

METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

The presentation of the community needs assessment data was organized into the following indicator classifications:

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| ▪ Environmental Scan | Chapter 3 |
| ▪ Family Life (including economic status and family stability) | Chapter 4 |
| ▪ Child Health and Education | Chapter 5 |
| ▪ Adult Health and Functioning | Chapter 6 |
| ▪ Elderly and Disabled Adults | Chapter 7 |
| ▪ Safety and Security | Chapter 8 |

Chapters 4 through 8 present quantitative and qualitative information pertaining to each of these classifications, while chapter 9 presents information about service providers serving St. Lucie County.

Indicator Data

Chapters 4 through 8 present quantitative data for each of the five classifications of indicators. These data were obtained from multiple sources, primarily state databases. Information was collected from the following:

- Agency for Workforce Innovation, Office of Early Learning, Florida Child Care Resource and Referral State Network
- Early Learning Coalition of St. Lucie County, Inc.
- Florida Department of Children and Families, 2006 Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey
- Florida Department of Children and Families, Performance Measures Dashboard
- Florida Department of Corrections
- Florida Department of Education, Education Information and Accountability Services (EIAS) Publications and Master School Identification File
- Florida Department of Education, Office of Early Learning
- Florida Department of Elder Affairs
- Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology
- Florida Department of Health, Office of Vital Statistics
- Florida Department of Juvenile Justice
- Florida Department of Law Enforcement
- Florida Education and Community Data Profiles
- Florida Legislature, Office of Economic and Demographic Research
- Florida Research and Economic Database
- St. Lucie County School District
- Syracuse University, Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse
- Treasure Coast Homeless Services Council, Inc.
- U.S. Census

- University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research
- University of Florida, Shimberg Center for Affordable Housing, Florida Housing Data Clearinghouse

The indicators included in this report were agreed upon by the Needs Assessment team and consultants. It is recognized that there are other indicators that were not included in this report due to time and cost constraints.

Data for the most recent year available are presented for St. Lucie County and for three peer counties – Lake, Manatee, and Marion. These counties were selected as peers based on population size, proximity to St. Lucie County, and the similarity in population and economic characteristics. Lake County includes Clermont, Leesburg, Eustis, Lady Lake, Tavares, and Mount Dora. Manatee County includes Bradenton, Palmetto, and Holmes Beach. Marion County includes Ocala, Belleview, and Dunnellon.

The table below shows some comparison points considered in the selection of the peer counties. Within each of the chapters, the data for St. Lucie County are contrasted with data for peer counties. For example, the population trends and the growth rate in St. Lucie and the peer counties are contrasted in the Environmental Scan section of the report.

<i>Points of Comparison: St. Lucie Co. and Peer Counties</i>	St. Lucie Co.	Lake Co.	Manatee Co.	Marion Co.
Population, 2005 estimate	241,305	277,035	306,779	303,442
Population, 2000	192,695	210,528	264,002	258,916
Population, percent change, April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2005	25.2%	31.6%	16.2%	17.2%
Children's Services Council	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Households, 2000	76,933	88,413	112,460	106,755
Persons per household, 2000	2.47	2.34	2.29	2.36
Median household income, 2003	\$37,388	\$39,013	\$39,683	\$33,177
Per capita money income, 1999	\$18,790	\$20,199	\$22,388	\$17,848
Persons below poverty, percent, 2003	12.9%	10.2%	10.8%	14.0%
Persons under 5 years old, percent, 2005	5.6%	5.4%	5.9%	5.3%
Persons under 18 years old, percent, 2005	21.9%	19.9%	21.4%	20.7%
Persons 65 years old and over, percent, 2005	21.1%	26.7%	22.5%	23.6%
White persons, percent, 2005	80.8%	88.4%	88.8%	85.9%
Black persons, percent, 2005	16.5%	8.8%	8.7%	11.6%
Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, percent, 2005	12.4%	9.1%	11.8%	7.9%
White persons not Hispanic, percent, 2005	69.2%	79.9%	77.6%	78.6%
Foreign born persons, percent, 2000	10.5%	5.1%	8.4%	5.2%
Language other than English spoken at home, pct age 5+, 2000	13.8%	8.4%	12.3%	8.8%
High school graduates, percent of persons age 25+, 2000	77.7%	79.8%	81.4%	78.2%
Bachelor's degree or higher, pct of persons age 25+, 2000	15.1%	16.6%	20.8%	13.7%

All rates presented in the indicator data are calculated by the source indicated.

Community Telephone and Focus Group Research

Chapters 4 through 8 each end with a section entitled Community Response. Community Response includes findings based on two research projects – a series of six focus groups and a community-wide telephone survey.

Primary research among residents of St. Lucie County was conducted in order to supplement secondary indicator data. Primary research provides a first hand look at factors that impact residents of the county. Both quantitative and qualitative primary research was conducted, with a telephone survey gathering statistically reliable data and focus groups that provided attitudes and perceptions among community leaders, agencies which provide services, faith-based organizations, Haitian residents, and Hispanic residents.

The telephone survey and focus groups were designed to provide data from a broad spectrum of residents. Further, the focus groups were invaluable in providing a voice of those residents who are under represented in random telephone surveys. This is particularly true of low income households and minority groups such as Hispanics and Haitians who either are not reachable by telephone or who are hesitant to participate in this type of survey.

Telephone Survey

A telephone survey of St. Lucie County residents was conducted in order to obtain results which offered a high level of statistical confidence. Survey results provided data on household composition, annual household income, education, and employment characteristics. The survey was conducted among 400 residents of the county which provided results at a 95% statistical level of confidence, with a margin of error of +/- 5%. A confidence level of 95%, +/- 5%, means that if this study were to be repeated, 95% of the time the results would fall within a range of plus or minus 5%.

The survey was designed to be representative of the demographics of the county as a whole.

The SRA and PEI team designed the telephone survey based upon their expertise with similar projects, as well as input from the task force led by United Way of St. Lucie County. The team worked closely with task force representatives to ensure that the survey was structured to provide the level of input needed.

The survey required 12 minutes to complete and included closed-ended questions (no open-ended questions were included).

After receiving approval on the survey, a pre-test was conducted among a random sample of area residents. The pre-test determined if questions were clear and non-ambiguous and if all possible answer options were included.

The following topic areas were included in the survey:

- Quality of life in the county and neighborhood
- How well programs and services in the county are handled
- How well the county serves the needs of specific population segments

- Crime rate and perception of safety
- Quality of health care
- Health issues and concerns
- Education
- Economic conditions
- Government and community service

The survey was fielded using a team of professionally trained and fully briefed interviewers. All members of the interviewing team attended three briefings to ensure a complete understanding of the survey.

CATI (Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing) was used to conduct this survey. CATI allows interviewers to use the computer instead of pencil and paper. Interviewers read the question as it appears on the monitor, then input responses directly into the system.

Interviewers were monitored by the field supervisor, and 10% of all completed surveys were validated in order to ensure quality control.

The telephone survey was conducted among 400 county residents between March 29 and April 3, 2007 during the hours of 5:00 PM and 9:00 PM Monday through Friday, and Saturday from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM in order to reach the full spectrum of residents.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are an effective market research technique for gathering perceptions and attitudes from groups of people who, because of their unique experiences and perspectives, are able to share a deeper level of information on a specific topic.

Six focus groups were conducted according to the following schedule:

Date	Time	Audience	Location
Tuesday - April 24, 2007	4:00 pm	Service providers	Indian River Community College
	6:30 pm	Community leaders	
Wednesday - April 25, 2007	4:00 pm	Service providers	Indian River Community College
	6:30 pm	Faith-based organizations	
Wednesday - June 27, 2007	5:30 pm	Hispanic residents	LaVoz newspaper office
Thursday - June 28, 2007	6:00 pm	Haitian residents	Notre Dame Mission

Service providers are ideal candidates for focus groups since they have the ability to supply a greater understanding of the needs of residents, from children to seniors. A full spectrum of providers was included in the research, with the following represented:

- Area Agency on Aging
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Boys & Girls Club of St. Lucie County
- Children's Services Council of St. Lucie County
- Council on Aging of St. Lucie County
- Early Learning Coalition of St. Lucie County
- Exchange Club CASTLE
- Habitat for Humanity
- Healthy Kids of St. Lucie County
- Healthy Start Coalition
- Hibiscus Children's Center
- Kids Connected By Design
- Mustard Seed Ministries
- National Alliance for Mental Health
- New Horizons of the Treasure Coast
- North Treasure Coast Chapter American Red Cross
- Planned Parenthood
- Safespace, Inc.
- St. Lucie Veteran's Services
- The ARC of St. Lucie County
- Treasure Coast Food Bank
- YMCA

In addition, community leaders were able to provide insight into the employment base on the community and represented the following:

- City of Fort Pierce Police
- Florida Atlantic University
- Florida Power and Light
- Fort Pierce Housing Authority
- Fort Pierce Utilities
- Publix at Tradition
- St. Lucie County Executive Roundtable
- St. Lucie County Sheriff
- Scripps Treasure Coast Newspapers

The faith-based organizations recruited for the focus group included the following:

- Indian River Presbyterian
- Miracle Prayer Temple
- New Life Christian Center
- New Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist
- Notre Dame Mission
- St. Lucie Catholic Church
- St. Peter Lutheran Church
- The Holy Place
- Victory Ministries International

The service providers, community leaders, and faith-based organization focus group respondents were invited to participate in the research by SRA using lists provided by the task force led by United Way of St. Lucie County. The Notre Dame Mission recruited the Haitian focus group and the LaVoz newspaper recruited the Hispanic focus group.

The task force was identified as the sponsor of the research during this process.

The service providers, community leaders, and faith-based organizations invited to attend received a letter confirming their participation in the group and providing all necessary specifications of the group including date, time, and location. The day before the group, the team re-contacted these individuals to ensure attendance. The Notre Dame Mission and LaVoz newspaper office confirmed attendance for the Hispanic and Haitian groups.

The team developed the list of questions to be asked during the focus groups. The questions were designed to meet the goals and objectives of the project and were specific to each group's audience.

The groups conducted among service providers, community leaders, and faith-based organizations were audio-video taped for later review and analysis. The DVDs from each session have been provided to the task force led by United Way of St. Lucie County. The Hispanic and Haitian groups were audio-taped only. Full transcripts of each group have been submitted to the task force under separate cover.

Program Directory Information

Chapter 9 presents an overview of the information collected as part of the program directory. The program directory information was collected through a web-based survey designed to capture information about the parent agency and each program that the agencies operate. To initiate data collection for the program directory, a listing of 159 agencies was compiled from "2-1-1" and from input by the task force. Of the 159 agencies, 68 completed program directory information for 169 programs.

Chapter 10 presents detailed information about specific services provided by the various agencies and programs.

Strategic Direction

Chapters 4 through 8 include a Strategic Direction section which outlines the key issues in that area and offers potential solutions for these issues.

This report offers strategic directions to be considered in each chapter. These are offered only as points to be considered to stimulate your discussion when you begin a dialogue about potential action plans. These should not be considered the only options available. It is suggested that an in-depth local analysis be undertaken prior to using these data.