

# COMMUNITY ALLIANCE OF SARASOTA COUNTY

## Data Group

### November 29, 2007 Meeting Summary

**Present:** Rose Chapman, Jewish Family and Children's Services  
Jamil Collins, Jewish Family and Children's Services  
Wendy Hopkins, Community Foundation of Sarasota County  
Doug Kerr, Volunteer  
GeeDee Kerr, All Faiths Food Bank  
Benjamin Kunkel, United Way 2-1-1 of ManaSota  
Ruth Lando, Community Foundation of Sarasota County  
Richard Martin, Suncoast Partnership to end Homelessness  
Elliott Metcalfe, Public Defender's Office  
Bryan Pope, The Salvation Army  
Zulma Solero, City of North Port Social Services  
Stewart Stearns, Community Foundation of Sarasota County  
Alberto Suarez, United Way 2-1-1 of ManaSota  
Chip Taylor, Sarasota County Human Services

**Staff:** Jamie Mahadeo, Sarasota County Human Services

There have been increases in the following areas for which data is available:

- # of free and reduced lunch
- # Public Defender clients
- # foreclosures
- # family civil law clients
- # domestic violence incidents
- # SPARCC clients
- # of clients at nonprofits
- # on waiting list at nonprofits
- # LIHEAP eligible
- # JFCS clients
- # CSBG eligible
- Medicaid/non-Medicaid eligible
- Lack of food at All Faiths Food Bank

In October, there were 700 **new** people registered in HMIS.

This problem started in July and the numbers on waiting lists are skyrocketing.

How do we respond to all of these?

With regard to employment data (Employee Leasing, JOBS etc) from 9/06 to 9/07, the number in the labor force is up 185,000 people. However, there has been a 47% increase in unemployment (+2,800 to 3,000 people).

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These are working people who are not experienced in navigating through the human services system, and nonprofits are not prepared to outreach to this group.

For large employers, employment is down by 5%.

There is data available on income issues like EITC eligibility, but these are lagging indicators.

Palm Beach does an EITC analysis by zip code that could be replicated here. They are developing a prosperity campaign (similar to Bill's suggestion) for increasing income through EITC, credit repair, debt reduction, etc.

It will be interesting to see how the Season of Sharing will fare with the number needing assistance versus the reduction in the amount of donations.

1. We need to create a call for action
2. We need to bring key community agencies together to develop a strategy for addressing this crisis.
3. Focus on:
  - job creation
  - increase in veterans services
  - engage volunteers to spread the idea of EITC
  - affordable housing
  - determine primary need for working poor (mortgage payments, \$ to meet financial needs, etc.) Get with JFCS, Sal Army, etc., to see what the problem is and the magnitude. Need to determine what each agency needs as well as the clients.
  - need an emergency assistance fund to provide case management to affected persons to realign debt, etc.
  - media coverage of meetings to educate the public regarding the issue

It was suggested that we raise \$5 million in this community. To do so we would need to explain what we are going to do with it and help families understand how they can help themselves.

Another major issue - - **If we get the \$5 million, do we have the infrastructure to deliver the services?**

Question - - Is \$5 million sufficient to solve the problem?

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Jobs exceeding the minimum wage are needed. There is a lack of employment, not a lack of employable skills.

Right now, 2-1-1 is receiving 250 to 400 calls per day.

Landlords are reporting that they are reducing rent on their apartments in order to attract and retain renters.

In some cases, families are sending the bread winners out of state for jobs. They are sending the money back to support their families.

In many working families, both parents have to seek work or take second jobs. The kids are left alone and often get in trouble. The crime rate is up. Also, those adults who are unemployed are more likely to get into trouble.

The money would help to assist families to plan for the future rather than living from month to month.

The difficulty of agencies sharing data at the present time is an issue. It is hard to see the gaps in services. We need to make sure each client signs a release of information form so agencies can share information.

It is hard to tell who is duping the system. It is assumed that the newly unemployed are not in that category. There is a potential to get the faith-based community to share data as well to protect them from double dippers.

Just seeing people who don't know how to access services is an issue in itself. These individuals need to be educated creating a significant case management burden.

Discussed Tapestry and the tie into the new Grants-in-Aid contracts.

Who needs what?

**2-1-1:** Is effectively handling current caller demands and explained they would rather see the funds go towards agencies and its direct services so referrals could be provided.

**JFCS:** Need one more case manager and billing staff

**Salvation Army:** Depends on the dollars available to be spent. May need 1 additional case manager and ½ FTE in bookkeeping as well as overhead (tithe to Atlanta increases).

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**Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness:** Needs case management and dollars for rent and for services to the chronically homeless - - Need to focus on prevention dollars.

**All Faiths Food Bank:** Needs new truck. Additionally, requests for food have increased 22%.

We need to communicate with the Workforce Development Board to see what number and types of jobs are available. Can promoting opportunities to develop additional jobs be useful?

This new group of needy individuals will be fine once the job market opens up again. They will not be chronic clients.

Donors are getting tighter with funds due to the stock market, real estate, construction, etc. Speculative investors in real estate will begin to fail next.

Things-to-Do:

- Need to meet again to discuss solutions
- Need real solid data to get to donors who can afford to give
- Talk to Diane McFarlin to get this in the media. Stories need to be written, a plan developed and decisions made on how the money will be spent.
- Need to hear from other folks in the community regarding what is needed
- Need a REAL plan covering all components of need - - a structured work plan.

Concern: Timing of when the stories come out - - We don't want everyone thinking that this is a "Christmas" push and that it will be resolved in a month.

The County is beginning to prepare for another round of layoffs. How do these type of things tie in with a large campaign for funding?