



Catalyst for positive community
change in Johnson County, Kansas



Human Service Summit Actions to Advance *Navigating the Future* June 2008

UCS hosted the annual Human Service Summit on June 10. More than 125 people participated in the event, including elected officials, community members and representatives from government agencies, non-profit, for-profit, and community-based organizations that make up the area's human services infrastructure.

The Human Service Summit included a progress report on strategic action recommended in [Navigating the Future: Setting the Course 2007-2011](#), a community-wide planning effort initiated by UCS to study the most pressing human service issues facing Johnson County and subsequently focus attention on areas where strategic action is most needed. A [four-page status report](#) was distributed at the meeting.

Participants in the Human Service Summit also took part in small group dialogue to discuss the actions taken in the community to advance the *Navigating the Future* strategic action priorities and to confer about actions that should be taken by Johnson County's human services infrastructure in the coming year. UCS encourages organizations to consider this list of actions as they carry out their work in the community.

Access and Assets for Economic Security

Goal: Low-income households access benefits that encourage employment, reduce financial stress and safeguard economic security.

Priority Actions

- Reduce households' expenses by increasing public transportation options.
- Connect people to job training and services (including job-readiness, i.e. resume, interview, maintaining the job once secured) – especially for dislocated workers and youth.
- Make access to and knowledge of children's health insurance for uninsured more widely available.
- Collaborate/coordinate between various organizations currently providing, or considering providing, dental care programs to provide acute care to low-income uninsured residents.
- Increase availability and access to quality, affordable child care.
- Continue to work on affordable housing, and join efforts to maximize positive outcomes to prevent homelessness and foreclosure.

Bank on Change

Goal: Low-to-moderate income households are connected to financial products and develop the financial management skills they need to build economic security.

Priority Actions

- Develop partnerships with financial institutions for programs.
- Offer financial education in elementary schools.
- Expand small dollar loan products from the Alliance for Economic Inclusion (AEI).

Housing Opportunities

Goal: Quality housing opportunities are available for low-to-moderate income workforce and special needs households.

Priority Actions

- Carry forward the Housing Task Force's recommendations and goals.
- Advocate for a Housing Trust Fund at the county level.
- Work towards a better transit system that supports local affordable housing efforts.

Early Learning

Goal: Young children enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school.

Priority Actions

- Increase availability and affordability of quality early learning, esp. for children in poverty, infants/toddlers, preschool at risk, all-day kindergarten and autism.
- Increase parent involvement and education, including co-parenting, father involvement.
- Improve quality of early learning through expanded Quality Rating System and professional development.
- Increase advocacy and awareness regarding value of investments in early learning and where dollars are going.
- Promote partnerships.

Human Service Delivery – Cross-System Issues

Goal: Human service organizations embrace and develop approaches to cultural competence.

Priority Actions

- Offer Cultural Competency Training for human service professionals.
- Increase public safety/law enforcement awareness to improve understanding of, and response to, different cultures.
- Sponsor public service announcements addressing diversity and tolerance that target the general public.
- Reach out to Spanish-speaking and other minority populations to ensure populations are aware and accessing services. Target outreach to underserved areas.
- Develop more diverse leadership - board and staff - within the human service sector.
- Human service organizations develop and implement cultural competency plans.

Goals: Human service providers improve service accessibility by reducing barriers to services and raise awareness of human service needs by describing program successes.

Priority Actions

- Support and funding for people's health through public services and safety net providers.
- Improve transportation to get people to jobs and essential services.
- Expand food stamp and health care outreach to school and faith-based organizations.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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