



COMMUNITY PRIORITIES FOR TOPEKA & SHAWNEE COUNTY

Organizations collaborating with United Way of Greater Topeka on this project include: City of Topeka Mayor's Office, Community Resources Council, Family Service and Guidance Center, Kansas Optometric Association, Shawnee County Health Agency, Shawnee County Medical Society, St. Francis Health Center, Stormont-Vail Health Care, Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce, Topeka Community Foundation, Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority, Topeka and Shawnee County Library, and Valeo Behavioral Health.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

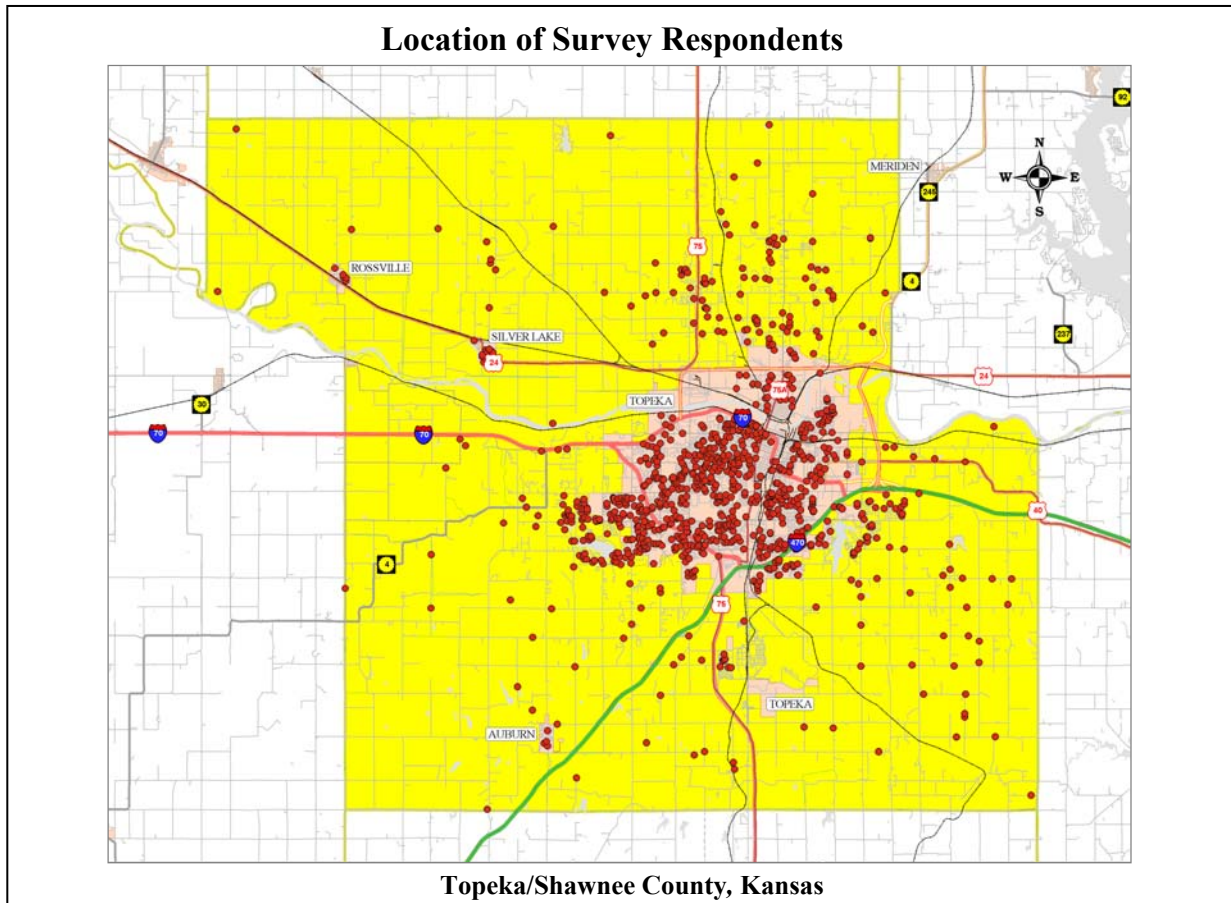
During the winter of 2005-06, ETC Institute conducted a community needs assessment survey for the United Way of Greater Topeka. The primary purpose of the survey was to gather information from residents and community leaders to help identify health and social welfare conditions. The results of the survey will be used to help identify needs and set priorities for the community.

Research Design

During December 2005 and January 2006, ETC Institute conducted a survey of residents and community leaders. The purpose of the surveys was to gather statistically valid data from residents and community leaders to objectively assess the relative importance of a wide range of community issues. The methodology for each survey is briefly described below.

- *Household Survey*. The household survey was administered to a random sample of 1061 Shawnee County households. The survey was administered by mail and phone and took approximately 20 minutes to complete. The overall results of the household survey have a precision of at least +/-3% at the 95% level of confidence. Crosstabulations of the data based on the age, gender, location of the respondent's home, household income, and household formation are provided in separate appendices.
- *Community Leader Survey*. The community leader survey was administered by mail and phone to 303 community leaders in Shawnee County. These leaders were drawn from a pool of individuals identified by the United Way of Greater Topeka. The pool included leaders from a wide-range of organizations including business, education, health care, social service, faith-based organizations, and community volunteers. The overall results of the community leader survey have a precision of at least +/-5% at the 95% level of confidence.

Geocoding. In order to better understand the needs of residents in specific areas of the County, ETC Institute geocoded the home address of respondents to the survey. The map below shows the physical distribution of survey respondents based on the location of their home.



This report contains:

- an executive summary of the methodology for administering the survey and major findings
- charts showing the overall results for most questions on each survey
- GIS maps that show the results of selected questions as maps of the county
- importance-satisfaction analysis that identifies community priorities based on the results of the community leader survey
- tables that contain the overall results for each survey; crosstabulations for selected demographic variables are provided in a separate appendices.
- a copy of the survey instruments.

Major Findings

The following pages highlight major findings from the community survey. The major findings are organized based on the eleven major types of issues that were assessed: (1) neighborhoods and quality of life, (2) transportation, (3) employment and job skills, (4) health and health care, (5) dental care, (6) housing and basic needs, (7) caregiving, (8) older adults, (9) parenting, (10) childcare, and (11) arts and culture.

Neighborhood and Quality of Life Issues

Some of the major findings regarding neighborhood and quality of life issues are briefly described below:

- Approximate 61% of the residents surveyed felt that burglary or other property crimes were a “major” or “minor” problem in their neighborhood.
- Approximately 51% of the residents surveyed felt that streets needed repairs in their neighborhood.
- Approximately 48% of the residents surveyed reported that illegal drug use was a “major” or “minor” problem in their neighborhood.
- Approximately 57% of the residents surveyed thought the quality of life in their community would stay the same over the next few years; 26% thought it would improve, 16% thought it would get worse, and 1% did not have an opinion.
- 75% of the residents surveyed thought that the physical condition of their neighborhoods was “excellent” or “good.” Only 5% rated the condition of their neighborhoods as “poor”.
- 93% of the residents surveyed thought their neighborhood was a good place to live.
- 91% of the residents surveyed said that they alert neighbors if they see anything suspicious in their neighborhood.
- 94% of the residents surveyed felt that health and social services were important to the well-being and quality of life in the Topeka area; 82% of those surveyed thought that the quality of life in the Topeka area would decline if health and social services were not available.

Transportation Issues

Some of the major findings regarding transportation issues are briefly described below:

- 50% of the residents surveyed thought that public transportation was available within 4 blocks of their home.
- 96% of those surveyed indicated that they had adequate access to transportation to get to and from work.
- 97% of those surveyed indicated that they had adequate access to transportation to get to and from shopping destinations..
- 96% of those surveyed indicated that they had adequate access to transportation to get to and from school.
- Only 3% of those residents surveyed reported using public transportation often; 73% indicated they “never” use public transportation.

Employment and Job Skill Issues

Some of the major findings regarding employment and job skill issues are briefly described below:

- 61% of the residents surveyed have been employed continuously for the past 2 years.
- 27% of the residents surveyed had someone in the household who needed computer training.
- 22% of the residents surveyed had someone in the household who had been without a job during the past year.

Health and Healthcare Issues

Some of the major findings regarding health and healthcare issues are briefly described below:

- 85% of those residents surveyed reported that everyone in their household was covered by health insurance; 15% indicated that at least one member of their household was not covered.

- 71% of the residents surveyed reported getting some or all of their health insurance from an employer, union or school; 28% of the residents surveyed got their health insurance from Medicare; 11% indicated they bought health insurance directly, and 8% got their health insurance from Medicaid
- 88% of those residents surveyed indicated that they have a specific person or place where they usually go when sick or in need of advice about their health. Among those who indicated they had a place to go, 25% indicated that they go to a hospital emergency room
- 12% of the residents surveyed indicated that someone in their household needed health care within the past year and did not receive it. The primary reasons that resident did not get needed healthcare were that “it costs too much” (75%) and they “were not covered by insurance” (59%).
- 24% of the residents surveyed had trouble paying medical bills within the past year.
- 58% of those surveyed indicated that they get physical exercise for at least 30 minutes three times per week. The primary reasons residents reported that they did not exercise more were: lack of time (55%), lack of energy (42%), and the need for less expensive exercise facilities (36%).
- 36% of the residents surveyed thought the condition of their health compared to others their age was excellent or good.

Dental Care Issues

Some of the major findings regarding dental care issues are briefly described below:

- 22% of the residents surveyed reported that someone in their household needed dental care within the past year and did not receive it. The two primary reasons residents did not seek needed dental care were that “it costs too much” (80%) and that the care was not covered by their insurance (60%).
- 64% of the residents surveyed said that their children saw the Dentist every 6 months.

Housing and Basic Needs Issues

Some of the major findings regarding housing and basic needs issues are briefly described below:

- 25% of the residents surveyed said that their combined expenses for housing and utilities exceeded 30% of their income.
- 28% of the residents surveyed reported that someone in their household experienced moderate nervousness, depression or anxiety during the past year; among these households, 20% felt that their needs were not met at all by services in the Topeka area.
- 23% of the residents surveyed reported that someone in their household experienced a personal or emotional crisis during the past year; among these households 24% felt that their needs were not met at all by services in the Topeka area.
- 17% of those residents surveyed reported that someone in their household experienced a serious physical illness or condition during the past year; among these households, 10% felt that their needs were not met at all by services in the Topeka area.

Caregiving Issues

Some of the major findings regarding caregiving issues are briefly described below:

- 10% of the residents surveyed indicated that someone in their household was a caregiver for a person over 65 years of age.
- 4% of the residents surveyed indicated that someone in their household was a caregiver for a person under 65 with disabilities.

Older Adult Issues

Some of the major findings regarding older adult issues are briefly described below:

- 35% of households surveyed who had someone in the household age 65 or older indicated that they could not afford needed home repairs.
- 13% of households surveyed who had someone in the household age 65 or older indicated that they needed help with daily activities.

Parenting Issues

Some of the major findings regarding parenting issues are briefly described below:

- 88% of the residents surveyed with children under age 18 indicated that they had attended parent-teacher conferences during the past year.
- 30% of those surveyed with children under age 18 indicated that their children needed out-of-school programs.
- 21% of those surveyed with children under age 18 felt that finding someone they could trust with their children was a “major problem” or a “minor problem”.
- 18% of those residents surveyed with children under age 18 indicated they had problems providing healthy food for their children all month.

Childcare Issues

Some of the major findings regarding childcare issues are briefly described below:

- 36% of the residents surveyed with children under age 6 felt that finding affordable childcare was a “major problem” or “minor problem”.
- 24% of the residents surveyed with children under age 6 said that finding child care convenient to their home or work was a “major problem” or “minor problem”.

Arts and Culture Issues

Some of the major findings regarding arts and culture issues are briefly described below:

- 67% of the residents surveyed felt that arts should have an important role in Downtown Topeka.
- 67% of those surveyed felt that the Topeka area needs more arts and cultural programs.
- The two primary reasons given by residents surveyed for not visiting arts and cultural facilities in the Topeka area more often were: not knowing about the programs (36%) and that they are too expensive (24%).

Top Priorities for Community Leaders

Community leaders were asked to rank the priority that should be placed on more than 40 issues. Based on the results of the community leader survey, the top three issues were: 1) downtown redevelopment in Topeka, 2) juvenile/youth crime, and 3) gangs/gang activity. The top 15 are shown in the chart below.

