

2011 Community Needs Assessment
Volume II: Focus Groups of Community Stakeholders



About the 2011 Community Needs Assessment

The United Way of Carlisle and Cumberland County engaged the Institute of State and Regional Affairs (ISRA) at Penn State Harrisburg to undertake a Community Needs Assessment to help them better understand and document their local community needs and issues. The activities undertaken by ISRA are documented individually in specific stand-alone reports (listed below) and culminate in a Final Report offering observations and recommendations.

The individual reports include:

Volume I: In-Depth Interviews of Community Stakeholders

Volume II: Focus Groups

Volume III: Community Survey of Residents

Volume IV: Demographic and Socioeconomic Background Research

Volume V: Final Report and Recommendations

The project team from the Institute of State and Regional Affairs at Penn State Harrisburg included:

Michael Behney, Director, Overall project coordination

Dr. Auden Thomas, Director, Center for Survey Research, Primary data collection coordination

Stephanie Wehnau, Associate Director, Center for Survey Research, Survey instrument development

Nicole Sturges, Project Coordinator, Focus group moderator

Tim Servinsky, Research Associate, Survey tabulation and analysis

Sue Copella, Director, Pennsylvania State Data Center, Demographic data collection coordination

Jennifer Shultz, Associate Director for Operations, Pennsylvania State Data Center, Demographic research

John Maurer, Project Associate, Pennsylvania State Data Center, Demographic research

Larry Meyers, Project Associate, Pennsylvania State Data Center, GIS/Mapping

Erik Li, Director, Information Technology Center, Online systems coordination

Dave Horan, Programmer, Information Technology Center, Website development

Chris Gulotta, Principal of The Gulotta Group, In-depth interviews

Dr. Robert Garraty, CEO of Garraty Workforce Investment, In-depth interviews

Assistance from United Way of Carlisle and Cumberland County was provided by:

Sherrie Davis, Executive Director

Kate Brazel, Community Impact Director

Special thanks to the G.B. Stuart Charitable Foundation for financial support for the 2011 Community Needs Assessment

Volume II: Focus Groups of Community Stakeholders

Technical Report

Conducted for:

The United Way of Carlisle and Cumberland County

Prepared by:

**Center for Survey Research
Penn State Harrisburg**

September 2011

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

The United Way of Carlisle and Cumberland County Focus Groups were conducted by the Center for Survey Research (CSR) at Penn State Harrisburg as part of the 2011 Community Needs Assessment. The purpose of the groups was to gather thoughts and perspectives on the local environment and to identify the most pressing needs of the local community.

A total of four focus groups, which included separate groups of community leaders, service providers, consumers, and community members, were conducted in June 2011. All of the groups were held at the United Way of Carlisle and Cumberland County (UWCCC) boardroom in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

METHODOLOGY

Participant Recruiting

Several recruiting strategies were utilized to recruit the four focus group populations to obtain the most participation possible.

Service Providers/Community Leaders

The United Way of Carlisle and Cumberland County (UWCCC) sent a direct mail pre-notification letter to a list of service providers and community leaders who were selected by the UWCCC. The letter contained information about the Community Needs Assessment and encouraged their participation in the focus groups (Appendix A). A few days later, an invitation email was sent to the UWCCC-provided lists (Appendix B). Participation was on a first-come, first-served basis. Interested participants were placed in a focus group session and given final confirmation of the date, time, and location of the session via phone or email. Reminder emails were also sent the day before the scheduled focus group session to confirm participant attendance (Appendix C).

Community Members

The Center for Survey Research purchased a listed household sample from the UWCCC coverage area. UWCCC sent a direct mail invitation letter to the targeted sample (Appendix D). Participation was on a first-come, first-served basis. Interested participants were placed in the focus group session and given final confirmation of the date, time, and location of the session via phone. Reminder phone calls were also made the day of the scheduled focus group session to confirm participant attendance.

Consumers

The Center for Survey Research sent an email and recruiting flyer to a list of United Way member agencies requesting their assistance to recruit direct consumers of their services for a focus group session (Appendices E & F). United Way member agencies were asked to forward the email or post the recruiting flyer in their offices. Participation was on a first-come, first-served basis. Reminder phone calls were also made the day of the scheduled focus group session to confirm participant attendance.

Composition of Focus Groups

In total, 28 individuals participated in the UWCCC focus group sessions. The groups ranged in size from 4 to 10 participants per group. Appendix G displays demographic characteristics of the participants.

Incentives

For the community members and consumers groups, a \$20 cash incentive was given to participants as a thank you for their participation. Light refreshments were also served at those focus group sessions. In lieu of a cash incentive, the community leaders and service providers groups were given boxed lunches prior to the start of the focus group sessions.

Moderating

The four focus groups were moderated by professional, experienced CSR staff members familiar with focus group methods and facilitation. Nicole Sturges served as moderator, and Timothy Servinsky and Michael Behney were note-takers. CSR used moderator's guides developed with

the UWCCC (Appendix H). Each focus group lasted 1 to 2 hours. Prior to participating in the focus group discussion, participants signed an informed consent form (Appendix I) and completed a short intake form designed to collect demographic information (Appendix J).

Recording

CSR staff digitally recorded each group with a dual recorder system.

FINDINGS

What do you think are some of the community's greatest strengths? With what aspects of your community are you satisfied?

Participants mentioned numerous strengths in the local community including the quality of life, small town atmosphere, good schools, nice parks, fairly low crime rate, stability, and strong sense of community. Several groups also noted the diversity of the community with a variety of residents including military from the Army War College and professors and college students from Dickinson College and Penn State Dickinson School of Law.

The one major strength that was discussed in each focus group was the availability of human service programs and assistance for those in need, especially churches, faith-based organizations, non-profit groups, and local government agencies. The local community is very generous, and many donate time and money to assist these organizations. Several groups also noted that collaboration and communication among non-profits, businesses, and government is very strong within the community.

What do you think are the community's weaknesses?

Most groups reported the lack of public transportation in the area as a major weakness. The area is currently serviced by Capital Area Transit (CAT); however, most participants felt the transportation focused more on commuters rather than residents. The groups also noted that many of the most critical government agencies, such as the Department of Public Welfare, Office of Aging, and CareerLink, are outside of town and the bus routes. This is a significant barrier to those who are seeking services. Many people have had to "get creative" with transportation resources, for example, single mothers getting together to drive to the grocery store, churches

setting up informal systems of volunteers to provide drivers, and the establishment of a community discretionary fund where organizations can get small amounts of money to help residents pay for gas.

Affordable housing was another area of concern. The hold on Section 8 vouchers has created large waiting lists and made it difficult for low-income individuals to secure housing. This puts a burden on local shelters, as many individuals and families are unable to transition out. The community is also seeing more people sleeping on the streets since shelters are full and they have nowhere else to go. One group also noted that about 50% of the housing in the area is rental properties; however, there are currently no rental ordinances in place. Many of these properties have absentee landlords, which unfortunately has led to a lot of substandard conditions, adding to the housing problem in the area.

Participants also reported that the area has lost a lot of industry and jobs. Many of the locally owned small businesses have closed, taking away the personal community connection, and large distribution centers with a corporate office out of the state or the country have moved in. Most of the employment in the area is low-paying (i.e., retail, warehouse, service) or through a temp agency that does not offer steady work or benefits. These low-paying jobs also create a large number of working poor families in the community. Many of these families are in need of assistance but do not qualify for government programs, which sometimes discourages them from working at all.

The focus group of community members also discussed environmental concerns including fracking materials in local landfills and waterways from Marcellus shale drilling and fumes from

trucks on nearby major interstates hurting the air quality. This group also reported instances of racial discrimination in the community when applying for employment and when volunteering at local organizations.

Participants in the service provider focus group reported several other weaknesses including challenges of getting people into the mental health system in the area, the lack of child care options, increasing problems with youth and the need for a youth center, and the large number of people who are coming into the community from outside the area to take advantage of the excellent human services and generosity the community offers. This was seen as a strength of the community, but it is also a weakness as it puts a great deal of burden on the programs and organizations that offer assistance.

What do you think are the 3 most important issues the United Way of Carlisle & Cumberland County should focus its resources on? What do you think are the most significant barriers to addressing these needs?

This question was only asked of the service providers and community leaders. There was general agreement that the three most important issues are: (1) access to mental health services, (2) permanent, affordable housing, and (3) public transportation. The groups also reported that young adult services, fundraising, and advocacy on human service issues were also important issues for the United Way to focus its resources. Both groups agreed that money was the most significant barrier to addressing the needs.

What are the most important issues/concerns of the community?

This question was directed only to the community members and consumers. Issues these groups reported were public transportation, housing, child care assistance, the increasing number of people needing social services while programs and funding are decreasing, and drug problems especially in subsidized housing areas.

How do you think needs differ among community members in various locations within Carlisle & Cumberland County?

Participants generally agreed that western sections of the county are very isolated and rural. Residents in these areas have different needs and may not have access to as many services and opportunities as those people who live in Carlisle or in the eastern part of the county.

Are there gaps or unmet needs in the community that should be addressed? If so, what are they? What is the extent of the problems in these areas? What are the priority needs?

Participants reported a need for more mental health services. There are long waiting lists to see therapists, and many people fall through the cracks. This often leads to homelessness, crime, and other problems for the community. Medical care in the area was also mentioned, especially affordable health care. The community member group also reported feeling that the for-profit hospital was not as responsive to the needs of the community as the non-profit Carlisle Hospital had been in the past. Participants also mentioned gaps in care for the elderly population in the community. The Office of Aging is overworked, and many elderly people don't know about services and programs available to assist them.

The need for job skills and training programs that could lead to higher-paying jobs and less reliance on social services was another unmet need that was reported. These types of programs

could also assist individuals recently out of prison, who have an extremely difficult time trying to find employment, housing, and services in the community.

Looking to the future (in the next year or so), what do you see as the outlook for those in need? How about in the next 3-5 years?

There was overwhelming agreement that the outlook in the next year is bleak. Budget cuts, high unemployment, increasing costs for gas and food, and a lack of funding for human service and government programs is not encouraging. Many feel the recession is not over yet and that for many people things will only get worse. There may be major changes in how services are provided as many non-profits may merge or go under. Organizations will also have a difficult time as they must learn to do more with less.

The outlook for the next 3-5 years was cautious as so much depends on the economy. Some participants noted that the more affluent areas of the county would recover more quickly, while the more rural and isolated areas would continue to face challenges.

What are your perceptions of the United Way of Carlisle & Cumberland County? Are its efforts (projects, initiatives, funding) targeted on the right priorities? How well does the United Way respond to community needs identified?

This question was only asked of the service providers and community leaders. Generally the participants reported that the United Way of Carlisle & Cumberland County (UWCCC) has an excellent reputation, strong community support, and qualified leaders. The UWCCC helps raise awareness of community needs and services available and facilitates collaboration among agencies to share information and network. Funding from the UWCCC has assisted with community needs including seasonal heating assistance through UGI, Success by 6 to improve

the quality of childcare, and offering scholarships through the Earned Income Tax Credit program.

Participants noted that the UWCCC should focus its efforts and resources on raising more money. One group also suggested the organization might look more critically at member agencies to determine resource allocation and ensure that the member agencies are held accountable for the work they do instead of just giving the same amount to the same organizations year after year. Several participants felt that the UWCCC did not have a strong presence in the western part of Cumberland County. The needs of these rural communities are different from Carlisle and the eastern sections of the county and need to be addressed differently.

What do you know about the United Way of Carlisle & Cumberland County? What are your perceptions of the United Way?

This question was asked of the community members and consumers only. The participants in these groups were mostly unfamiliar with the work of the United Way in the local community, only mentioning that they help people in need. Most were familiar with the United Way fundraising campaign through employers and the large thermometer tracking giving downtown. However, one participant noted that he does not give to the United Way anymore because he would rather give directly to a specific service organization to eliminate the overhead of the United Way. Another participant had a negative experience a number of years ago and felt he was being discriminated against when he was turned away from volunteering with the organization. Overall the participants in these groups were not knowledgeable about the organization, its member agencies, or how they could get involved.

What recommendations do you have for the United Way for improving services for area residents/community members? What role should the United Way have in the provision of community services?

Participants from the four groups offered a variety of different recommendations for the United Way. Suggestions from the service providers and community leaders included:

- Keep fundraising and surpassing goals.
- Look at new and innovative ways of doing business (i.e. identifying volunteer opportunities and matching people with them, researching and presenting ways to be more time and cost efficient, purchasing health care or services in a bulk rate).
- Facilitate job training opportunities.
- Encourage collaboration with agencies and work closely with organization like the Chamber of Commerce to connect businesses and non-profits.
- Follow the Carlisle Area Health & Wellness Foundation model for presenting the Needs Assessment to the community.
- Include representation from western Cumberland County on the Board.
- Develop a consortium with manufacturing companies in addressing the needs of the local community.
- Be more open to change and adding more member agencies.
- Be aware of conflicts with regard to fundraising events since other local organizations hold similar events to those of the United Way to do their own fundraising (i.e., motorcycle ride).

Suggestions from the community members and consumers included:

- Reaching out to utilize more volunteers or researching organizations such as Americorps.
- Direct more funding for programs that help with basic needs (i.e., food, shelter, utilities).
- Work to improve public transportation in the local area.
- Improve publicity and marketing of the United Way and what it does in the community.
- Concentrate limited resources on those most in need.

APPENDIX A

PRE-NOTIFICATION LETTER: SERVICE PROVIDERS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

[MONTH] 2011

The United Way of Carlisle and Cumberland County has partnered with The Pennsylvania State University and the Institute of State and Regional Affairs at Penn State Harrisburg to conduct a Community Needs Assessment. This community assessment will focus on four important areas:

- Understanding the local environment
- Identifying and evaluating local community strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and risks
- Identifying the most pressing community needs; comparing and contrasting those needs with current United Way of Carlisle and Cumberland County identified community impact areas and strategic goals
- Capturing the local needs with regard to national level goals and indicators.

In the next few weeks you may be contacted via email by the Center for Survey Research at Penn State Harrisburg, inviting your participation in a focus group session to gather information and understand perspectives from community stakeholders. Participants for focus groups will be randomly selected from lists provided by the United Way of Carlisle and Cumberland County and are limited in number.

I encourage your participation in this important project. Your participation assists the United Way in identifying and more effectively addressing the most pressing needs of our community.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 717-243-4805 or Sherrie@carlisleunitedway.org.

Thank you,

Sherrie L. Davis
Executive Director
United Way of Carlisle & Cumberland County

*Center for Survey Research
Penn State Harrisburg*

APPENDIX B
INVITATION EMAIL: SERVICE PROVIDERS & COMMUNITY LEADERS

Dear [First Name] [Last Name],

I am writing on behalf of the United Way of Carlisle and Cumberland County to invite you to participate in a focus group. The United Way has partnered with The Pennsylvania State University and the Institute of State and Regional Affairs at Penn State Harrisburg to conduct a Community Needs Assessment, a research study to understand the local environment and identify the most pressing needs of the local community. The purpose of the group is to gather information and understand perspectives of community stakeholders.

I hope you **or one** designated representative can join us and 6-10 other service providers for a light lunch and 2 hours of discussion. We have a limited number of spots in the focus group and will fill them on a first-come, first-served basis.

We will be audio recording the session so that we have a good sense of what people said during the focus group. We will keep those audiotapes, and anything you say, completely confidential. Also, I want to emphasize that once you come to a session, anything you do there will be completely voluntary, and you'll be free to leave at any time for any reason.

FOCUS GROUP DETAILS:

WHEN: [DATE] from [TIME]

WHERE: United Way of Carlisle & Cumberland County Boardroom
145 South Hanover Street
Carlisle, PA 17013

RSVP: Nicole L. Sturges, Project Coordinator
Email: nls17@psu.edu
Direct line: 717-948-6117
Toll-Free: 1-888-778-2775 *press # 3*

Please RSVP by [DATE].

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me. We look forward to seeing you!

Sincerely,
Nicole L. Sturges
Project Coordinator
Center for Survey Research
Penn State Harrisburg
Phone: (717) 948-6117
nls17@psu.edu

*Center for Survey Research
Penn State Harrisburg*

APPENDIX C

REMINDER EMAIL



[Participant's First Name],

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the United Way of Carlisle & Cumberland County focus group session. This e-mail confirms your participation in our session tomorrow, [DATE] from [TIME]. The session will be held in the boardroom of the United Way offices (145 South Hanover Street, Carlisle). Street parking is available in front of the building, or you can park in the lot behind the building.

The focus group session will last no more than 2 hours, and a light lunch will be provided from noon-12:30pm. We will begin the focus group discussion promptly at 12:30pm! We will be audio recording the session so that we have a good sense of what people said during the focus group. We will keep those audiotapes, and anything you say, completely confidential. Also, I want to emphasize that once you come to the session, anything you do there will be completely voluntary, and you'll be free to leave at any time for any reason.

If you have any questions or your attendance plans have changed, please contact me at 717-948-6117 or 1-888-778-2775 (press # 3).

Thank you!
Nicole

Nicole L. Sturges
Project Coordinator
Center for Survey Research
Penn State Harrisburg
777 West Harrisburg Pike
Middletown, PA 17057
Phone: (717) 948-6117
Fax: (717) 948-6306
Toll Free: 1-888-778-2775
nls17@psu.edu
<http://csr.hbg.psu.edu>



*Center for Survey Research
Penn State Harrisburg*

APPENDIX D

INVITATION LETTER: COMMUNITY MEMBERS

June 2011

Dear [First Name] [Last Name],

The United Way of Carlisle and Cumberland County has partnered with The Pennsylvania State University and the Institute of State and Regional Affairs at Penn State Harrisburg to conduct a Community Needs Assessment to understand the local environment and identify the most pressing needs of the local community. The study is being conducted for research.

I am writing to invite you to participate in a focus group on this topic with 6 to 10 other residents from the Carlisle and Cumberland County area on [DATE] from [TIME]. The focus group will be held in Carlisle. Additional details about the focus group session including location and directions will be provided when you RSVP. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

The focus group is an informal group discussion which will last no more than 2 hours. Light refreshments will be provided, and participants will receive **\$20 cash as a token of our appreciation for your time and effort**. If you are interested in participating, please contact Nicole Sturges to RSVP your attendance. You will find Nicole's contact information below. We will fill spots in the focus group session on a first-come, first-served basis. Space is limited, so contact us soon! If we do not hear from you, a member of the research team will follow up via phone to request your participation and answer any questions you may have. **Please RSVP by [DATE]**.

FOCUS GROUP DETAILS:

WHEN: [DATE] from [TIME]

RSVP: Nicole Sturges, Project Coordinator
Direct line – 717-948-6117
Toll-free – 1-888-778-2775 *press # 3*
Email – nls17@psu.edu

I hope you will be able to join us and be a part of this important research in our local community.

Sincerely,
Sherrie Davis
Executive Director

*Center for Survey Research
Penn State Harrisburg*

APPENDIX E

RECRUITING EMAIL: CONSUMERS

As you may be aware, the United Way of Carlisle & Cumberland County is conducting a Community Needs Assessment of its service area this summer in partnership with Penn State Harrisburg’s Institute of State and Regional Affairs. I am contacting you to request your assistance in recruiting your direct consumers/clients to participate in a focus group session that has been scheduled as part of the Needs Assessment data collection process. The focus group will help the Penn State study team and United Way to better understand the local environment and identify the most pressing needs of the local community. This is an opportunity for the voices of your consumers/clients to be heard within the context of the Needs Assessment, and I hope you will encourage the participation among your consumers/clients.

About the focus group: The focus group session is scheduled for Thursday, June 23. The group is an informal group discussion, which will last no more than 2 hours. Light refreshments will be provided, and participants will receive \$20 cash as a token of our appreciation for their time and effort. There are a limited number of spots available in the focus group session, but we need your help recruiting broadly for this focus group to ensure sufficient participation and broad-based representation from across various agencies like yours that receive United Way funding.

How can you help? Attached is a recruiting flyer outlining all of the information for the session. **Would you please assist us by distributing the flyer to your direct consumers/clients by (1) printing and displaying it in locations where they might see it and/or (2) forwarding the flyer directly to your consumers/clients via email or mail?** Any assistance your office could provide would be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Thank you,
Nicole

Nicole L. Sturges
Project Coordinator
Center for Survey Research
Penn State Harrisburg
777 West Harrisburg Pike
Middletown, PA 17057
Phone: (717) 948-6117
Fax: (717) 948-6306
Toll Free: 1-888-778-2775
nls17@psu.edu
<http://csr.hbg.psu.edu>



APPENDIX F

RECRUITING FLYER: CONSUMERS



EARN \$20 AND HELP YOUR COMMUNITY!

The **United Way of Carlisle & Cumberland County** is partnering with the **Center for Survey Research at Penn State Harrisburg** to conduct a focus group session to discuss the local environment and identify the most pressing needs in the community.

You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

The session will last less than 2 hours and you will earn \$20 just for sharing your opinions!

THURSDAY, JUNE 23, 2011 FROM 6-8PM*

You must register with **Penn State** in order to receive the \$20. Participation is limited and will be on a first-come, first-serve basis.

*Additional details including location will be provided to those who register.

For more information or to register for the session, please call or email Nicole Sturges, Project Coordinator at 1-888-778-2775 or nls17@psu.edu.



APPENDIX G

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS* (N=28)

Gender	N
Male	9
Female	19
Age (years)	N
25-39	7
40-49	5
50-59	14
60-69	1
Race/Ethnicity	N
White	26
Black/African American	2
Education Level	N
Less than high school	1
High school diploma or GED	5
Some college	3
Two-year technical degree	1
Four-year college graduate	10
Graduate work	7
Marital Status	N
Married or living with a partner	15
Single/never married	4
Divorced	6
Widowed	2

*Numbers are based on those participants who responded to the question; missing data are not included in the table.

APPENDIX H

MODERATOR'S GUIDE

United Way of Carlisle & Cumberland County Focus Group Sessions June 2011 Moderator's Guide

Good Afternoon/Evening! Thank you for attending our focus group session sponsored by The United Way of Carlisle & Cumberland County. My name is Nicole Sturges, and I will be the moderator for today's group. I am with Penn State Harrisburg's Center for Survey Research. (introduce note-taker)

The purpose of today's group is to gather information and understand perspectives on the local environment, identify the most pressing needs of the local community, and to hear suggestions for future goals for the United Way and the community. There are no right or wrong answers, so please feel free to share your point of view no matter what it is. My role is to ask questions, to listen and to make sure everyone has a chance to speak and share. We are audio recording the session because your comments are important to us and we don't want to miss anything. Please be assured that anything you say here today will be kept confidential, and we will not use names in any of our reports. We have a series of questions with multiple sub-questions that we would like to ask you during this 2 hour session. We want to get through all of the questions, so if we are running long on one question, we may need to end the discussion and move on to the next question. There will be an open comment question at the end where you will be able to share any final thoughts or opinions that you didn't have a chance to share during the discussion. Finally, please remember that anything we discuss during this session should not leave this room. Let's begin by having each person introduce him- or herself (first names only) and tell us how long you have lived in the Carlisle or Cumberland County area.

QUESTIONS:

Community Needs

1. What do you think are some of the community's greatest strengths? With what aspects of your community are you satisfied?
2. What do you think are the community's weaknesses?
3. What do you think are the 3 most important issues the United Way of Carlisle & Cumberland County should focus its resources on? What do you think are the most significant barriers to addressing these needs? (*this question is only for the services providers and community leaders*)
4. What are the most important issues/concerns of the community? (*this question is only for the consumers/community members*)
5. How do you think needs differ among community members in various locations within Carlisle & Cumberland County?

Service Gaps

6. Are there gaps or unmet needs in the community that should be addressed? If so, what are they? What is the extent of the problems in this/these areas? What are the priority needs?

Strategic Goals

7. Looking to the future (in the next year or so), what do you see as the outlook for those in need? How about in the next 3-5 years?

Community Impact

8. What are your perceptions of the United Way of Carlisle & Cumberland County? Are its efforts (projects and initiatives, funding) targeted on the right priorities? How well does the United Way respond to community needs identified? (*this question is only for the services providers and community leaders*)
9. What do you know about the United Way of Carlisle & Cumberland County? What are your perceptions of United Way? (*this question is only for the consumers/community members*)
10. What recommendations do you have for the United Way for improving services for area residents/community members? What role should the United Way have in the provision of community services?
11. Is there anything else that we have not covered that you would like to discuss or share with us on this topic?

APPENDIX I

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The Pennsylvania State University

Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research

Title of Project: United Way Community Needs Assessment

Principal Investigator: Dr. Auden Thomas
Penn State Harrisburg
777 West Harrisburg Pike
Middletown, PA 17057
717-948-6435
adt121@psu.edu

I. Purpose of this Research/Project

The United Way of Carlisle and Cumberland County (UWCCC) is undertaking a Community Needs Assessment with the assistance of the Institute of State and Regional Affairs at Penn State Harrisburg. The community assessment will focus on the following key focus areas and activities: (1) Understanding the local environment; (2) Identifying and evaluating local community strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and risks; (3) Identifying the most pressing community needs; comparing and contrasting those needs with current UWCCC identified community impact areas and goals; and (4) Capturing the local needs with regard to national level goals and indicators.

II. Procedures

You will be led by an experienced moderator in a guided discussion for about 2 hours. Penn State research team members will take notes, and the discussion will be taped with digital audio recorders to ensure that information and comments are not missed. Prior to the discussion, you will complete a demographic intake form. Notes and recordings will be used during analysis.

III. Benefits

Benefits of this study are to provide the United Way with information on the local community environment and to identify community needs. The United Way can then target funding to address the most pressing needs. Your participation will give you the opportunity to be part of this process and to have your voice heard as a member of the local community.

IV. Extent of Confidentiality

All responses will be kept completely confidential. If you speak about the contents of the focus group outside the group, it is expected that you will not tell others what individual participants said. The focus groups will be recorded so that the researchers can have a good sense of what people said after the session is over. Recordings will be stored at the Center for Survey Research at Penn State Harrisburg. Only approved study personnel will have access to the recordings and transcripts. Although the moderator will interact with participants on a first-name basis, names will NOT be attached to comments. Non-personal data collected from these interviews will be maintained

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for 5 years. After 5 years, paper copies of the data will be shredded, electronic files will be removed from our server, and any data stored on CDs will be erased.

V. Freedom to Withdraw

Your participation is voluntary. You can choose not to answer certain questions. Furthermore, you may withdraw at any time without penalty.

VI. Right to Ask Questions

Please contact Dr. Auden Thomas, Director of the Center for Survey Research at Penn State Harrisburg, with any questions, concerns, or complaints about this study. She can be reached at 717-948-6435.

VII. Subject's Responsibilities

A focus group is a group interview where we bring 8 to 12 people together to talk about things that they have in common. You will comment on questions that are introduced by the group's moderator. You must be 18 years of age or older.

VIII. Payment for Participation (this section will only be included for consumers and community members)

You will receive a \$20 cash incentive as a token of our appreciation for your time and effort.

Please initial one check box for the section below:

Publications/Presentations:

I do give my permission for portions of this focus group to be directly quoted in publications/presentations. Your name will NOT be attached to your quotes.

I do **NOT** give my permission for portions of this focus group to be directly quoted in publications/presentations.

If you agree to take part in this study, please sign your name and provide the date below. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

_____ Date: _____
Subject signature

Subject Name (Printed)

_____ Date: _____
Signature of person obtaining consent

Name of person obtaining consent (Printed)

Questions about this research may be directed to:

Dr. Auden Thomas, Principal Investigator
Penn State Harrisburg

777 West Harrisburg Pike
Middletown, PA 17057
717-948-6435
adt121@psu.edu

Note: subjects will be given a complete copy (or duplicate original) of the signed informed consent form.

APPENDIX J

INTAKE FORM

**United Way of Carlisle & Cumberland County Focus Group
Intake Form
[NAME OF GROUP]
[DATE]**

Please complete this brief focus group intake form (front & back). Responses are confidential and cannot be linked back to you because your personal information is **NOT** connected to the data. Completion of this Focus Group Intake Form implies your consent to use this demographic information during qualitative analysis. Thank you!

1. Sex

- Male
- Female

2. What is your age? _____ years

3. Do you consider yourself to be Hispanic or Latino?

- Yes
- No

4. What is your race?

- White
- Black/African American
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- American Indian/Native Alaskan
- Other, please specify _____

5. What category best describes your educational level?

- Less than high school
- High school diploma or GED
- Some college
- Two-year technical degree
- Four-year college graduate
- Graduate work

6. What is your marital status?

- Single/never married
- Separated
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Married or living with a partner
- Other

7. What is your zip code? _____

8. How long have you lived in Carlisle/Cumberland County? _____

Asked only of community members

9. What organization are you representing?

This question will not be asked for the consumer or community member group.

10. What is your job title?

This question will not be asked for the consumer or community member group.