

Key informant survey

Methods and participant characteristics

United Way of Knox County invited leaders and volunteers from several different sectors to participate in the *Key Informant Survey*. The surveys were collected by phone and mail in June and July 2004. A total of 124 key informants participated and the response rate was 62%.

Forty percent of respondents were community volunteers, 33% represented social service providers, 17% were business leaders, and 10% represented associations or civic organizations. Sixty-seven percent of the key informants were female and 95% were white. Most listed their primary occupation as “executive, administrative, or managerial” (70%) or “professional” (17%).

Community strengths

Key informants were asked to rate several different community strengths related to cooperation and leadership on a four-point scale (1= “strongly agree,” 2= “somewhat agree,” 3= “somewhat disagree,” 4= “strongly disagree”). Overall, respondents tended to “somewhat agree” with the statements about community strengths, indicating a moderately good climate of cooperation and respect in Knox County. The vast majority of key informants agreed (“strongly” or “somewhat”) that “Knox County is where leaders from business, labor, government, education, religious, neighborhood, non-profit and all other sectors come together and work productively to address critical community issues.” There was less agreement about cooperation among different neighborhoods, religious groups, and geographic regions.

Table 32: Knox County community strengths (n=111-120)

Community strength (in rank order, starting with biggest strength)	Average Rating	1 Strongly Agree	2 Somewhat Agree	3 Somewhat Disagree	4 Strongly Disagree
Knox County is where leaders from business, labor, government, education, religious, neighborhood, non-profit and all other sectors come together and work productively to address critical community issues.	1.9	24%	58%	18%	0%
Knox County is one in which there exists a great deal of mutual respect among leaders from all sectors of the community.	2.0	27%	45%	23%	4%
Knox County actively supports and strengthens connections between families, neighborhoods, and the whole community.	2.0	25%	56%	15%	3%

Table 32 continued Community strength	Average Rating	1 Strongly Agree	2 Somewhat Agree	3 Somewhat Disagree	4 Strongly Disagree
Knox County actively promotes participation in the political process from all races, genders, ages and cultures.	2.2	19%	46%	28%	7%
Knox County is one where leaders from all sectors of the community share common goals and uphold a common vision for the community.	2.2	16%	49%	30%	5%
Knox County actively promotes positive relations among people from all races, genders, ages, and cultures.	2.2	16%	50%	29%	5%
Knox County is where people and organizations from all geographic regions get together to address mutual concerns.	2.3	16%	46%	33%	5%
Knox County is where all religious groups come together to address pressing social concerns.	2.3	16%	52%	24%	9%
Knox County is where associations in neighborhoods from various parts of the community share strategies and work together.	2.4	4%	62%	25%	8%

Source: *COMPASS Key Informant Survey, 2004*

Community concerns

In order to identify their highest priority concerns, respondents were asked to rate several community problems on a four-point scale (1= “not an issue,” 2= “minor issue,” 3= “moderate issue,” 4= “major issue”). Table 33 displays these results in rank order, starting with the problems key informants identified as the county’s most significant issues. Concerns related to health and the economic conditions emerged as the most significant problems. More than half of respondents (53%) rated “lack of affordable medical care” as a “major issue.” About half also rated “alcohol and/or drug abuse” (51%), “unemployment or underemployment” (48%), lack of jobs (45%), and “mental illness, emotional issues, or suicide” (41%) as major issues. The schools (school safety and quality instruction), recreational facilities, gang activity, and the environment (water, air, and green space) received the lowest ratings, indicating relative satisfaction with the status quo on those issues.

Table 33: Community concerns for Knox County (n=96-124)

Community issue (in rank order, starting with biggest concern)	Average Rating	1 Not an Issue	2 Minor Issue	3 Moderate Issue	4 Major Issue
Lack of affordable medical care	3.4	2%	12%	33%	53%
Alcohol and/or drug abuse	3.4	0%	13%	36%	51%
Unemployment or underemployment	3.4	0%	11%	40%	48%
Lack of jobs	3.4	2%	6%	48%	45%
Mental illness, emotional issues, or suicide	3.3	0%	16%	44%	41%
Obesity	3.2	5%	13%	36%	46%
Family violence, abuse of children or adults	3.2	0%	18%	44%	37%
Poverty	3.2	3%	8%	56%	32%
Shortage of affordable housing	3.1	2%	25%	34%	39%
Lack of affordable care for children	3.1	4%	21%	36%	38%
Teen pregnancy	3.1	0%	19%	47%	33%
Substandard housing	2.8	7%	32%	33%	27%
Lack of cultural activities (concerts, museums, etc.)	2.8	11%	30%	32%	27%
Lack of community resources for emergency needs (loss of housing, emergency transportation, unanticipated burial, etc.)	2.7	15%	27%	30%	29%
Inadequate public transportation	2.7	15%	26%	29%	30%
Crime	2.7	2%	41%	43%	14%
Illiteracy	2.7	5%	36%	50%	10%
Overcrowded housing	2.5	18%	37%	26%	20%
Lack of an information and referral service	2.5	17%	28%	43%	12%
Racial or ethnic discrimination	2.4	12%	48%	28%	13%
Quality instruction in the classroom	2.4	20%	34%	34%	12%
Poor road and/or traffic conditions	2.3	13%	27%	39%	22%
Shortage of recreational facilities (swimming pools, etc.)	2.3	22%	36%	27%	15%
Gang activity	2.2	16%	49%	31%	4%
Water or air pollution	2.1	24%	44%	26%	7%
Lack of green space preservation	2.1	30%	34%	30%	7%
Unsafe school environment	1.9	30%	47%	22%	1%

"Other" concerns written in by two or more respondents: homelessness (4), need more grocery and retail stores (2), and need parenting classes (2).

Source: *COMPASS Key Informant Survey, 2004*
Knox County Community Assessment 2004-2005

Full Report, March 2006

When asked to prioritize what they feel are the county’s first and second most serious issues, “unemployment or underemployment” (12%) and “alcohol and/or drug abuse” (12%) emerged as the top concerns (see Table 34). Once again, health and economic issues dominated the list of the most important issues.

Table 34: “Which of the previous issues do you believe is the most serious in your community?” (top responses; n=113-118)

	Most Serious	Second Most Serious
Unemployment or underemployment	12%	10%
Alcohol and/or drug abuse	12%	10%
Poverty	7%	3%
Lack of jobs	7%	4%
Lack of affordable medical care	7%	14%
Shortage of affordable housing	7%	8%
Lack of affordable child care	7%	5%
Mental illness or emotional issues	6%	5%

Source: *COMPASS Key Informant Survey, 2004*