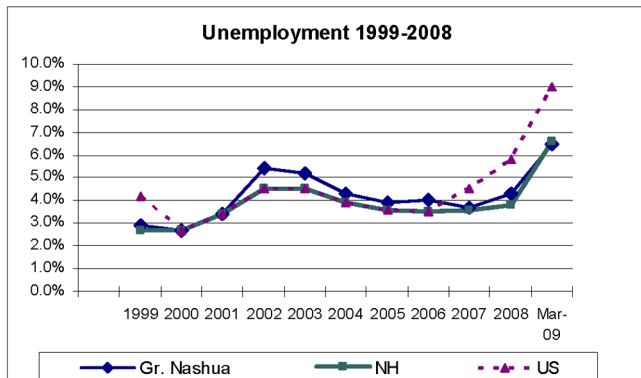


Source: NHDHHS, Health Statistics and Data Management

Issue #2: The Economy/Meeting Basic Needs

Unemployment

The average annual unemployment rate for Greater Nashua in 2008 was 4.3%, and as of March 2009, the rate was 6.5%, which was slightly below the state rate.



Note: Before 2004 data for Greater Nashua was based on the PMSA. After 2004 data are for a larger 19 town area.
Source: NH Employment Security, Economic and Labor Market Information

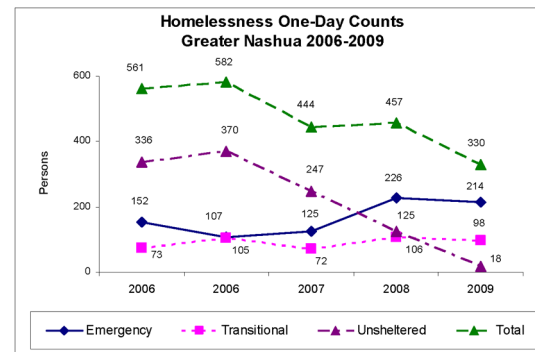
There were 6,743 initial unemployment insurance claims made in 2007, and 5,708 such claims were filed through August 2008. Worsening economic conditions are expected to increase unemployment and initial claims beyond the mark set in 2007.

About one in five (18%) respondents to the Regional Household Survey reported that "job security" was a major issue for the community, while one in 10 (11%) said they or family members contend with a lack of job security. Household Survey respondents said that "finding a job with medical benefits" was an important issue for the community as a whole (20%) and in their own lives (11%). Since survey responses were collected many months before the economic downturn during the fall of 2008, these findings probably underestimate the current concern about such issues.

Poverty & Homelessness

"Poverty" was listed by 20% of Household Survey participants and 56% of provider survey participants as a major issue in the community. During New Hampshire's 2008 fiscal year, 14,413 area residents, including 8,909 children, were in households that received some form of state financial assistance.

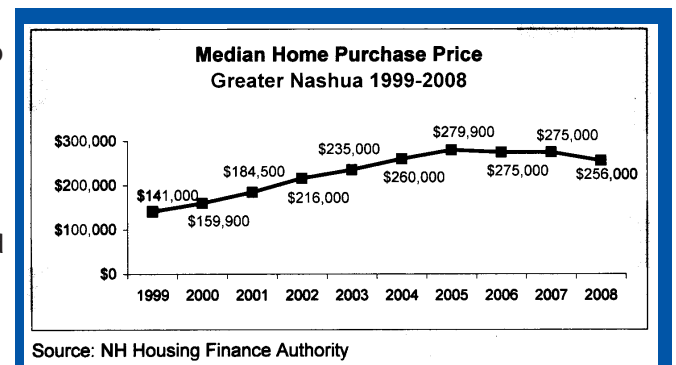
On January 28, 2009, a one-day count identified 330 people in Greater Nashua as homeless, of which 18 were living on the street or in structures considered unsuitable for habitation. The remaining were residing in emergency shelters and transitional programs.



Source: Greater Nashua Continuum of Care

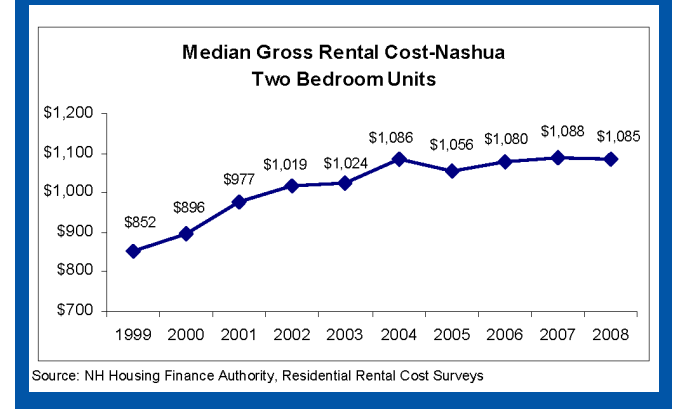
Issue #3: Affordable Housing

"Housing people can afford" was identified as a major community issue by 45% of households and 92% of providers who responded to the assessment surveys. According to federal standards, housing is considered to be affordable when it costs no more than 30% of the total household income. The affordable housing issue in Greater Nashua represents not only a discrepancy between income and housing costs, but a lack of housing choice as well. Limited options exist for many home buyers and renters. Housing experts recognized that for many years the region did not produce enough housing to meet the demand. The current economic downturn and the tightening of credit policies have curtailed housing development even further. Between January and August 2008, there were 684 foreclosures in the towns of Greater Nashua.



Source: NH Housing Finance Authority

Families who cannot afford to own a home in the current market are increasing the demand for rental properties. The median rental cost for a two-bedroom unit in Nashua during 2008 is \$1,085 per month, down slightly from the prior year level of \$1,088. There are long waiting lists for most types of public housing. For low-income persons and families, the wait for a two-bedroom Nashua Public Housing Authority apartment is at least two years, and waiting for a three-bedroom unit will take one year or more. The wait for a voucher for Section 8 subsidized housing from the Housing Authority is approximately five years. The anticipated job losses due to the economic recession are expected to exacerbate housing issues.



Source: NH Housing Finance Authority, Residential Rental Cost Surveys

The high cost of housing is seen as a primary reason for high levels of out-migration among young adults from New Hampshire. The exodus is expected to result in slowing workforce growth, declining numbers of children, and a rapidly aging population. The Greater Nashua Workforce Housing Coalition was formed to address the challenges of bringing moderately priced housing to the region. The coalition seeks broad-based interest in and support for affordable housing for low- to moderate-income households. It engages the public about housing's impact on the economic vitality of the region, and encourages the production of workforce housing by promoting best practices/"smart growth" techniques. United Way and over 30 other non-profit organizations, businesses, and local governments participate in the Coalition.

Issue #4: Substance Abuse, Mental Health

The 2003 National Survey on Drug Use and Health indicated that New Hampshire has a higher than average rate of alcohol abuse and dependence (9.1% compared to 7.6% nationally), and has one of the highest rates of abuse or dependence on illicit drugs among young adults (27.8% vs. 21.3% for those 18-25 years of age). The Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that about 40% of area high school students had at least one or more drinks of alcohol during the previous month. Three in four teens say it would be easy to very easy to get beer, wine or hard liquor, and one in four report that it would be easy to very easy to get drugs like cocaine, LSD or amphetamines. Of those teens who have used addictive substances, many had their first experiences by age 13. The Greater Nashua Community Prevention Coalition was established in early 2008 to help deal with the problem of alcohol use by youth and young adults. The coalition brings together people representing the schools, police, the courts, the New Hampshire Liquor Commission, youth-serving organizations and other relevant stakeholders. The coalition is developing a comprehensive plan that will focus on reducing alcohol consumption among teenagers and young adults.

In 2007, 32% of Hillsborough County residents responding to the Behavioral Risk Factor Survey reported that their mental health was not good on one or more of the past 30 days. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that one in seven teens surveyed statewide during the past year said that they seriously considered attempting suicide. Approximately one in 10 youth had made plans about how they would attempt suicide.

Dual diagnoses--the presence of both a mental and substance abuse problem--are quite frequent. Fifteen percent of those adults who are affected annually by mental illness also experience a co-occurring substance abuse problem. Among clients of Greater Nashua Mental Health Center, approximately 88% have dual diagnoses.