

Lycoming County United Way  
Senate Urban Affairs & Housing Committee  
October 4, 2011

Adhering to our mission statement “mobilizing resources to improve lives” Lycoming County United Way has been serving the public and human service needs of Lycoming County since 1922. Through our fund raising efforts more than \$60-million dollars has been raised, including \$1,431,455 this past year; the single biggest campaign in our 89-year history.

Through a yearly volunteer-driven funds distribution process campaign proceeds are distributed to those Lycoming County human service programs operating under our United Way umbrella. During the past year we have provided funding to 43 programs used 42,747 times by residents of Lycoming County.

Four years ago, LCUW embarked on an ‘Impact Funding Plan.’ This plan was adopted so that LCUW was positioned to respond to the changing human service needs of our county. To assist in indentifying these needs we conduct a series of Community Needs Assessment surveys, conducted independently by The Center for the Study of Community and the Economy at Lycoming College.

Using a variety of samplings the survey is intended to assimilate the pulse of the community in identifying their collective assessment of the most important human service issues facing Lycoming County. These results, used in conjunction with other data available to LCUW, are used to prioritize allocation funding decisions.

LCUW allocates funding distributed to five Impact Areas identified as Nurturing our Children, Serving those with Special Needs, Caring for People in Crisis, Supporting our Seniors, and Strengthening our Families. Intertwined in these areas are various programs addressing housing needs.

The growing negative housing impact being felt in Lycoming County can be gleaned from the results of our past two Community Needs Assessment surveys.

The 2005 survey ranked concerns regarding homelessness 22<sup>nd</sup> among 36 identified needs. In 2009, homelessness ranked 9th, the single biggest jump of all areas calculated. Problems rated above homelessness included:

- 1 Consumption of alcohol and/or drugs by youth
- 2 Unemployment

- 3 Access to affordable health insurance
- 4 Abuse of alcohol and/or drugs by adults
- 5 Child abuse and neglect
- 6 Access to health care
- 7 Underemployment
- 8 Domestic abuse

LCUW will conduct our next Community Needs Assessment survey in February, 2012. It is anticipated the growing housing crises will continue to climb among the most pressing county human service needs. Many of those above mentioned areas of concerns can be linked to the unavailability of adequate housing in Lycoming County.

Among those programs currently funded by LCUW that are housing related include:

- Journey House – Opened in 2007, as a transitional housing program to address the needs of homeless families and provide the tools for self-sufficiency. During the past year 17 individual/families have participated in the program. The program has an active waiting list of 15 families and another 35 families waiting to get on the waiting list.
- Saving Grace Shelter – Opened in February 2011 a converted church building serves as a temporary shelter that can accommodate 24 individuals. Shelter currently has a waiting list of 62.
- Liberty House – Opened in 2002 at the YWCA as a housing program that provides shelter to female headed families and transitional housing for single women. Shelter can house 30 individuals. It is currently full with a waiting list of 72 individuals.
- American Rescue Workers – Provides a shelter for homeless men that can accommodate 35. On any given day there are 10-12 on a waiting list. A transient shelter is also available to house six men.

Additionally, LCUW collaborates with the Family Housing Alliance, State Homeless Assistance Program (HAP), the Central PA Regional Housing Advisory Board, Lycoming County Task Force, Housing Coalition and PA Housing Alliance to seek solutions to the housing crises.

Submitted by: Scott N. Lowery  
Executive Director  
Lycoming County United Way

