

Texoma Council of Governments

2011-2015 Texoma Needs Assessment

A Study of Unmet Needs for Low-Income
Texomans who Seek Self-Sufficiency



3. Conclusions

3. CONCLUSIONS



Through the experience with applying various approaches to qualitative research, we have gained a new appreciation for the study of such a broad and complex subject. The interviews point out complicating factors that Texomans experience on a day-to-day basis. Identifying the top needs does not do the experience of poverty justice because often a household is experiencing multiple setbacks at once that compound the effects of one another. Finding just one solution for their condition requires more than one avenue of attack.

Given the opportunity to conduct additional research there are several opportunities that we would have liked to have pursued, including:

- While we limited the scope of this study to identify and quantify the critical needs and services for low income Texomans who seek self-sufficiency, we are left with more questions about the causes and barriers to attaining self-sufficiency. Discussions with key informants brought up unique observations and feedback on the possible causes of poverty in Texoma. These causes tended to center around substance abuse, family violence, and a multi-generational culture of poverty. These issues could have come up in the open-ended critical needs question, but did not very often because respondents were only asked to consider the most critical needs and services in their communities.
- Explore the possibility that there is a disconnect between local perceptions of poverty and the actual experience of poverty in our communities. There are several aspects of this study that seem to indicate this could be an issue in Texoma. By surveying clients, service providers, and community members extensively about the most critical services and assistance for low-income Texomans seeking self-sufficiency, there appeared to be noteworthy differences in responses. Community members and service providers indicated employment and education as not services, while clients tended to indicate direct services such as utility bill assistance and food assistance over employment and education. Studies conducted in other parts of the country have indicated there is disconnect between general thinking about poverty and the individual experience. This



manifests in misperceptions on very basic trends in poverty such as the distribution of wealth as studies have shown Americans assume the distribution of wealth is more equal than it is in reality¹.

- Investigate and identify differences societal causes of poverty, such as large-scale, socio-economic factors, and individual causes of poverty, such as why a family can or cannot earn a family-supporting wage. The responses gathered in the primary survey questions do not lend themselves to interpreting the approach the respondent took in providing their answer. Again, if there is a disconnect between our perceptions of poverty that the experience of poverty, a specific look at this issue may lend interesting results.

With that said, the unmet needs and vital services identified in this study will be the basis of the Community Action Plan for services and expenditures through the year 2015. TCOG will continue to work with local jurisdictions and community organizations to create economic opportunities and improve quality of life for the Texoma Region. CSBG funds will support the Texoma Council of Governments and the offering of direct services (including education assistance and other supportive services) to low income Texomans to help alleviate causes of poverty in our region.

¹ Norton, Michael I., and Ariely, Dan. *Building a Better American: One Wealth Quintile at a Time*. Accessed on October 12, 2010, <http://www.people.hbs.edu/mnorton/norton%20ariely%20in%20press.pdf>.



REFERENCE LIST

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Women's Rights, "Domestic Violence and Homelessness" April 15, 2010. <http://www.aclu.org/pdfs/dvhomelessness032106.pdf>

Babbie, Earl. "Survey Research." *The Basics of Social Research*. Belmont: Thomson Wadsworth, 2005.

Carter, Keith and Lionel Beaulieu. "Conducting a Community Needs Assessment: Primary Data Collection Techniques," Florida Cooperation Extension Service, June 1992.
http://www.virtualcap.org/downloads/VC/US_Needs_Assessment_FL_Coop_Extension_Primary_Data_Collection_Techniques.pdf

Grayson County Department of Juvenile Services. "Statistical Report 1/10/2007 to 12/31/2007". April 10, 2010. http://www.co.grayson.tx.us/Juvenile/Juve_Administration.htm

HUD CHAS data and other housing information can be accessed on the HUD USER website, *Data Set* page: <http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/pdrdatas.html>

Lewis, Jane. *Qualitative Research Practice*. Ed. Jane Ritchie and Jane Lewis. London: Sage Publications, 2003.

Maintz, Julia. *Blending Spaces: Actor-Network Interactions of An Internet-Based E-Learning Course*. London: Transaction Publishers, 2008.

National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL), State and County Estimates, "State and County Estimates of Low Literacy", March 15, 2010. <http://nces.ed.gov/naal/estimates/index.aspx>

The National Network to End Domestic Violence, Domestic Violence, NNEDV Policy Issues, April 15, 2010 <http://www.nnedv.org/policy/issues/housing.html>. Can also be found: Browne, A. 1998. "Responding to the Needs of Low-income and Homeless Women Who are Survivors of Family Violence." *Journal of American Medical Women's Association*. 53(2): 57-64.

The National Network to End Domestic Violence, NNEDV Policy Issues, "Violence Against Women Act". April 15, 2010. <http://www.nnedv.org/policy/issues/vawa.html>

Norton, Michael I., and Dan Ariely. *Building a Better American: One Wealth Quintile at a Time*. Accessed on October 12, 2010,
<http://www.people.hbs.edu/mnorton/norton%20ariely%20in%20press.pdf>

Project United. <http://www.projectunited.org/>

Sherman Homelessness Coalition. "Homelessness Count" April 1, 2010.



Texas Department of Health and Human Services. Research and Statistics. April 15, 2010. <http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/research/index.html>

Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA), “2009 State of Texas Low-income Housing Plan and Annual Report”, March 11, 2010. <http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/housing-center/docs/09-SLIHP.pdf>

Texas Department of Protective Services. Reports, Plans, Statistics, and Presentations. “2008 Data Book” http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About/Data_Books_and_Annual_Reports/2008/databook/default.asp

Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System. School Report Card, March 30, 2010. <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/aeis/2009/index.html>

Texas Education Agency, Division of Accountability Research: Reports and Abstracts, “Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools, 2007-08 (July 2009)”. April 15, 2010. <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/research/abs2.htm#Dropout>

Texas Education Agency, Glossary for The Academic Excellence Indicator System 2008-2009, Glossary, March 3, 2010. <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/aeis/2009/glossary.html>

Texas Education Agency. “The Texas Kids Count Project”. Center for Public Policy Priorities, Austin, TX. Secondary School Completion and Drop-outs 2007-2008 Report. May 3, 2010. http://www.cppp.org/factbook09/select_indicator.php?fipse=48181

Texas Workforce Commission LCMI Department, Tracer: Labor Market and Career Information (LMCI), “Texas Economic Statistics” April 15, 2010. <http://www.tracer2.com/>

Texoma Council of Governments. <http://www.texoma.cog.tx.us/>

Texoma Homeless Network. <http://texomahomelesscoalition.ning.com/>

Texoma Workforce Board. “Workforce Texoma Strategic and Operational Plan Fiscal Years 2009-2010”.

United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, “County Data” April 15, 2010. <http://www.bls.gov/lau/#tables>

United States Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, “Cooke County: Selected Social Characteristics in the United States: 2006-2008, March 3, 2010. http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ACSSAFFacts?_event=ChangeGeoContext&geo_id=05000US48181&geoContext=&street=&county=grayson&cityTown=grayson&state=&zip=&la



[ng=en&_sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=&_useEV=&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010&submenuId=factsheet_1&ds_name=ACS_2008_3YR_SAFF&ci_nbr=null&qtr_name=null®=null%3Anull&keyword=&industry=](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ACSSAFFFacts?_lang=en&_sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=&_useEV=&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010&submenuId=factsheet_1&ds_name=ACS_2008_3YR_SAFF&ci_nbr=null&qtr_name=null®=null%3Anull&keyword=&industry=)

- Fannin:
http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ACSSAFFFacts?_event=ChangeGeoContext&geo_id=05000US48147&_geoContext=&_street=&_county=fannin&_cityTown=fannin&_state=&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=&_useEV=&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010&_submenuId=factsheet_1&ds_name=ACS_2008_3YR_SAFF&ci_nbr=null&qtr_name=null®=null%3Anull&keyword=&industry=
- Grayson:
http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ACSSAFFFacts?_event=ChangeGeoContext&geo_id=05000US48147&_geoContext=&_street=&_county=fannin&_cityTown=fannin&_state=&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=&_useEV=&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010&_submenuId=factsheet_1&ds_name=ACS_2008_3YR_SAFF&ci_nbr=null&qtr_name=null®=null%3Anull&keyword=&industry=

United States Census Bureau, State and Metropolitan Area Data Book, “USA Counties” March 1, 2010. <http://censtats.census.gov/usa/usa.shtml>

United States Department of Agriculture, School Meal Programs Overview, “National School Lunch Program” March 8, 2010.
http://www.squaremeals.org/fn/render/channel/items/0,1249,2348_2363_0_0,00.html

United Way. <http://www.unitedwaygrayson.org/>

VISTO. <http://www.vistohelps.com/>



