

CHAPTER 8: HUMAN SERVICES

Human services are vital to the health of every community. Timely delivery of an array of human services is an important component of the City of Fort Worth's vision of a future with strong neighborhoods, a sound economy, and a safe community. The City, Tarrant County, the State of Texas, secular nonprofits, faith-based nonprofits, and for-profit providers have a strong history of community initiatives and collaborations in the delivery of human services in Fort Worth.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

Over 425 nonprofit and governmental agencies provide more than 2,700 human service programs for Tarrant County residents. City departments along with umbrella organizations such as United Way, Area Agency on Aging, Catholic Charities, Tarrant County Youth Collaboration, and Mental Health/Mental Retardation of Tarrant County ensure efficient delivery of services by providing information and referral, and soliciting and leveraging funds.

The City's commitment to ensuring delivery of services to all residents is evidenced by the work of the City's Community Relations Department (CRD). The CRD is the link between Fort Worth's diverse community and City services, ensuring equitable service delivery to all. The department provides information, referrals, and problem resolution for residents; builds neighborhood capacity; fosters programs that support school readiness for children and engage youth; encourages diverse dialogue; and enforces anti-discrimination laws. The CRD sponsors community events to promote tolerance and to support and celebrate diversity. The CRD also provides staff support for the Human Relations Commission, the Mayor's Committee on Persons With Disabilities, and the Youth Advisory Board.

In 2005, the United Way of Metropolitan Tarrant County completed a countywide assessment of the health and human service needs of Tarrant County communities and citizens. Community leaders identified the top ten human service concerns in Tarrant County for the next three years: public transit services, gang violence, school drop-outs, availability of quality health services, homelessness, youth substance abuse, affordable housing, quality child care, long-term care services for the elderly, and availability of quality mental health services.

The human service issues discussed in this chapter fall into the categories of children and youth, families, communities, seniors, health, and crisis relief. Many human service agencies and organizations provide services in more than one of these categories. The following list of agencies is only a sample of those providing human services in Fort Worth.

Children and Youth

Youth services are targeted toward youth at risk for behaviors such as school dropout, teen pregnancy, substance abuse, etc. Tutoring, pregnancy prevention, sports and recreation, and self esteem programs are a sample of the range of youth services available. Some agencies providing these services are Big Brothers Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Club, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Child Care Associates, Communities in

Volunteer Opportunities in Fort Worth



The City of Fort Worth encourages volunteers to improve our communities and help our neighbors. The Cowtown Brush Up program, shown above, is a City-initiated neighborhood revitalization program where volunteers add a fresh coat of paint to deteriorating houses. (Source: Housing Department, 2007.)

Schools, United Community Centers, YMCA, YWCA, Fort Worth After School, and the City's Parks and Community Services Department.

Families

Family support can include child care, programs on parenting skills, self-support training, personal and family counseling, adoption, support for neighborhood associations (please see Chapter 9: Neighborhood Capacity Building for more information) and initiatives to help build communities, immigration assistance, and job training and placement. Two Early Learning Resource Centers have been established to help families prepare their young children for success in kindergarten. Some agencies providing these services are the American Red Cross, Catholic Charities, Jewish Federation, Lena Pope Home, Northside Inter-Church Agency, The Parenting Center, The Women's Center of Tarrant County, the Fort Worth Housing Authority, the Parks and Community Services Department, Tarrant County Department of Human Services, and many area churches.

Communities

The Community Relations Department (CRD) has a strong community focus. Community housing and employment rights forums, and neighborhood training workshops are examples of CRD-sponsored informational events held to inform the community of their rights and responsibilities under the City of Fort Worth's anti-discrimination ordinance. In an effort to meet the needs of the community, the CRD is comprised of three divisions.

The Enforcement Division is charged with enforcing laws regarding fair housing, equal employment opportunity, and equal access in public accommodation. The CRD is a certified Fair Employment Practices Agency by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) certified Fair Housing Assistance Program. These designations ensure that complaints filed with the CRD are also filed with the federal agencies. The CRD's School and Youth Outreach Division (SYO) facilitates programs, such as youth engagement and after-school programs, to encourage youth to be involved in the community. The Neighborhood and Community Outreach Division (NCO) oversees community events that celebrate diversity, and encourages and assists neighborhoods with organizing neighborhood associations. The NCO division also supports existing neighborhood associations, facilitates communication between residents and City departments, provides information about City services to neighborhoods, and develops educational opportunities for neighborhood associations.

Seniors

Senior services are designed to serve those over 60 years of age. Such services can include delivery of daily meals, transportation, social programs, guardianship services, advocacy for nursing home residents, and respite care for Alzheimer's caregivers. Major providers of these services include the American Red Cross, Area Agency on Aging of Tarrant County, Guardianship Services, Mental Health/Mental Retardation of Tarrant County, Senior Citizen Services of Greater Tarrant County, Meals on Wheels, Texas Department of Aging and Disabled Services, Texas



Goodwill empowers people with disabilities, disadvantages and other barriers to employment so that they can achieve maximum independence.
(Source: United Way of Metropolitan Tarrant County, 2007.)

Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, Visiting Nurse Association of Tarrant County, and the Parks and Community Services Department. The Area Agency on Aging of Tarrant County, the United Way, and the City of Fort Worth are working together to identify neighborhoods where socially isolated seniors live in order to improve their access to needed services. Identifying these neighborhoods will enable community partners to more effectively provide opportunities for social interactions, enhanced transportation services, in-home health and housekeeping services, home repairs, shopping assistance, wheelchair ramps, help with Medicare questions, yard clean-up, and links to other vital community services.

Health

Health-related human services assist people who are mentally or physically ill, have disabilities, or are caregivers. Services range from immunizations to long-term case management. Agencies providing these services include the AIDS Outreach Center, the Arc of Greater Tarrant County, Cancer Care Services, Child Study Center, Day Resource Center, Mental Health/Mental Retardation of Tarrant County, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Sickle Cell Disease of America, Recovery Resource Council, AA, AlAnon, Tarrant County Challenge, EasterSeals of Greater NW Texas, Urban Inter-Tribal Center of Texas, the City's Public Health Department, and Tarrant County Public Health Department. In addition, United Way's "FitFuture" coalition strives to address the obesity epidemic; in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, nearly 66 percent of residents are considered overweight or obese. Please see Chapter 19: Public Health for more information.

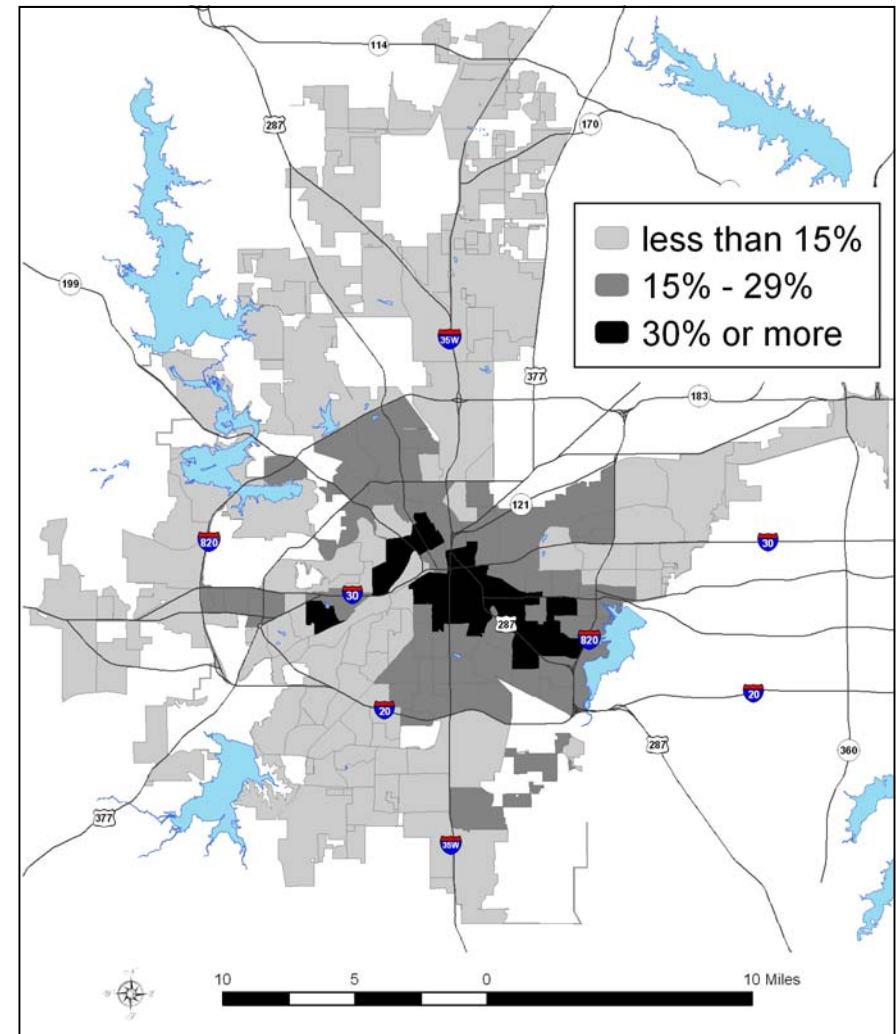
Crisis Relief

A crisis can be triggered by a family emergency, health crisis, job loss, loss of a home, or natural disaster. Crisis relief can include temporary financial and material assistance including food, rent/mortgage payments, utilities, and clothing. Relief can also include job training, transportation, and shelter. Agencies that provide such services include the American Red Cross, Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, United Community Centers, SafeHaven of Tarrant County, YWCA, various homeless shelters, the Parks and Community Services Department, the Fort Worth Housing Authority, Tarrant County Department of Human Services, and many area churches.

Information and Referral

Information and referral for human services is available from a variety of sources. City, county and state offices are listed in the blue pages of the Fort Worth telephone book. 2-1-1 Texas is the number to dial for health and human services both in Tarrant County and across Texas. When dialing 2-1-1, callers can talk to an information and referral specialist who will assess their needs and refer them to services ranging from child care to transportation. The 2-1-1 information and referral service in Tarrant County is nationally accredited and is operated by United Way of Tarrant County in partnership with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. The 2-1-1 information and referral service at United Way publishes the Blue Book, a directory of Tarrant County health and human services. The 2-1-1 community resource database is available on-line at United Way's Web site (www.unitedwaytarrant.org).

Areas High in Poverty by Census Tract, 2000



In 2000, 15.9 percent of Fort Worth residents had incomes below the poverty level, with the greatest concentration in the central city. Poverty can present a barrier to accessing human services. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.)

Barriers

Citizens can experience barriers in trying to access services due to a variety of reasons: lack of information, cultural differences, lack of transportation, illness, disability, language disparity, and lack of income. While the need for human services spans income, age and racial lines, the needs of those below the poverty level are often most pressing. The 2000 Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Income Guidelines for the U.S. placed the poverty income level for a typical family of two adults and two children at \$17,050. The 2007 figure is \$20,650. While the poverty income level figure has increased approximately 13 percent, the minimum wage has not increased during this 7-year time period, leaving minimum wage earners farther behind the general population. Low-income individuals and heads of households can face the additional challenges of finding affordable transportation and dependent care while attending job training and during employment.

Service providers can also experience barriers to delivery of services during a weak economy when funding and donations shrink and the demand for services expands. Staffing levels, which affect delivery, are also affected by economically challenged times.

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The following are human service goals and objectives for the City of Fort Worth:

Promote unbiased and impartial treatment, thereby providing equitable support to all citizens of our diverse community.

- Promote fair housing through partnerships, landlord/tenant counseling, and education to housing providers as a means of furthering the public interest. The FWHA provides training and orientation for landlords on a monthly basis.
- Provide fair housing and fair employment outreach and education to other City departments, industry professionals and residents.
- Develop, coordinate, or participate in educational programs, outreach events, community meetings, and collaborations that celebrate our city's diversity, promote cooperative efforts, increase communication with the community, reduce disparities, encourage prejudice reduction, and promote tolerance.

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

The following policies and strategies will help to achieve the City's human service goals and objectives:

Policies

- Work to improve neighborhood, community, and local government relations through the Community Relations Department.
- Work with the Fort Worth Housing Authority to provide services that enable individuals to become self-sufficient.
- Use the "Asset Building" approach to provide youth programs through City departments (see Appendix F: Youth Asset Model).
- Ensure that the citizens of the City of Fort Worth have equal enjoyment of all rights, privileges and freedoms; without regard to race, sex, religion, color, national origin, age, disability, housing and familial status; and sexual

Southside Community Center



The Southside Community Center at 959 East Rosedale is an example of a "one-stop" facility. This community center houses the Fort Worth ISD Adult Learning Center, Child Care Associates, and the Shamblee branch library. The Center also features a neighborhood police storefront, and a Community Action Partners site, as well as providing social, cultural and recreational activities for youth, adults, and seniors. (Source: Parks and Community Development, 2007.)

orientation.

- Work with the county and the state to establish “one-stop” services in communities in locations served by public transportation.
- Establish shared facility agreements with independent school districts and other agencies for the provision of community services for seniors and children.
- Support the provision of quality, affordable child care and early education opportunities.
- Provide leadership to increase and improve after-school programs that keep children safe, provide academic enrichment and help working families.
- Support efforts to provide child development training to help families ensure children have social, emotional, and cognitive skills needed in kindergarten.

Strategies

- Assist the Texas Health and Human Services Commission in efforts to monitor the impacts of reduced federal funding on services to low income residents.
- During City Council incentive contract negotiations, such as those related to tax abatements, incorporate the best possible employee and human services benefits (e.g. health care, livable wage, job training, child care, mass transit options, etc.) to accommodate special groups that are in need of and would not otherwise have accessibility to such benefits.
- Provide for the communication needs of special groups, such as the economically disadvantaged, non-English speakers, minorities, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities.
- Assist school districts and their employees in accessing community services.
- Work with nonprofit organizations and agencies, such as Corporate Champions for Children, to provide child care that is available year-round, 24 hours a day.
- Provide leadership by convening parties to look for funding to increase the quality of early care and educational opportunities for children age five and under.
- Through the Early Childhood Resource Centers, assist FWISD and non-profits with parents and caregivers to help young children under age five to prepare for success in kindergarten.

PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

Fort Worth Community Action Partners

- The Community Action Partners (CAP) (formerly the Neighborhood Resources Development) Centers operated by the Parks and Community Services Department provide case management, direct services (food, shelter, clothing, rental/mortgage, utilities, transportation, childcare, and other essential needs) to persons with incomes at or below 125 percent of the poverty level. Staff also provides referrals to local agencies for additional services. The Texas Departments of Housing and Community Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, with assistance from gas and electric utility providers, fund these programs.
- The following seven City community centers provide community services: Andrew “Doc” Session, Como, Martin Luther King, Northside, North Tri-Ethnic, Southside, and Worth Heights. The Far Southeast and Far Northwest CAP offices, located outside the city limits, also provide community services.

AMAKA Child Care Center



The AMAKA Child Care Center at 1501 Stephenson Street is located within Butler Place. It has the capacity to provide child care for 100 children. (Source: Fort Worth Housing Authority, 2007.)

Many of the City's community centers also serve as emergency shelters and safe havens for the children of the community.

- The City provides funding for after-school programs in partnership with area school districts.
- The City has initiated an effort to adopt an "Asset Building" approach to providing youth programs through City departments. The goal of this approach is to assist youth in developing assets that will help them succeed in life. These assets are grouped into eight categories: support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identities. A list of the 40 desired developmental assets is provided in Appendix F.
- The City has opened two Early Childhood Resource Centers, serving families in the Northside and Polytechnic Heights communities. These centers opened in 2006 and are a component of the Early Childhood Matters Plan.
- The City collaborates with corporate and private donors in the Cowboy Santas Program to provide holiday assistance to low income households.

Fort Worth Housing Authority

- The Family Investment Center is a one-stop center assisting public and assisted housing residents to attain self-sufficiency. Services are provided through collaborative partnerships with area service agencies. Some of the services offered or proposed include: adult and remedial education and GED preparation, case management, crisis intervention and self-empowerment skills, vocational education and training activities, information and referral services, small business development and transportation services.
- The AMAKA Child Care Center provides affordable childcare on a sliding tuition scale and accommodates up to 100 children. The Center is operated in collaboration with the YMCA.
- The Family Self-Sufficiency Program, for the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) clients and public housing residents, is designed to help unemployed or underemployed residents achieve economic self-sufficiency. FWHA encourages participants to attain additional education and job training, counseling, volunteer experience, budgeting assistance and to learn healthy lifestyle behaviors. These services are provided through agencies such as Tarrant County College (TCC), Fort Worth ISD, United Way, Consumer Credit Counseling Services, Childcare Management System, etc.
- FWHA, in collaboration with the Fort Worth Public Library, administers COOL and BOLD (satellite libraries of the Fort Worth Public Library located in the Cavile and Butler public housing communities) through which GED preparation, literacy classes, tutoring, children's story times and resource information from other libraries are offered.
- FWHA provides for a Service Coordinator to conduct comprehensive needs assessments and perform individual case management of the elderly and disabled residents of the Hunter Plaza and Fair Oaks housing communities.
- The University of North Texas Health Science Geriatric Clinic, located at Hunter Plaza, provides geriatric health care services to residents 62 years and older.
- Senior Citizen Services provides social activities and serves lunches to elderly

Satellite Library



The Butler community has an on-site satellite library that opened in 1997 and is open five days a week.
(Source: Fort Worth Housing Authority, 2007.)

community residents at Cavile Place and Hunter Plaza.

- The “I Have A Dream” Foundation is an organization located in the Butler community that provides a comprehensive daily academic mentoring and tutoring program for youth in the 2nd - 5th grades.
- The Boys and Girls Club, located in the Butler and Cavile communities, provides educational, recreational, cultural and leadership programs.
- In collaboration with Tarrant County College, FWHA provides on-site computer, medical and clerical training for public housing residents and Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) clients.
- FWHA purchases monthly bus passes for public housing residents who are employed, enrolled in training/school, or actively searching for a job.

Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) Programs

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) furnishes temporary financial assistance to families with needy children who are deprived of parental support.
- Through Medicaid, HHSC facilitates access to Medicaid programs for recipients of TANF, the elderly, and the disabled.
- Texas Works helps people identify barriers to employment and find resources that will help them along the road to economic and social self-sufficiency.
- The Food Stamp Program helps low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to buy nutritionally adequate food to supplement their diets.
- Nutrition programs include the Child and Adult Care Food Program, National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, Special Milk Program, and the Summer Food Service Program.
- Food distribution programs provide USDA-donated commodities to low-income individuals and families, public and private schools, summer food-service programs, food banks, and soup kitchens.
- TexCare offers two separate children's health insurance programs, CHIP and Children's Medicaid. Both programs provide health insurance for children at flexible rates, based on the number of people in the family and the family's income and expenses.

Community Initiatives

- Mental Health Connection is a county-wide collaboration to improve the delivery of mental health services to those in need.
- Fort Worth ISD established three Family Resource Centers on middle school campuses to improve families' access to mental health services.
- The Partnership for Children is a collaboration focused on early childhood issues.
- Infant Mortality Initiative, headed by Catholic Charities, addresses the infant mortality rate, especially in African-American communities.
- The Early Childhood Matters Initiative is focused on ensuring every child will enter kindergarten ready to succeed.
- Planned Parenthood of North Texas, Inc. is dedicated to the achievement of parenthood by choice by ensuring the provision of voluntary reproductive health care and sexuality education and by advocating the right of every person to receive these services. PPNT has 28 clinics in North Texas, including four in Fort Worth, two in Arlington, one in Bedford, and one in Burleson.



Working with **43 community partners** and other local organizations, United Way helps seniors and kids, strengthens families, provides crisis relief, and promotes health. A comprehensive list of agencies serving the Fort Worth area can be found at the United Way website: www.unitedwaytarrant.org. (Source: *United Way of Metropolitan Tarrant County, 2007.*)

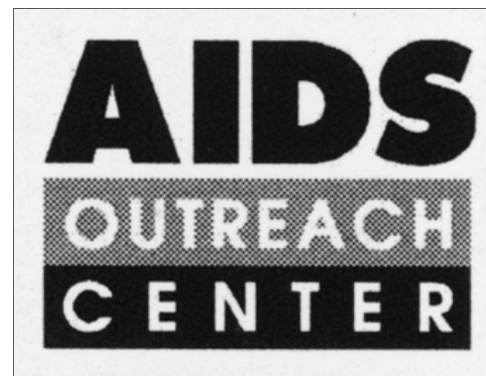
- The Tarrant County Family Violence Council coordinates law enforcement, corporations, and social service providers in addressing domestic violence.
- The Healthy Marriage Initiative, organized by The Parenting Center, coordinates grants and local initiatives aimed at promoting healthy marriage and strengthening families.

United Way and Community Partners

Nonprofit organizations and their volunteers have played an important part in addressing human service needs in Fort Worth. United Way Tarrant addresses the needs of kids, families, seniors, health, and crisis relief. United Way has also focused on five important community issues: early learning and development, child abuse and neglect prevention, isolation among older adults, childhood obesity, and adult literacy.

The following related agencies provides services to the City:

- The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) of Tarrant County plans, coordinates, funds, and provides human care services for older adults and their caregivers. Its mission is to be the visible advocate and leader in Tarrant County in providing a comprehensive and coordinated continuum of services and opportunities so that older people can lead dignified, independent, and productive lives. AAA distributes over \$3.5 million in federal and state funds annually for such services as home-delivered meals, congregate meals in senior centers, transportation to medical services, respite to caregivers, legal assistance/benefits counseling, information and referral, and long-term care ombudsman. AAA also operates the Access & Assistance program which connects older adults with services that enable them to remain in their own homes as long as possible.
- Corporate Champions for Children is a Tarrant County collaboration of 17 organizations, including the City of Fort Worth, committed to providing quality care for all children. The program is coordinated through the First Texas Council of Camp Fire Boys and Girls. The program provides individual child care referrals, child care information, and parenting resource information.
- Tarrant County Child Care Management Service subsidizes child care costs and provides child care through a network of contracted providers for children of parents who are active in the workforce or preparing for employment. Child Care Associates of Fort Worth and Tarrant County operates the Service under a contract with the Tarrant County Workforce Board.
- Head Start is a national program which provides comprehensive developmental services to low-income, pre-school children, and social services to their families. Specific services for children focus on education, socio-emotional development, physical and mental health, and nutrition. The cornerstone of the program is parent and community involvement.
- The Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Fort Worth operate programs within two public housing communities and in stand-alone facilities. Tutoring, mentoring, and educational, social and recreational activities are offered.
- The YWCA sponsors teenage pregnancy prevention programs in collaboration with area schools and two public housing communities.



AIDS Outreach Center, a community partner of United Way, works in Tarrant and surrounding counties to serve persons with HIV, educate the public about HIV prevention, and advocate for sound HIV public policy. More information on community partners can be found at the United Way website. *(Source: AIDS Outreach Center, 2007.)*