

The intersection of 1) best practices, 2) community needs assessments, and 3) input from our local public and professionals marks the way to determining how United Way of LaPorte County, as well as other local funders, can have the greatest impact on Education, Financial Stability, and Health in LaPorte County.



United Way of LaPorte County

TRANSITION TO COLLECTIVE IMPACT FUNDING

UNITED WAY OF LAPORTE COUNTY 2-10-16

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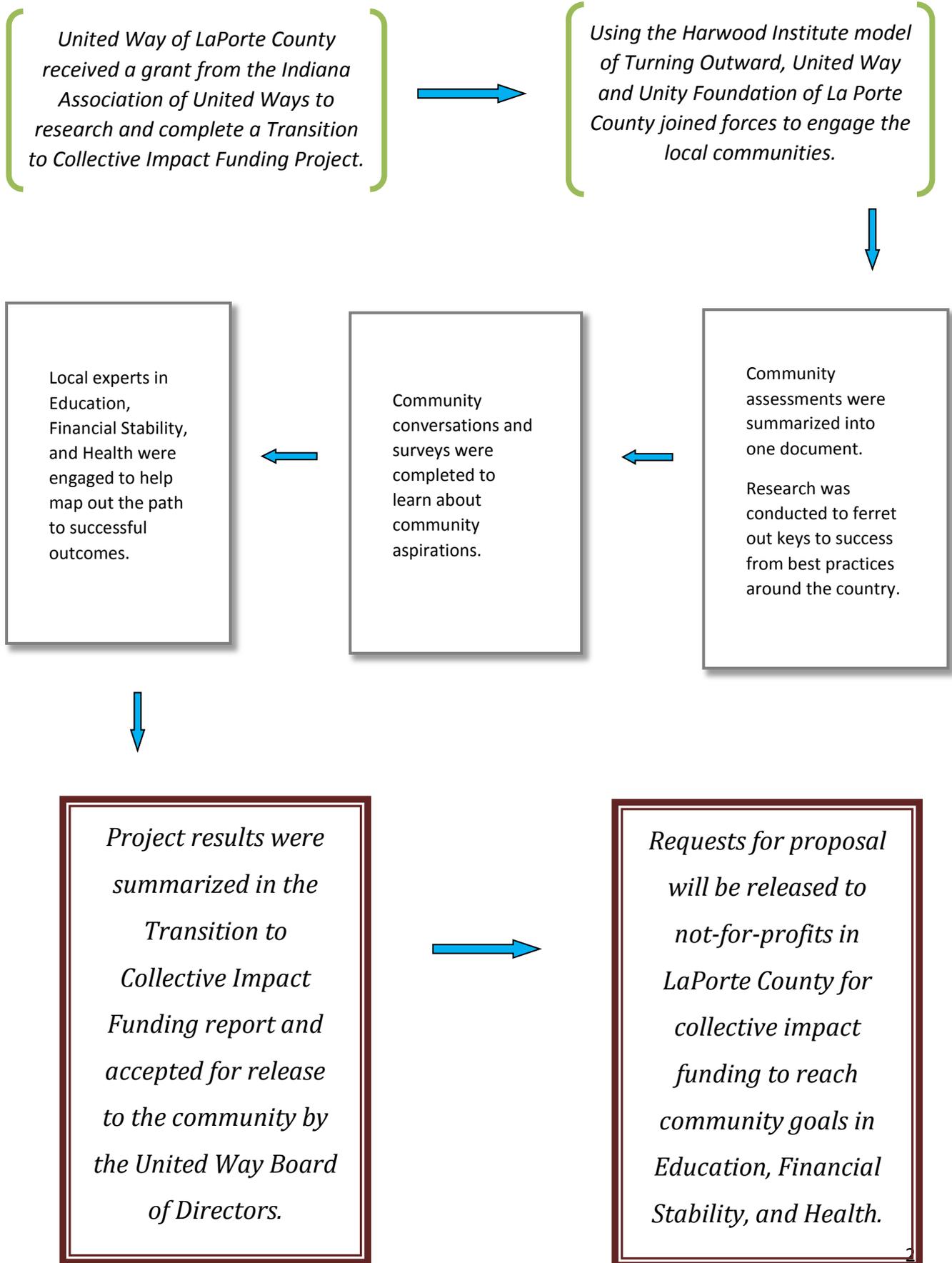


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Transition to Collective Impact Funding:

Executive Summary

United Way organizations around the world are changing the definition of success from annual dollars raised to measurable community impact in specific priority areas. Throughout 2014-15, the United Way of LaPorte County partnered with Unity Foundation of La Porte County to complete a Community Conversations project with funding from the Indiana Association of United Ways. The initial stages of this project included training intern teams from Purdue University Lafayette Campus, Purdue University North Central Campus, and Valparaiso University about United Way's worldwide priority areas: Education, Financial Stability, and Health. These teams were then charged to conduct best practice research in these key areas and to create compilations of successful initiatives. They extracted keys to success from each piece of research and formulated a list of common keys in each priority area to guide future planning. The teams reviewed the LaPorte County needs assessments that had been completed by other local community groups from 2005 through 2014, extracted commonalities, and analyzed how these combined assessments compared with the input gathered from our community conversations/surveys. Additional summits and focus groups with local subject matter experts helped to create pictures of what success/progress would look like and how it could be measured.

This has been a home grown, grassroots approach; and while our goal was not to produce a rigorous statistical report, we followed the Harwood Community Innovators model (<http://www.theharwoodinstitute.org/>) of turning outward to learn about our communities and great care was taken to represent the diversity of our county. **The intersection of 1) best practices/keys to success, 2) a community assessments summary, and 3) input from our local public and professionals marks the way to determining how United Way of LaPorte County, as well as other local funders, can have the greatest impact on Education, Financial Stability, and Health in LaPorte County.**

The United Way of LaPorte County board of directors embraces the collective impact model. In response to the learning gained through the process described above, they will release requests for proposals, RFPs, to not-for-profit agencies in LaPorte County. RFPs will include timelines, general requirements for applicants, and directions for completing letters of intent and online proposals. Technical assistance will be provided by United Way as needed. Proposals from programs and/or collaborative initiatives addressing one or more of the objectives in the three priority area (Education, Financial Stability, and Health) will be reviewed by local volunteers and subject matter experts. These "readers" will score each proposal and make final recommendations for funding awards to the United Way Board of Directors.

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The Process

The first community conversations were held on April 2, 2014 in Michigan City, and on April 29, 2014 in LaPorte. LaPorte County United Way Executive Director, Kris Pate, began these televised and recorded conversations by introducing the Harwood Model of community engagement, <http://www.theharwoodinstitute.org/>. Participants were asked first to identify what they aspire most for their community, what challenges stand in the way of accomplishing these aspirations, and what new conditions would be needed to break down barriers and move forward. Round table discussions were encouraged with the assistance of facilitators and were recorded by volunteer and intern scribes. Kris Pate and Unity Foundation president, Maggi Spartz, discussed the importance of Education, Financial Stability, and Health in a successful community. All in attendance were then asked to list more focused aspirations pertaining to Education, Financial Stability, and Health as described below in the comment data charts. Concurrently, these focused survey questions were made available online via the United Way of LaPorte County's website, <http://unitedwaylpc.org/communityconversations>, and distributed in Spanish with the help of Spanish Interpreter Angela Ruiz. Targeted focus group conversations were held throughout the county at later dates to ensure demographically representative responses and data continued to be collected for the next fifteen months. Additional conversations were held through November of 2015 to discuss the strengths and resources available in LaPorte County, share ongoing findings, gather additional input, and fine-tune funding goals for United Way of LaPorte County. The following section of this report details the Transition to Collective Impact Funding Project's findings, in order of the process, representing all input gathered across methods.

Overall and General Aspirations

Interestingly, general comments trended in the direction of Education, Financial Stability, and Health without any prompt to focus them toward these areas. LaPorte County residents appear to agree with the worldwide United Way belief in the importance of these three key building blocks of community success. In summary, all of the general comments were variations of these ideas and beliefs. The following comment is a perfect example that represents this data set as a whole:

“My hope is to live in a community where people are employed, educated, healthy, and safe. However, right now we face many broken systems, lack of awareness, and apathy. In order to get there together as a community, we need to become collaborative, educated, and understanding.”

Best Practice Research

Intern research teams worked together on the Community Conversations project beginning in January of 2014. The initial objective was to analyze common themes among best practices specific to Education, Financial Stability, and Health. The findings from this best practice research represent a wealth of direction and insights for future undertakings. **In general, best practice research finds that successful approaches to community change require 1) community involvement, 2) accountability, 3) perseverance, and 4) an overall desire for change.** The following summarizes common themes among best practice research specific to Education, Financial Stability, and Health.

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Education

Successful approaches specific to education most often include: 1) leadership/expert instruction - those implementing programs are passionate experts on the subject at hand and there is consistency of curriculum and teacher expertise; 2) community involvement, collaborations, and partnerships; 3) technology and diversity (race/class/gender); 4) an integrative student-centered approach; and 5) parental engagement.

Financial Stability

Successful approaches that are specific to building financial stability most often include 1) financial literacy education; 2) promotion of asset building; 3) dedication/perseverance; and 4) collaboration. Creating broad awareness and understanding of the mental models/lenses of people in poverty and building partnerships with businesses/financial institutions play important roles in successful initiatives.

Health

Successful approaches that are specific to health most often include 1) goal oriented “step programs”; 2) health education; 3) community outreach; and 4) effective use of technology.

Collective Impact

Exerpts from “Collective Impact” article by John Kania & Mark Kramer ([Winter 2011](#))

See full article at: http://ssir.org/images/articles/2011_WI_Feature_Kania.pdf

Large-scale social change requires broad cross-sector coordination, yet the social sector remains focused on the isolated intervention of individual organizations.

ISOLATED IMPACT

Most funders, faced with the task of choosing a few grantees from many applicants, try to ascertain which organizations make the greatest contribution toward solving a social problem. Grantees, in turn, compete to be chosen by emphasizing how their individual activities produce the greatest effect. Each organization is judged on its own potential to achieve impact, independent of the numerous other organizations that may also influence the issue. And when a grantee is asked to evaluate the impact of its work, every attempt is made to isolate that grantee’s individual influence from all other variables. In short, the nonprofit sector most frequently operates using an approach that we call isolated impact. It is an approach oriented toward finding and funding a solution embodied within a single organization, combined with the hope that the most effective organizations will grow or replicate to extend their impact more widely.

Funders search for more effective interventions as if there were a cure for failing schools that only needs to be discovered, in the way that medical cures are discovered in laboratories. As a result of this process, nearly 1.4 million nonprofits try to invent independent solutions to major social problems, often working at odds with each other and exponentially increasing the perceived resources required to make meaningful progress. Recent trends have only reinforced this perspective. The growing interest in venture philanthropy and social entrepreneurship, for example, has greatly benefited the social sector by identifying and accelerating the growth of many high-performing nonprofits, yet it has also accentuated an emphasis on scaling up a few select organizations as the key to social progress. Despite

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the dominance of this approach, there is scant evidence that isolated initiatives are the best way to solve many social problems in today's complex and interdependent world. No single organization is responsible for any major social problem, nor can any single organization cure it.

In the field of education, even the most highly respected nonprofits—such as the Harlem Children's Zone, Teach for America, and the Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP)—have taken decades to reach tens of thousands of children, a remarkable achievement that deserves praise, but one that is three orders of magnitude short of the tens of millions of U.S. children that need help. The problem with relying on the isolated impact of individual organizations is further compounded by the isolation of the nonprofit sector. Social problems arise from the interplay of governmental and commercial activities, not only from the behavior of social sector organizations. As a result, complex problems can be solved only by cross-sector coalitions that engage those outside the nonprofit sector.

We don't want to imply that all social problems require collective impact. In fact, some problems are best solved by individual organizations. In "Leading Boldly," an article we wrote with Ron Heifetz for the winter 2004 issue of the Stanford Social Innovation Review, we described the difference between technical problems and adaptive problems. Some social problems are technical in that the problem is well defined, the answer is known in advance, and one or a few organizations have the ability to implement the solution. Examples include funding college scholarships, building a hospital, or installing inventory controls in a food bank.

Adaptive problems, by contrast, are complex, the answer is not known, and even if it were, no single entity has the resources or authority to bring about the necessary change. Reforming public education, restoring wetland environments, and improving community health are all adaptive problems. In these cases, reaching an effective solution requires learning by the stakeholders involved in the problem, who must then change their own behavior in order to create a solution. Shifting from isolated impact to collective impact is not merely a matter of encouraging more collaboration or public-private partnerships. It requires a systemic approach to social impact that focuses on the relationships between organizations and the progress toward shared objectives. And it requires the creation of a new set of nonprofit management organizations that have the skills and resources to assemble and coordinate the specific elements necessary for collective action to succeed.

THE FIVE CONDITIONS OF COLLECTIVE SUCCESS

Our research shows that successful collective impact initiatives typically have five conditions that together produce true alignment and lead to powerful results: a common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone support organizations.

Common Agenda

Collective impact requires all participants to have a shared vision for change, one that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions. Take a close look at any group of funders and nonprofits that believe they are working on the same social issue, and you quickly find that it is often not the same issue at all. Each organization often has a slightly different definition of the problem and the ultimate goal. These differences are easily ignored

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when organizations work independently on isolated initiatives, yet these differences splinter the efforts and undermine the impact of the field as a whole. Collective impact requires that these differences be discussed and resolved. Every participant need not agree with every other participant on all dimensions of the problem. In fact, disagreements continue to divide participants in all of our examples of collective impact. All participants must agree, however, on the primary goals for the collective impact initiative as a whole. The Elizabeth River Project, for example, had to find common ground among the different objectives of corporations, governments, community groups, and local citizens in order to establish workable cross-sector initiatives. Funders can play an important role in getting organizations to act in concert. In the case of Strive, rather than fueling hundreds of strategies and nonprofits, many funders have aligned to support Strive's central goals. The Greater Cincinnati Foundation realigned its education goals to be more compatible with Strive, adopting Strive's annual report card as the foundation's own measures for progress in education. Every time an organization applied to Duke Energy for a grant, Duke asked, "Are you part of the [Strive] network?" And when a new funder, the Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile Jr./U.S. Bank Foundation, expressed interest in education, they were encouraged by virtually every major education leader in Cincinnati to join Strive if they wanted to have an impact in local education.

Shared Measurement Systems

Developing a shared measurement system is essential to collective impact. Agreement on a common agenda is illusory without agreement on the ways success will be measured and reported. Collecting data and measuring results consistently on a short list of indicators at the community level and across all participating organizations not only ensures that all efforts remain aligned, it also enables the participants to hold each other accountable and learn from each other's successes and failures. It may seem impossible to evaluate hundreds of different organizations on the same set of measures. Yet recent advances in Web-based technologies have enabled common systems for reporting performance and measuring outcomes. These systems increase efficiency and reduce cost. They can also improve the quality and credibility of the data collected, increase effectiveness by enabling grantees to learn from each other's performance, and document the progress of the field as a whole. All of the preschool programs in Strive, for example, have agreed to measure their results on the same criteria and use only evidence-based decision making. Each type of activity requires a different set of measures, but all organizations engaged in the same type of activity report on the same measures. Looking at results across multiple organizations enables the participants to spot patterns, find solutions, and implement them rapidly. The preschool programs discovered that children regress during the summer break before kindergarten. By launching an innovative "summer bridge" session, a technique more often used in middle school, and implementing it simultaneously in all preschool programs, they increased the average kindergarten readiness scores throughout the region by an average of 10 percent in a single year.

Mutually Reinforcing Activities

Collective impact initiatives depend on a diverse group of stakeholders working together, not by requiring that all participants do the same thing, but by encouraging each participant to undertake the specific set of activities at which it excels in a way that supports and is coordinated with the actions of others. The power of collective action comes not from the sheer number of participants or the uniformity of their efforts, but from the coordination of their differentiated activities through a mutually

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reinforcing plan of action. Each stakeholder's efforts must fit into an overarching plan if their combined efforts are to succeed. The multiple causes of social problems, and the components of their solutions, are interdependent. They cannot be addressed by uncoordinated actions among isolated organizations. All participants in the Elizabeth River Project, for example, agreed on the 18-point watershed restoration plan, but each is playing a different role based on its particular capabilities. One group of organizations works on creating grassroots support and engagement among citizens, a second provides peer review and recruitment for industrial participants who voluntarily reduce pollution, and a third coordinates and reviews scientific research. The 15 SSNs in Strive each undertake different types of activities at different stages of the educational continuum. Strive does not prescribe what practices each of the 300 participating organizations should pursue. Each organization and network is free to chart its own course consistent with the common agenda, and informed by the shared measurement of results.

Continuous Communication

Developing trust among nonprofits, corporations, and government agencies is a monumental challenge. Participants need several years of regular meetings to build up enough experience with each other to recognize and appreciate the common motivation behind their different efforts. They need time to see that their own interests will be treated fairly, and that decisions will be made on the basis of objective evidence and the best possible solution to the problem, not to favor the priorities of one organization over another. Even the process of creating a common vocabulary takes time, and it is an essential prerequisite to developing shared measurement systems. All the collective impact initiatives we have studied held monthly or even biweekly in-person meetings among the organizations' CEO-level leaders. Skipping meetings or sending lower-level delegates was not acceptable. Most of the meetings were supported by external facilitators and followed a structured agenda. The Strive networks, for example, have been meeting regularly for more than three years. Communication happens between meetings too: Strive uses Web-based tools, such as Google Groups, to keep communication flowing among and within the networks. At first, many of the leaders showed up because they hoped that their participation would bring their organizations additional funding, but they soon learned that was not the meetings' purpose. What they discovered instead were the rewards of learning and solving problems together with others who shared their same deep knowledge and passion about the issue.

Backbone Support Organizations

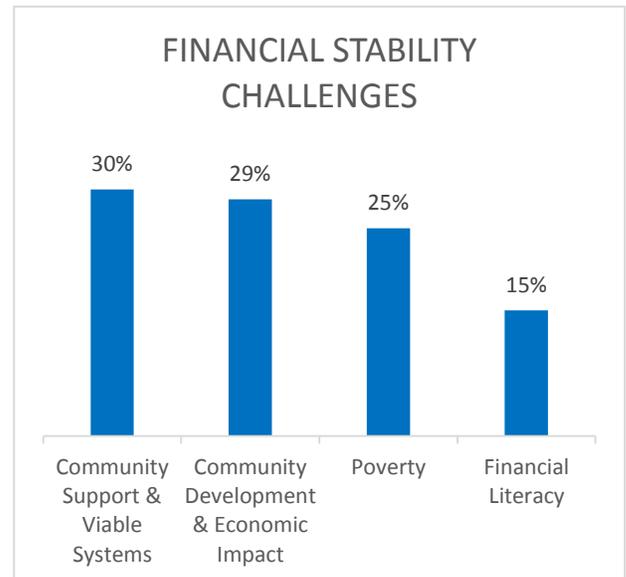
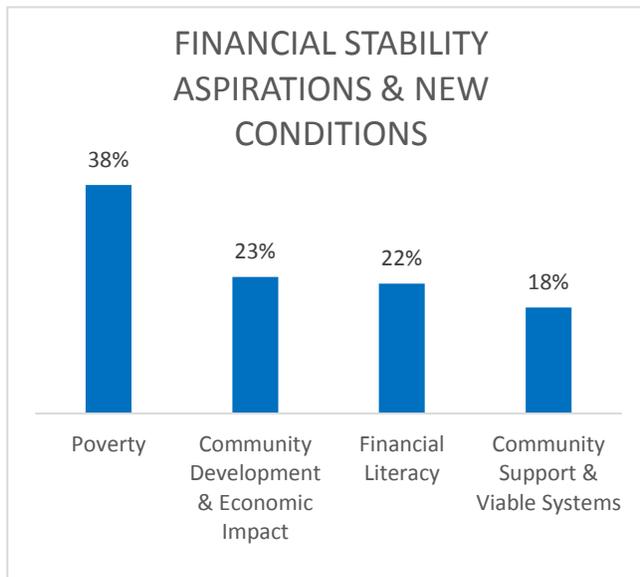
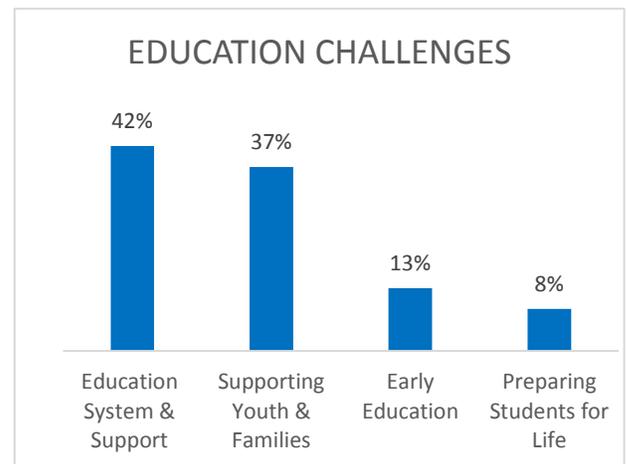
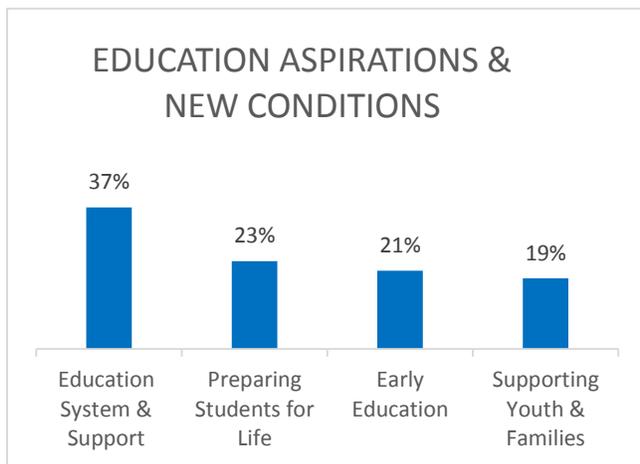
Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organization and staff with a very specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative. Coordination takes time, and none of the participating organizations has any to spare. The expectation that collaboration can occur without a supporting infrastructure is one of the most frequent reasons why it fails. The backbone organization requires a dedicated staff separate from the participating organizations who can plan, manage, and support the initiative through ongoing facilitation, technology and communications support, data collection and reporting, and handling the myriad logistical and administrative details needed for the initiative to function smoothly. Strive has simplified the initial staffing requirements for a backbone organization to three roles: project manager, data manager, and facilitator. Collective impact also requires a highly structured process that leads to effective decision making. In the case of Strive, staff worked with General Electric (GE) to adapt for the social sector the Six Sigma process that GE uses for its own continuous quality improvement. The Strive Six Sigma process includes training, tools, and

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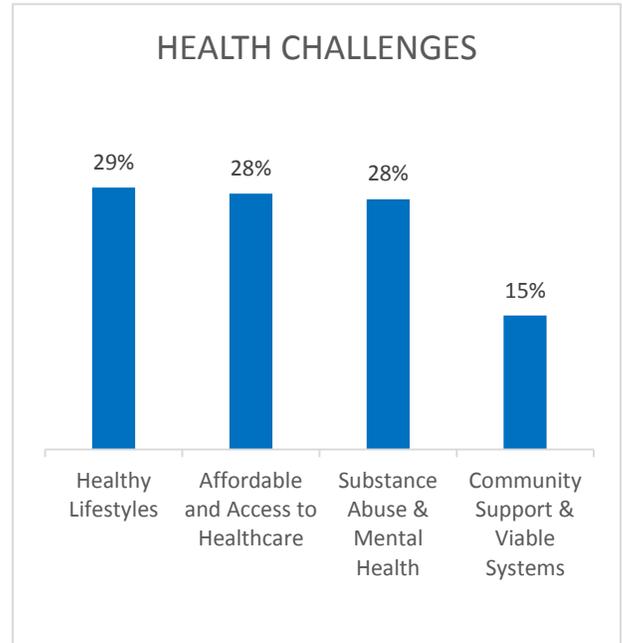
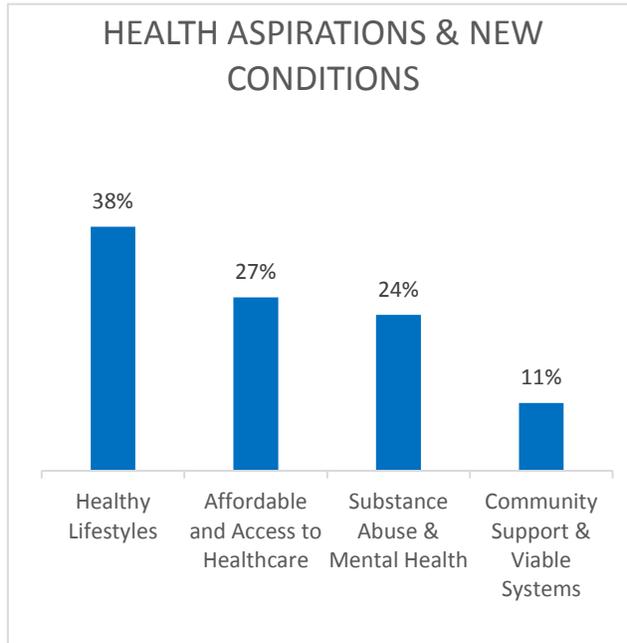
resources that each SSN uses to define its common agenda, shared measures, and plan of action, supported by Strive facilitators to guide the process. In the best of circumstances, these backbone organizations embody the principles of adaptive leadership: the ability to focus people’s attention and create a sense of urgency, the skill to apply pressure to stakeholders without overwhelming them, the competence to frame issues in a way that presents opportunities as well as difficulties, and the strength to mediate conflict among stakeholders.

Aspirations, Challenges, and New Conditions Comment Data

The following charts depict the combined input from all conversations and survey entries regarding the prompts, “My aspirations for my community are...” “The challenges we face in reaching these aspirations are...,” and “The changes needed in my community to reach our aspirations are...”



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Micro/Macro Comparative Descriptive Analysis

After our initial conversations, we began taking a micro approach to analysis which resulted in several distinct coding variables labeling our comment data. We continued adding to and expanding these variables as focus group conversations and online surveys brought in more comment data regarding aspirations, challenges, and new conditions. As we brought our data collection to an end, we compared our findings to the collective results of past LaPorte County needs assessments. Using data common to both research methods, we were able to focus our data on four macro categories as shown in the previous charts. However, we will discuss the micro categories that were taken into consideration when developing these categories.

Regarding Education

Our education data trends in the same direction for both Education System & Support and Early Education. However, while we aspire highly for a community that prepares students for life, we rank this as fourth out of the top four challenges specific to education. In the same way, we rank Supporting Youth & Families fourth out of the four aspirations and new conditions categories, but see it as one of the biggest challenges we face. The following lists represent the micro categories that comprise our final four data categories for education.

Education System & Support includes comments labeled as:

- Systems/Political/Leadership
- Teachers
- Value of Education

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Preparing Students for Life includes comments labeled as:

- Alternative Education
- Post-Secondary Education
- Life Skills
- Graduation Rate
- K12 Skills

Early Education includes comments labeled as:

- Early Education
- Literacy
- Kindergarten Readiness
- Literacy

Supporting Youth & Families includes comments labeled as:

- Family Involvement
- Parents (discipline, involvement, skills, apathy)

Regarding Financial Stability

Our financial stability data trends in a fairly stable direction regarding Community Development & Economic Impact and Financial Literacy. However, while Community Support & Viable Systems has been identified as the greatest of the four challenges specific to financial stability, it ranked fourth in the number of comments of the four categories under aspirations and new conditions. Most importantly, under aspirations and new conditions comment data, we see that Poverty stands out significantly compared to the additional three categories. At the same time, Poverty drops significantly compared to the other four categories as the last of the four top challenges identified. This implies that community support/viable systems and community development/economic impact are identified as the greatest roadblocks to addressing poverty. The following lists represent the micro categories that comprise our final four data categories for financial stability.

Poverty includes comments labeled as:

- Poverty
- Basic Needs
- Housing/Homelessness
- Financial Stability

Community Development & Economic Impact includes comments labeled as:

- Activities/Things To Do
- Economic and Infrastructure Development
- Transportation

Financial Literacy includes comments labeled as:

- Financial Literacy

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Community Support & Viable Systems includes comments labeled as:

- Systems/Political/Leadership
- Employment

Regarding Health

Our health data trends in the same direction, meaning that each category represented on the Health charts above is seen both as an aspiration/new condition and as a challenge in relative terms. For example, “healthy lifestyles” has been identified as the highest aspirations/new conditions response. It has also been identified as the biggest challenge we face regarding health. This means that we are unified in our thinking as a community; we can identify both what we want to see and the barriers that stand in the way. The first step to breaking down barriers to building a healthy community is becoming aware of the true challenges faced. The following lists represent the micro categories that comprise our final four data categories for health.

Healthy Lifestyles includes comments labeled as:

- Activities/Things to do
- Value of Health
- Nutrition/Exercise
- Alternative Health
- Health Education
- Environmental
- Preventative Health
- Obesity

Affordable and Access to Healthcare includes comments labeled as:

- Affordability Regarding Healthcare
- Access to Healthcare
- Health Education

Substance Abuse & Mental Health includes comments labeled as:

- Substance Abuse
- Mental Health

Community Support & Viable Systems

- Systems/Political/Leadership
- Safety/Crime

Regarding Common Themes

The following comment labels trended throughout the majority of the subcategory focus areas across Education, Financial Stability, and Health. These common themes were also identified throughout the comments regarding aspirations, new conditions, and challenges by respondents.

- The importance of building strong, connected communities

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- Changing attitudes is a vital key to community change
- Engage and connect youth in/with our communities
- Cohesiveness/Partnerships/Collaborations among service providers
- Connections to church/spirituality
- Funding and resource development

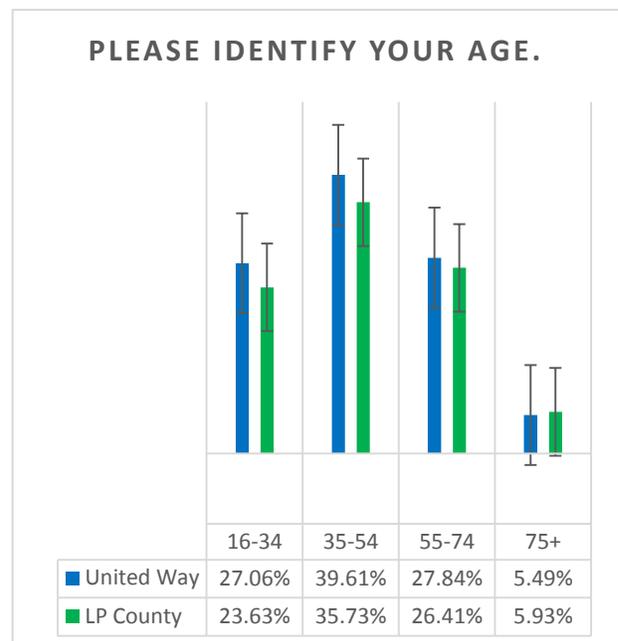
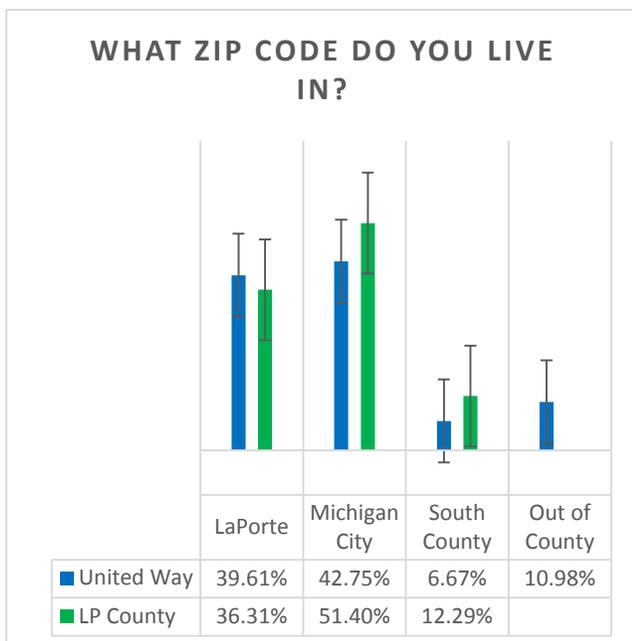
Specifically across Health categories, the following comment labels were reoccurring themes:

- Seniors
- People with disabilities
- Veterans

Aspirations, Challenges, & New Conditions Demographics

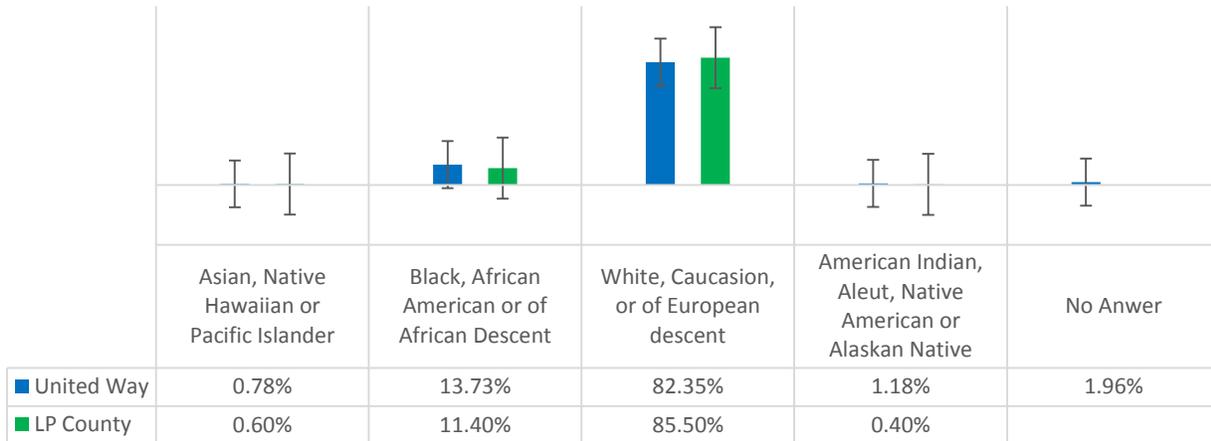
Ensuring a full representation of the many voices in our community was a top priority. Harwood’s demographic survey was completed by respondents that participated in the Aspirations survey, whether by attending a conversation or by completing an online survey. The online survey was promoted with the help of a social media campaign and a survey in Spanish was promoted directly to the Latino/Hispanic community. Additional focus groups were identified and targeted using our demographic data.

The following charts represent demographic sets: Zip Code, Age, Race/Ethnicity, Hispanic/Latino, Primary Language Spoken at Home, Gender, and Household Income. United Way and LaPorte County demographics are represented in the graphs by color, and each bar displays the error line. To better understand this type of descriptive data, we have to allow the error bars, rather than the numbers or graph bars, to guide our discussion following the charts.

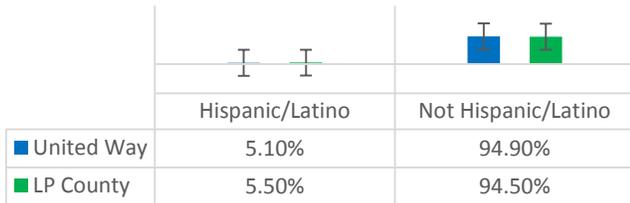


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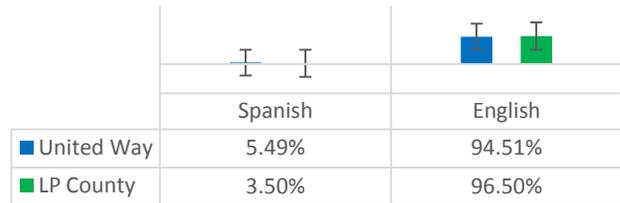
HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE YOUR RACE OR ETHNIC GROUP?



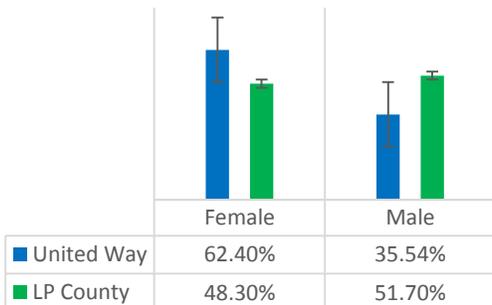
DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF LATINO OR HISPANIC?



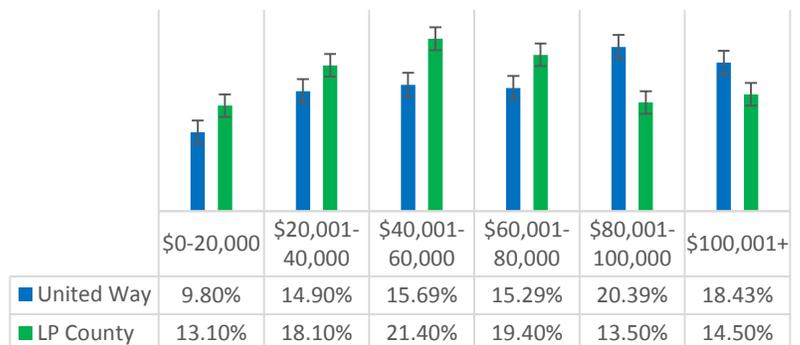
PRIMARY LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME



HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY YOURSELF?



WHAT IS YOUR FAMILY INCOME?



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Demographics Discussion

We set out to answer one specific research question with our demographics survey: “Have we represented the diverse voices of our community regarding aspirations, challenges, and new conditions?” In order to answer this question, we have used comparative descriptive analytics to measure whether the demographic statistics of the respondents who participated in the process mirror those of the community as a whole. When comparing two descriptive statistics, in this case any La Porte County demographic (blue) with the same United Way demographic (green), we use the error lines to tell us whether any difference that is found is statistically significant. This could mean that we did not have a positive outcome regarding our research question. The following discussion will provide insight into the demographic charts and tables.

Regarding Hispanic/Latino, Primary Language, and Race/Ethnicity:

These three data sets represent the best possible outcome for comparative descriptive research. You will notice that the graph bars seem to be equal, the chart numbers are very close, and the error bars are either perfectly aligned or one measures within the other (see county versus United Way regarding response: Black, African American, or of African Descent). This means that we have, in fact, achieved an outstanding representation of the unique diversity within our community regarding these three demographic sets.

Regarding Age:

It is also ideal if United Way over-represents LaPorte County in any demographic set as long as this is the case across all sections in that set (see sets: 16-34, 35-54, 55-74), or is combined with sets whose error bars are aligned with or measure within one another (see sets 55-74 and 75+).

Regarding Zip Code:

Zip code is the first data set highlighting a slight variance. There is little statistical significance regarding the difference we see in LaPorte respondents, while the difference within Michigan City and South County residents is more significant. The significance of this difference may be diminished by the group of 10% of all respondents who reside outside of La Porte County. It is important to note, that this 10% likely work in La Porte County.

Regarding Income:

While all demographics can impose ethical dilemmas such as how to target specific groups without stereotyping or profiling, “Income” can be the most difficult to manage. Especially regarding a project that aims to build community and promote awareness regarding the mental model/lense of poverty. While looking at the Income chart, it is easy to see statistically significant difference. However, this does not reflect a lack of validity in the research question. It is imperative to understand that while we can target certain groups, such as an audience in the age group of 75+, without offending participants by holding focus group conversations at retirement facilities or senior centers, it is much more difficult and highly unethical to assume the financial status of respondents belonging to any group.

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Regarding Gender:

Gender poses interesting questions that are very common in areas such as social services, community minded programming, community participation, and non-profit organizations: “Why are these fields of interest so often dominated by females,” and “How do we engage more men in conversations regarding them?” These gender findings are certainly not unique to LaPorte County. For this reason, this statistically significant difference does not pose threat to the validity of our original research question.

In Summary:

United Way of LaPorte County has made every effort to obtain an equal distribution regarding common community demographic sets. Although some differences, particularly regarding gender and income were apparent, they were not significant enough to believe that demographic survey goals had not been accomplished. However, future research may be suggested regarding gender in social services or how income and/or gender intersect with community problem solving participation. **Overall and in general, we can report that the comment data collected through Harwood’s Community Aspiration Survey process provides an accurate representation of the many diverse voices within LaPorte County.**

The Summits

Separate summits were held with local experts and professionals to discuss take-aways from best practice research, the community assessments summary, and community conversations results for each of our key priority areas: Education, Financial Stability, and Health. It is important to note the interconnectedness of these priority areas was clearly apparent in the overlap of one topic into another. For example, when discussing poverty, its impact on educational success was highlighted; and when discussing health, whether physical or mental, a clear connection to financial stability was noted.

Research of best practices indicates the best way to influence community change is to encourage community involvement, build in accountability, exhibit perseverance, and have a strong desire for change.

Opening Summit Statement

“At United Way of LaPorte County and at Unity Foundation, we know that we need to be out with people in our community, listening to their hopes and aspirations and letting them guide us forward.

In 2014, we held a series of community conversations in LaPorte County. Hearing people talk about their aspirations for their community was very helpful and eye-opening.

We also assembled a summary of needs assessments done on LaPorte County since 2005 to gather more insight. Then we took stock of our local resources (not only those on the 2-1-1 list, but also the ones that are less well-known). We believe that the overlap of these three components: community aspirations, documented community needs, and available resources converge on a “sweet spot” where we can focus our efforts and our dollars to have the greatest impact on moving LaPorte County forward.

This work has changed the way we approach community solutions. Through our partnerships with local agencies and institutions, we have brought together the leadership from the community – YOU – so we can focus on our development together. This morning, we are holding a summit to talk about what we’ve learned so far and to hear your input to help us forge solutions and move forward together.”

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Financial Stability Summit

The Financial Stability/Poverty Summit was held on March 25, 2015. Local statistics and current United Way funded programming information was explained. LaPorte County has higher percentages in almost all areas of poverty when compared to national and state rates. Free/reduced lunch rates are higher than most of the state, ranking 8th highest out of 92 counties. As they grow older, children receiving free/reduced lunch also do more poorly as a group on advanced placement testing.

The causes of poverty include one or more of the following: 1) individual behaviors and circumstances, 2) community conditions, 3) exploitation, and/or 4) political/economic structures and systems. Best practices in combatting poverty include: 1) improving financial literacy through education, 2) promotion of asset building, 3) dedication and 4) collaboration through effective partnerships with banks and businesses with a common understanding of poverty.

Our current programming approaches include safety nets to manage the effects of poverty and assistance in the transition out of poverty. The need for a more focused, community-wide approach that will impact behaviors, conditions, exploitation, and systems supports is central to the United Way of LaPorte County's transition into collective impact program/collaboration funding.

Education Summit

The Education Summit was held on May 27, 2015. Community aspirations and local educational program statistics were discussed. Best practices point to the importance of having: 1) leadership/expert instruction - those implementing programs are passionate experts on the subject at hand and there is consistency of curriculum and teacher expertise; 2) community involvement, collaborations, and partnerships; 3) technology and diversity (race/class/gender); 4) an integrative student-centered approach; and 5) parental engagement. The importance of: 1) early education that prepares children to learn within a school environment and 2) the on-going need to support students as they continue through their school years and prepare for life were primary topics of discussion.

Health Summit

The Health Summit was held on June 3, 2015. Crucial issues afflicting our region include: tobacco and substance abuse; maternal and infant health care; pre-term birth/low birth weight; teen birth rate/family planning; access to health care; education on healthy choices; obesity and chronic disease management; the need for community partnerships; and mental health care. Notable commonalities arising between the aspirations survey responses and assessed community needs are substance abuse and mental health issues. Nearly half of U.S. adults will develop at least one mental illness during their lifetime. However, more than 80% of people with symptoms of mental illness, particularly depression, do not seek treatment. Lack of knowledge, fear of disclosure, rejection from friends, and discrimination are a few reasons why people with mental illness do not seek help.

Mental illness is associated with increased occurrence of chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, epilepsy, and cancer but with less use of medical care, reduced adherence to treatment therapies for chronic diseases, and higher risks of adverse health outcomes. Mental illness is also highly associated with substance abuse, suicide, and violent crime/sexual abuse, and domestic/child abuse.

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LaPorte County has the highest rate of bars per capita in the state of Indiana with 92% more bars than average for Indiana and 92% more than the United States as a whole. It has been long established in the research that greater densities of bars, taverns, and sometimes restaurants are directly related to drunken driving and alcohol-related crashes. Arrests and treatments for heroin and prescription drugs has increased exponentially since 2005, an alarming trend. In the 2014 State Epidemiological Report, researchers averaged the priority scores across all five drug categories and ranked counties in Indiana by severity of alcohol and drug problems:

- Alcohol: LaPorte scored 210 out of 230 (3rd highest in State)
- Marijuana: score: 200 out of 250 (6th highest)
- Cocaine and Heroin: 250 out of 288 (3rd highest)
- Meth: not in top 10%
- Prescription Drug: not in top 10%

Best practices suggest that we need goal-oriented “Step Programs” that celebrate incremental successes, more public health education, greater communication and outreach, and more effective use of technology to address health/health education issues.

Goals and Measurements

Education

Education Goal: Prepare students for life by addressing one or more of the following issues (see request for proposal, Education RFP, for sample measurements for success):

- a) Pre-K; preparing children for success in school
- b) Accomplishment of grade level milestones
- c) On-time high school diploma attainment
- d) Career/college preparation
- e) Student support (mentoring, tutoring, etc.)
- f) Social skills and emotional resilience
- g) Extra-curricular opportunities/explorations
- h) Parental/family engagement and support

Financial Stability

Financial Stability Goal: Increase financial stability in LaPorte County by addressing one or more of the following issues (see request for proposal, Financial Stability RFP, for sample measurements for success):

- a) Homelessness
- b) Children living in poverty in LaPorte County
- c) Repeat usage of basic needs assistance
- d) “Toxic Charity”
- e) Financial literacy education
- f) Adult literacy rates
- g) Job preparedness and employment
- h) Advocacy for systems changes

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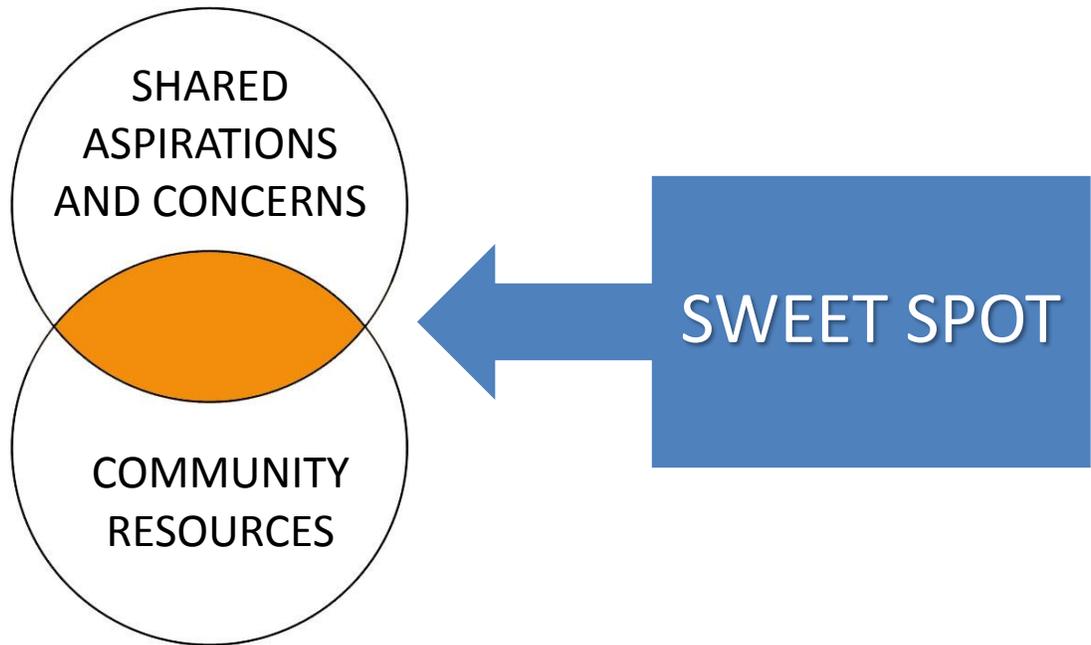
Health

Healthy Lifestyles Goal: Increase positive health behaviors in LaPorte County in one or more of the following categories (see request for proposal, Health RFP, for sample measurements for success):

- a) Chronic disease prevention, detection, recovery, and/or management
- b) Obesity
- c) Prenatal care and healthy births
- d) Mental health disorder prevention, detection, recovery, and/or management
- e) Substance abuse prevention, detection, recovery, and/or management (tobacco, alcohol, and drugs)
- f) Education, outreach, and/or advocacy

THE SWEET SPOT

UNITED WAY OF LAPORTE COUNTY FUNDING PRIORITIES



EDUCATION

Prepare preschoolers for in-school success

Prepare students for a lifetime of success

FINANCIAL STABILITY

Create bridges out of poverty

Reduce the number of homeless

Reduce the number of children living in poverty

HEALTH

Reduce obesity

Reduce substance abuse

Increase positive maternal and child health outcomes

UNITED WAY OF LAPORTE COUNTY – TRANSITION TO COLLECTIVE IMPACT FUNDING

Focus on “ALICE” (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed)

United Ways across Indiana are increasingly concerned about the growing number of people in our communities who hold jobs but just can't seem to maintain stability, much less get ahead. The term “ALICE” represents the men and women of all ages and races who get up each day to go to work, but who aren't sure if they'll be able to make ends meet. These families are defined with low income, little or no savings, and steady jobs. This population is comprised of households with men and women alike, and includes children and seniors.

ALICE households are working households and pay taxes; they hold jobs and provide services that are vital to the Indiana economy in a variety of positions such as retail salespeople, laborers and movers, team assemblers, and nursing assistants. The core issue is that these jobs do not pay enough to afford the basics of housing, child care, food, health care, and transportation. Moreover, the growth of low-skilled jobs is projected to outpace that of medium- and high-skilled jobs into the next decade. At the same time, the cost of basic household necessities continues to rise. There are serious consequences for both ALICE households and their communities when these households cannot afford the basic necessities. ALICE households are forced to make difficult choices such as skipping preventative health care, healthy food, or car insurance. These “savings” threaten their health, safety, and future – and they reduce Indiana's economic productivity and raise insurance premiums and taxes for everyone. The costs are high for both ALICE families and the wider community. Public and private assistance is not enough to lift ALICE households to economic stability. The income of ALICE and poverty-level households in Indiana is supplemented with \$13.9 billion in government, nonprofit, and health care resources. Despite this assistance, ALICE and poverty-level households remain 23 percent short of the income needed to reach the ALICE Threshold. For more information, see <http://unitedwaylpc.org/reports>. **Funding applicants will be requested to address if/how their work will impact “ALICE” in LaPorte.**

Next Steps

The United Way of LaPorte County board of directors embraces our collective impact direction. In response to the learning gained through this process, they will release requests for funding, RFPs, to not-for-profit agencies in LaPorte County for programs and/or collaborative initiatives addressing one or more of the three goals listed above. Applicants may choose to address one or any combination of sub-goal areas under the chosen goal(s). RFPs will include timelines, general requirements for applicants, and directions for completing online proposals. Technical assistance will be provided by United Way throughout the collaboration building and RFP submission process.

Special Thanks and Acknowledgments

Numerous volunteers, interns, community partners, and our United Way of LaPorte County board and staff provided assistance with the Community Conversations project. Most notably, Unity Foundation of La Porte County president, Maggi Spartz, brought many years of successful community planning experience along with expert facilitation skills to the table. Nanda Danitschek and Nicole Mitchell, our very first interns to assist with the process, stuck by us as dedicated volunteers long after their internships had ended. Nanda shared her expertise in data collection and analysis throughout the project and took on the role of lead volunteer as other interns came onboard. Special thanks to everyone who participated in this incredible learning experience!