



Community Report

August 2009

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Human Service Summit Focuses on Civic Leadership

UCS hosted the 8th annual Human Service Summit on June 9 at the Ritz Charles Conference Center in Overland Park. More than 120 people participated in the event, including elected officials, community members and representatives from government agencies, nonprofit, for-profit and community-based organizations that make up the area's human services infrastructure.

UCS Executive Director Karen Wulfkuhle set the stage for challenges facing the human service delivery system with an update on current demographic trends in Johnson County, which is growing annually by an average of 10,000 persons. While the area is frequently associated with prosperity, in reality Johnson County has the second highest number of people at 200% of the federal poverty level when ranked with other counties in the region. Additionally, she noted that Johnson County is projected to be the largest county in the metro area by 2030.

"In times like this, true leadership is needed now more than ever," said Brad Stratton, UCS board president. With providers being challenged to deliver results despite tighter budgets and smaller staffs, Ed O'Malley, CEO of the Kansas Leadership Center and former Kansas State Representative, energized participants with his keynote address. He later moderated a panel comprised of five leaders who engaged in compelling dialogue about leadership, especially in the current economic climate. See related articles.



Kansas Leadership Center CEO Ed O'Malley joins Brad Stratton, UCS board president, at the 8th annual Human Service Summit on June 9.

To wrap things up, attendees took part in two exercises to stimulate collective thinking. The first was an individual exercise to identify how organizations have responded to changes in availability of resources and changes in demand for service. The second was a small group-facilitated dialogue to discuss how individuals and organizations could exercise leadership to respond to changing demands and availability of resources.

Ed O'Malley Focuses on Rethinking Leadership in Keynote Address

Leadership is the ability to mobilize people to make progress on difficult issues, according to Ed O'Malley, former state representative from Roeland Park and current CEO of the Kansas Leadership Center in Wichita. O'Malley made these comments during his keynote address at the annual Human Service Summit in June.

"Think of leadership as an activity, not as a position of authority or expertise in a subject or cause," O'Malley said. "Don't just assume that addressing challenges is the job of someone in authority. True leadership is about mobilizing people to do difficult work."

At the heart of his presentation was a challenge to the audience to rethink the definition of leadership. O'Malley stressed how results are the critical measure of one's effectiveness as a leader. As obvious as that might sound, he has found that community civic leaders too often mistakenly believe they are succeeding because they dedicate a lot of time and effort.

Human Service Summit (cont'd)

O'Malley Keynote Address (cont'd)

Throughout his address, O'Malley shared some of the lessons he has learned at the Kansas Leadership Center over the past two-and-a-half years while visiting with civic groups across the state. He said that the gap between the current reality and our aspirations for our community, as in other Kansas communities, is a gap of competence related to leadership, not expertise.

"You have to be mindful of the challenges of civic leadership. It is much more difficult than in business or even within your own organization," O'Malley said. "In the business world, you have an authority structure to grease the wheels a little bit." That kind of structure does not exist when human service organizations are trying to provide community leadership, he has found. O'Malley concluded by leaving attendees with ideas to consider as they work to promote leadership in their own roles.

A complete summary of O'Malley's key points is available at www.ucsjoco.org. To learn more about the resources and training the Kansas Center for Leadership offers, visit www.kansasleadershipcenter.org.

Panelists on Leadership in Challenging Times

Following his keynote address, Ed O'Malley moderated a panel comprised of five leaders who engaged in dialogue about leadership and critical thinking. Panelists included **Mary Lou Jaramillo**, president and CEO of El Centro; **David Renz**, Ph.D., director of the Midwest Center for Nonprofit Leadership; **Janet Schalansky**, president and CEO of Kansas Children's Service League; **Brent Stewart, Sr.**, president and CEO, United Way of Greater Kansas City; and **David Wiebe**, executive director of Johnson County Mental Health Center.

Panelists shared personal experiences related to the difficulty of leadership, especially during challenging times. Balancing scores of demands, focusing on broader issues while keeping the bigger picture in focus, being comfortable with one's own limitations, and creating a sense of urgency, which results in risk-taking and ac-

tion were among the obstacles the leaders said they face on a regular basis.

The panel agreed that while the current down economy presents challenges, it also offers an opportunity to engage people and increase the awareness of human service needs. Plus, the downturn has made people more aware of the safety net that's available across the metro area.

"Very little will change if the same people keep doing the same thing; you've got to make sure you let the unusual voices rise." Mary Lou Jaramillo, president and CEO of El Centro

Educating legislators about the issues was among the positive things the group thought the human service infrastructure is doing well to respond to the struggling economy. They stressed, however, the importance of approaching legislators collectively – as system partners – with solutions.

To be effective, leaders must overcome the tendency to deal with day-to-day problems and look at the broader picture. "We can't do everything – we need to focus on what we should do," said Janet Schalansky, president and CEO of Kansas Children's Service League.

Summit Participant Engagement

Participants at the summit took part in small group dialogue to discuss organizations' planned responses to challenging times and new ideas for leadership roles to address them.

Detailed reports plus additional summary and demographic information presented at the 2009 UCS Human Service Summit are available at www.ucsjoco.org. UCS encourages the use of these materials to inform decision making that affects human service delivery.



"When it comes to civic leadership, there's more than one legitimate answer to the problem. A strong leader has to be willing to accept that." David Renz, Ph.D., director of the Midwest Center for Nonprofit Leadership

Report

Progress Update

Navigating the Future: Setting the Course 2007-2011

The second generation *Navigating the Future* plan was released in June of 2007. Careful analysis of data and trends in Johnson County resulted in a plan to focus attention on those areas where strategic action is most needed. Following is a brief summary of advancements made over the past 12 months, which was presented to Human Service Summit attendees on June 9, 2009.

√ *Access and Assets for Economic Security*

UCS worked diligently to increase enrollment in the federal Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), which is known in Kansas as the Food Assistance Program (formerly referred to as Food Stamps). During the 17-month project, the number of people receiving Food Assistance increased 3,500. Nearly 100 individuals from government entities, and community and faith-based groups were trained to assist consumers with applications while nine new SRS Access Points were added, expanding outreach and onsite Food Assistance Program enrollment.

√ *Housing Opportunity Trust Fund*

To increase the availability of quality housing opportunities for low-to-moderate income workforce and special needs households, UCS supported the application and subsequent award of Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds by HUD to Johnson County, Overland Park and Olathe. Opportunities for foreclosure assistance and information on fair housing practices were also distributed to providers working with low-to-moderate income households.

√ *Quality Learning for School Readiness*

UCS partnered with the Kansas Coalition for School Readiness to raise awareness and advocate for state investment in quality voluntary early childhood programs. Additionally, roundtable discussions were held with early childhood providers to promote collaboration, foster a shared sense of mission and discuss challenges in early learning and development.

More than \$11 million was earmarked in the Kansas FY2009 budget to establish the Kansas Early Childhood Block Grant thanks to the efforts of UCS and others. These funds remain dedicated to children's programs even after the legislature addressed the budget deficit.

√ *Bank on Change*

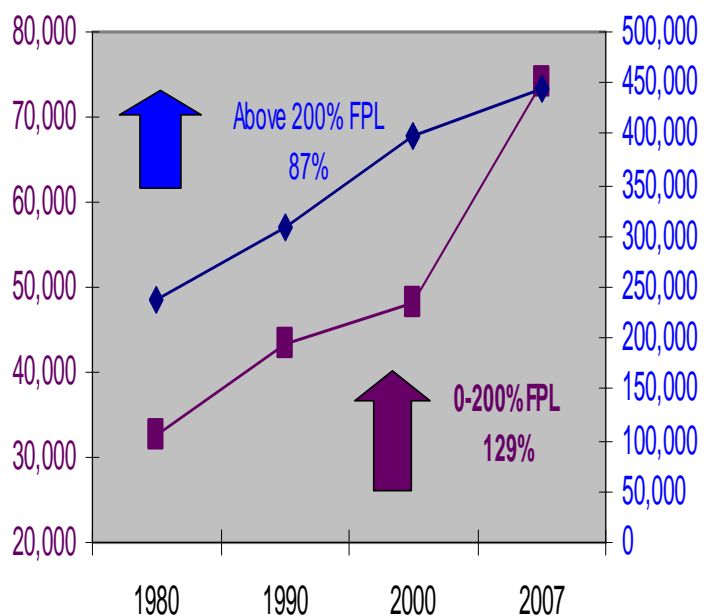
Service providers working with low-to-moderate income households were connected to a small dollar loan pilot program at the National Bank of Kansas City. The program is sponsored by the FDIC and offers an alternative to costly payday loans. Also, as part of its work managing the Johnson County Continuum of Care on Homelessness, UCS promoted Money Smart Week in April in an effort to increase awareness of the need for financial management skills.

For more information on *Navigating the Future: Setting the Course 2007-2011*, visit www.ucsjoco.org.

More County Residents Have Low Incomes

The number of people with income below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) grew 129% between 1980 and 2007 – from approximately 32,450 to 74,200. This outpaced the 87% population increase of people above 200% FPL — 238,000 to 444,500.

200% FPL Family of three is \$36,620
Family of four is \$44,100



UCS Secures Grant for Criminal Justice and Mental Health Collaborative Project

Improving the response to adults with mental health needs who are in contact with the criminal justice system is the goal of a collaborative planning project among criminal justice and mental health systems in Johnson County. Beginning in July, UCS will facilitate the 12-month project that is supported by a grant from the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City.

"Unfortunately, many people with mental health issues end up in the criminal justice system. Many of them, particularly those with serious and persistent mental illnesses, are better served by appropriate care and treatment which may not be able to be provided through the criminal justice system. Clearly, community safety can be enhanced by focusing community resources to provide appropriate treatment in a quick and responsive manner." Stephen Tatum, Chief Judge, 10th Judicial District

Estimates indicate that 24 percent of individuals in state prisons have a recent history of mental disorders.* The goal of this collaborative planning process is to develop a system that intervenes at the earliest point possible in order to get mental health services to people before they enter the criminal justice system or get too far into the system, and help people with mental illness who are incarcerated prepare for a safe and successful transition to the community.

Key participants from Johnson County criminal justice and mental health systems include the District Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Office, the 10th Judicial District Court, Court Services, Corrections Department, Criminal Justice Coordinator, Johnson County Mental Health Center, Public Defender's Office, National Alliance on Mental Illness Johnson County, Lenexa Police Department and Overland Park Police Department.

*U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics

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