

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **WHAT IS THE 2007 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT UPDATE?**

United Way of Metropolitan Dallas (UWMD) publishes the Community Needs Assessment as a means to guide the allocation of donor funds, influence public policy and provide a service to the community. United Way's ability to target the funds that it raises to the most compelling needs in the community is strongly supported by its knowledge of health and social welfare conditions. Accurate and reliable data on the demographic, social, and economic conditions of the communities in the Dallas area are vital for planning, resource allocation, and measuring the impact of policies and programs.

The Community Needs Assessment provides data about the people who live in the four counties served by the UWMD: Collin, Dallas, Denton, and Rockwall counties. It is intended not only for internal use and decision-making, but for use by other organizations and by the community at large. Potential users include researchers, grant writers, funding organizations, program developers, policymakers, planners, students and the general public.

The Community Needs Assessment is also intended to initiate community discussion about how the region can provide the highest quality of life for all of its residents. The information provides the community with baseline data about the state of the region, about the quality of life here, and the challenges facing our community.

The Community Needs Assessment is developed in three year cycles. Year one is a longer and more extensive report, with the following two years being briefer updates. The most recent Community Needs Assessment was published in 2005. This document in its entirety, as well as the 2007 and 2006 Community Needs Assessment Updates can be found online at [www.unitedwaydallas.org](http://www.unitedwaydallas.org).

The updated information contained in this report serves as a supplement to the 2005 Community Needs Assessment. This update provides an opportunity to review current priorities and determine if they should be changed or modified.

### **HISTORICAL TRENDS**

Themes and trends identified in the 2005 Community Needs Assessment and the 2006 Community Needs Assessment Update continue to shape our community and inform the delivery of health and human services. These themes include:

#### 2005 Community Needs Assessment

- Young Hispanic population
- Aging Anglo population
- Changing household composition

#### 2006 Community Needs Assessment Update

- Twice the national rate in population growth
- Increase in families with barriers to success
- Widening dispersion of need

The population of North Texas has continued to grow at a pace faster than the nation; mainly as a result of immigration (primarily from Mexico) and in-migration from other regions in the United States. Due to birthrates and mobility patterns, much of our region's growth has been fueled by increases in youth and young adult populations.

Despite economic growth, poverty continues to increase in the North Texas region. Many families are caught in a self-perpetuating cycle of factors which are both cause and result. Some of these factors are: access to employment opportunities, educational attainment, health care and the ability to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency.

With the growth and increased mobility of the North Texas population, many concerns traditionally associated with the inner cities have increased their prevalence in the outlying suburban areas. These emerging areas of need, coupled with the persistent and pressing needs of longtime suburban and rural residents, are changing the health and human service landscape of our region.

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## **2007 KEY THEMES AND TRENDS**

Updated data suggests several additional trends that also effect residents of Collin, Dallas, Denton and Rockwall counties. Three trends that stand out are:

### **RISING ECONOMY, FAMILIES LEFT BEHIND**

Although a number of indicators (decreasing unemployment, increase in educational attainment, etc.) suggest positive economic changes in our region, many families have yet to experience the benefits of a growing economy. Persistent disparities continue to exist between families with access to resources and those with barriers to obtaining financial security. For these families, even meeting basic needs often presents a challenge; as evidenced by increases in poverty amongst families with children and the continued increase in both families served and pounds of food distributed by the North Texas Food Bank. As wages fail to keep pace with increasing costs, many families are faced with difficulties in obtaining and maintaining affordable housing. Throughout the region, a significant number of families spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing and many potential homebuyers lack the requisite income to qualify for traditional mortgage loans. One result of these rising home costs and income deficits has been an increased reliance on sub-prime mortgage loans despite a projected 16.9% foreclosure rate in the Dallas-Plano-Irving market for these types of loans. Struggling to meet these challenges places many North Texas families in a precarious financial position where securing and maintaining their independence is often jeopardized.

### **FAMILIES WITH NEEDS ON THE MOVE**

As is similar in the nation as a whole, an increasing number of North Texas families are moving from the central city (Dallas) to suburban areas. Rates of migration to the suburban counties far exceed migration rates into the city. This is spurred by rising costs and crime rates in the city, along with the promise of employment and educational opportunities. This suburban migration has not only added to the total population of these areas, but has also highlighted the need for services and supports to address the needs of the increasing number of suburban families facing challenges. Examples of the changing need profile for suburban counties include increases in free lunch eligibility, limited English proficiency and at-risk students. Similarly, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Child Protective Services, and Adult Protective Services intake rates have increased at a faster rate in the suburban counties.

### **NEW GENERATION GAP**

Changes in the age structure of the North Texas population continue to impact our region. As in the general United States' population, our area has experienced an aging of the Anglo population as members of the Baby Boom generation continue to advance in years. In North Texas, the aging among Anglos has been coupled with the growth of the Hispanic and youth populations. Fueled by domestic and international migration and differential birthrates between Anglos and populations of color, Texas continues to have a younger median age than the nation as a whole. This generation gap between Anglos and people of color (including new immigrants) will increase the need for effective, culturally competent education and workforce development programs to ensure our region's continued success.

<b>MAJOR CONCERNS</b>	
Increased Child Poverty	Between 2000 and 2005, the percentage of families with children living in poverty increased by 41% in Collin County and 32% in Dallas County.
Housing Affordability and Foreclosure	Housing costs continue to rise as does reliance on sub-prime mortgage loans. A 16.9% foreclosure rate is projected for sub-prime loans in the Dallas-Irving-Plano market.
Health Insurance Coverage	Nearly a quarter (24.2%) of Texas residents lack health insurance coverage. Large disparities continue to exist between racial and ethnic groups, with 55.8% of Hispanics without health insurance.
Rising Medical and Dental Costs	Between 2000 and 2006, medical costs <sup>1</sup> increased by more than two and one half times the general cost of living.
Free/Reduced Lunch Eligibility	Free and Reduced price lunch eligibility, determined by household income, has increased throughout the North Texas region in both city and suburban school districts.
More Students At-Risk	The number of students classified as “at-risk” has increased throughout the region from 2002 - 2006. Plano ISD experienced a 4% increase, while Dallas ISD increased by 11%. Lewisville ISD led the region in growth of the at-risk population with an increase of 84%, while Rockwall experienced a similar 78%.
Increase Number of Limited English Proficiency Students	Dallas ISD, where 3 in 10 students are classified as Limited English Proficient, was the only district to decline in LEP students between 2002 and 2006. Within the suburban districts growth in the LEP student population ranged from 33% in Plano ISD to 58% in Rockwall ISD.

<b>POSITIVE TRENDS</b>	
Decreased Crime	Between 2001 and 2005 violent crimes against persons decreased by 12% while crimes against property decreased by 16% throughout the region.
Declining Mortality Rates (Leading Causes of Death)	Deaths from heart disease, cancer, and stroke (the three leading causes of death) have declined consistently throughout North Texas since 1996.
Lower Unemployment Rate	Although the North Texas region continues to be impacted by the net loss of jobs between the economic downturn of 2002-2003, unemployment has continued to decrease in Dallas, Collin and Denton counties.
Decreasing High School Attrition	The IDRA (Intercultural Development Research Association) reports that the attrition rate, the percent of 9 <sup>th</sup> grade students who did not graduate with their class, decreased by 2% in the North Texas region from 2002 to 2006.

<sup>1</sup> Costs measured by the Consumer Price Index