

From: Nashville.gov
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This is a courtesy copy of an email bulletin sent by Dinah Gregory.

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Metropolitan Social Services

Planning, Coordination & Social Data Analysis Newsletter

April 2016 - Organization Highlights Edition

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7th Annual Community Needs Evaluation Released

On March 1, 2016, Metropolitan Social Services released the [2015 Community Needs Evaluation](#) at a public event, the *Status of Nashville's Poverty*, available on [YouTube](#) through the Metropolitan Government's YouTube Channel.



The annual Community Needs Evaluations provide an overview of social service needs and resources available to meet the needs. It provides the objective foundation to identify current and anticipated needs, based on trends in the community. It describes the magnitude and patterning of poverty and disparity in recent years and among diverse social and demographic groups. The information can be used by the many public and private service providers to more effectively anticipate service needs and maximize the availability of social services among Nashvillians. It is also a tool for policy makers, professional practitioners, advocates and philanthropists in their efforts to alleviate poverty.

The 7th Annual Community Needs Evaluation describes the all-time high for the number of Davidson County residents living in poverty - 19.9% or 129,057, based on the most recent 2014 data from the U. S. Census Bureau. It explains who is most likely to be in poverty: 47.0% of single mothers with children under age 5; followed by 36.1% of the Hispanic/Latino population; 35.1% of people with a disability; 33.8% of people with less than a high school education; 33.1% minor

children under age 18 and 31.8% for Black or African Americans.

It also describes how poverty detrimentally affects people - in their health, educational attainment, economic status, opportunity and more. It explains how that adverse experiences of children can impair their mental, emotional and physical health for decades to come. As a society, we can make the investment in supportive and effective services now to prevent many of these occurrences, or we can pay much more later, in health care costs, disability benefits, homelessness, incarceration and other circumstances related to issues that could have been addressed earlier in life. It also explains how evidence-based practices can assure that services are based on practices that have been proven to work, making them more cost efficient and more effective in achieving positive results.

Despite the rise of poverty in Davidson County, many organizations are working to improve quality of life for members of our community who are in need. This newsletter focuses on just a few local initiatives that are doing much to help Nashvillians in Need. (If you would like to request that another organization be highlighted in a future newsletter, [please contact Metro Social Services.](#))

More than 200 people attended the *The Status of Nashville' Poverty*, and there were questions from participants about what is going on in Nashville regarding issues related to people in need. Below is an update, featuring a few of the programs and services that are helping Davidson County residents in need.

Aging and Disability Updates

Council on Aging of Middle Tennessee - Elder abuse and financial exploitation are among the fastest growing crimes against older persons. The [Council on Aging of Middle Tennessee](#) has developed [pocket guides](#) for law enforcement officials, medical personnel and financial institutions that provide tips and resources to identify and prevent elder abuse.

Tennessee Disability Coalition - Individuals who have a disability usually earn less income and are more likely to be unemployed than persons without a disability. The [Tennessee Disability Coalition](#) assists persons with a disability in understanding their rights and assesses their eligibility for public benefits, including subsidized housing. The Coalition also promotes self-sufficiency through their [Benefits to Work Program](#) that encourages individuals who have disabilities to pursue their career goals.

Workforce and Economic Opportunity Updates

Nashville Workforce Network - NWN - The [Nashville Workforce Network](#) was created to organize workforce efforts following the Nashville's Poverty Reduction Initiative. The Network brought together nonprofits, government, educational institutions, private sector businesses, and others with workforce development efforts. The mission of the Network is to reduce the effects of poverty in Nashville by creating and maintaining collaborations, streamlining resources, building skills, and promoting economic opportunities.

The Network's Education and Networking Committee develops events, creates professional development opportunities, develops relationships with employers, and creates networking opportunities for members. Its Membership Committee manages NWN communications, develops strategic partnerships, recruits new members, and provides administrative support. The Models, Reports, and Data Committee creates models from experiences, develops white papers, develops shared standards and outcomes, and collects and analyzes data on industry trends.

NWN provides training about the workforce characteristics and benefits of hiring mature workers, formerly incarcerated, immigrants and refugees, people with disabilities, and veterans. The Network also facilitates job fairs and other activities to help low-skilled workers obtain employment.

Financial Assistance Coalition - In response to the growing need for financial assistance to help poor families pay for rent, utilities and basic necessities, the [Financial Assistance Coalition](#) was formed more than two years ago. Metropolitan Social Services-Planning, Coordination and Social Data Analysis, [Rooftop Foundation](#), [NeedLink Nashville](#) and [United Way of Metropolitan Nashville](#) invited other organizations to come together. The Financial Assistance Coalition addresses ways to coordinate financial assistance more effectively and collected data to assess the significant unmet need. On March 9, 2016, the Financial Assistance Coalition hosted a Service Provider Fair with dozens of social workers, case managers and other staff from organizations that provide social/human services to people in financial need. Individuals and organizations learned more about each other, with the goal of better serving low-income Nashvillians.

The Nashville Financial Empowerment Center - FEC - The [Nashville Financial Empowerment Center](#) is a program of the Office of the Mayor in partnership with United Way of Metropolitan Nashville. In January of 2013, Nashville was selected as one of five cities that have received funding through Bloomberg Philanthropies' investment in the Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund.

The Nashville Financial Empowerment Center provides free, professional financial counseling to Davidson County residents. The FEC helps Davidson County residents reduce debt and build assets through one-on-one financial counseling incorporated into existing services offered in the city. Trained financial counselors can help clients create budgets, open safe and affordable bank accounts, understand credit reports, decrease debt, and increase savings.

Drive to 55 - [Drive to 55](#) is an initiative of Governor Bill Haslam to get 55 percent of Tennesseans equipped with a college degree or certificate by the year 2025. It is an opportunity to enhance the educational attainment of Tennessee's workforce. The initiative has three components:

1. Tennessee Promise offers two years of tuition-free community or technical college to Tennessee high school graduates beginning with the Class of 2015. High school seniors may apply for the Tennessee Promise scholarship, which will provide two years of tuition-free attendance at a community or technical college in Tennessee.

Tennessee Promise is both a scholarship and mentoring program focused on increasing the number of students who attend college in the state. It provides students a last-dollar scholarship, meaning the scholarship will cover tuition and fees not covered by the Pell grant, the HOPE scholarship, or state student assistance funds.

2. Tennessee Reconnect initiative was developed to help more of our state's adults enter higher education to gain new skills so they can advance in the workplace or fulfill lifelong dreams of completing a degree or credential. As part of Tennessee Reconnect, all Tennessee adults can now attend and earn a diploma or specialized training certificate at any of the 27 Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology, completely free of tuition and fees.

3. Labor Education Alignment Program (LEAP) is intended to eliminate skills gaps across the state in a proactive, data-driven, and coordinated manner by encouraging collaboration across education and industry and by utilizing regional workforce data to identify and then fill skills gaps across the state. The initiative will help ensure that our postsecondary institutions are producing the skills and credentials that Tennessee employers actually need.

Housing Updates

Barnes Affordable Housing Trust Fund - In July 2013, Metro Nashville government established the [Barnes Affordable Housing Trust Fund](#), and a 7-member Metro Housing Trust Fund Commission to oversee the fund. The same [Metro Ordinance](#) allocated \$2,279,040 as initial funding for the Trust. The Fund has leveraged over \$5,000,000 in local and public funding, providing support for

more than 100 units of affordable housing thus far.

Mayor Megan Barry's Housing Priorities and Action Plan - On April 11, 2016, [Mayor Megan Barry](#) released a [housing priorities and action plan for 2016-2017](#). It calls for the city resources to focus on funding, building and preserving affordable and workforce housing in Davidson County. Mayor Barry committed a \$10 million investment in the Barnes Fund for Affordable Housing and announced a public-private partnership to create workforce housing on Metro property.

Short Term Rental Property - Metro enacted two ordinances in 2014 to regulate and tax [short-term rental property](#), such as the private homes advertised on the Airbnb web site as vacation rentals. Short Term Rental Property (STRP) is defined in the Ordinances as a residential dwelling unit, containing not more than four sleeping rooms, that is used and/or advertised for [transient occupancy](#). In 2015 Metro Ordinance [BL2015-1056](#) was enacted to dedicate a portion of the transient occupancy privilege taxes generated by short-term rental properties to the Barnes Fund for Affordable Housing.

County Metropolitan Governments Can Convey Surplus Real Property to Nonprofits - In 2015 a state law was successfully changed to authorize county Metropolitan governments to convey surplus real property by grant or donation to a nonprofit organization for the purpose of constructing affordable or workforce housing ([Amendment](#) to TCA Title 7, Chapter 3, Part 3 and Title 67, Chapter 5, Part 25).

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) - On April 5, the Metropolitan Council an [ordinance](#) on third reading to amend how Tax Increment Financing (TIF) would be used by MDHA. As reported in the [Tennessean](#), the ordinance will clarify that TIF revenue will remain within the Metro Government's general fund after the loan is paid off by developers. It requires that the debt service portion of taxes remain with the Metro Government and requires on regular reports about TIF loans.

Madison Homeless & Poverty Coalition - With an increasing amount of poverty and homelessness in the [Madison](#) area, the community has come together to create the Madison Homeless & Poverty Coalition (MHPC). Organized in 2015, it is chaired by Pastor Jay Voorhees of [City Road Chapel](#) on Gallatin Road. The MHPC is establishing a database of resources and seeking ways to assist people with access to those resources. The Coalition features members from Open Table, the Veterans' Administration, Rescue 1 Global, Elevate Ministries, Metropolitan Homelessness Commission, Salvation Army, Resonate Church, as well as local business owners and residents along with many others. For additional information, please contact [Sasha Mullins Lassiter](#).

Sudden Housing Loss Coalition - A new alliance was formed by social service, fair housing, and low-income housing provider agencies to give emergency and longer-term help for residents faced with sudden housing loss. The Sudden Housing Loss Coalition comes together when necessary to assist groups of low-income residents who are facing abrupt loss of their housing. Recent examples include the notice of eviction to residents when the owners of a large apartment building did not renew their property-based Section 8 contract, and the abrupt notice of closure due to Metro Codes violations of a motel occupied by low-income families. Both events required the residents to find alternative housing quickly. When informed of a sudden housing loss situation, a participating provider agency reports it to the Director of [Programs](#) at Metro Social Services who then coordinates Coalition response.

The Contributor - Many local non-profit housing agencies contribute to subsidized, affordable, and workforce housing in Nashville. [The Contributor](#) street newspaper publishes and maintains a [list](#) of local permanent, transitional, and temporary shelter housing and other resources.

Food and Nutrition Updates

Meet Me at the Market - The [Meet me at the Market](#) Program a joint effort by AARP, Fifty Forward and Nashville's Farmers Market and Metro Transit Authority (MTA) to encourage seniors to shop at the Farmers Market during peak growing seasons May through September. Seniors are provided transportation and "Fresh Buck Vouchers" that can be used to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables for area farmers. The vouchers enable seniors to stretch their limited food budget and provide an opportunity to have access to locally grown fresh fruits and produce.

Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee - [Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee](#) provides [Mobile Food Pantries](#) to underserved communities in Davidson County and across their forty-six county service area. Perishable Mobile Pantries provide low-income clients access to healthy nutritious food on a weekly basis through donations. Distribution sites include senior high-rise towers and subsidized housing for the elderly.

Health Updates

The Nashville Health Disparities Coalition - Through a grant from the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), the [Meharry Medical College](#) launched the [Nashville REACH 2020](#), an initiative to increase availability and consumption of healthy foods among African-Americans living in North and Northeast Nashville. The Nashville Health Disparities Coalition is helping to lead the initiative, comprised of health and nutrition community partners from faith based groups, nonprofits, government to community stakeholders.

The Nashville Health Disparities Coalition in collaboration with the [Tennessee Department of Health](#) targeted the zip codes of 37208 and 37207 due to their lack of full service grocery stores and access to fresh foods. The [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) identified the areas as food deserts. The Coalition's purpose is to reduce risk factors, and reduce chronic diseases that predispose residents in 37207 and 37208 to obesity, diabetes, heart disease and some forms of cancer.

Hospital to Home - With healthcare providers facing heightened pressure to coordinate care and reduce costs for patients with chronic conditions, some organizations are exploring [partnerships](#) with community organizations to serve their homeless patients for short periods after their discharge from the hospital.

The [Hospital to Home](#) program is helping to bridge that health gap in the Nashville healthcare system for the homeless. The program developed as a new initiative of the [Mayor's Office of Innovation](#) and the [Metro Homelessness Commission](#). The program works to coordinate multiple community and Metro agencies to establish an improved system of care related to the health-care, social services, and housing needs of medically vulnerable populations experiencing homelessness.

Metro Nashville Public Health Department - The [Metropolitan Nashville Public Health Department](#) is addressing issues of [health equity](#), described in the 2015 Metro Nashville Health Equity Report. In addition, they are leading an initiative to prevent and relieve the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences, benefiting both children and their families. The 2016 Healthy Nashville Summit on April 22 focuses on Adverse Childhood Experiences, although the event is already at capacity.

Healthy Nashville - Healthy Nashville provides an array of community and demographic data, as well as a [dashboard](#) that provides a graphic display of disparities in Davidson County.

Advocacy

A VOICE for the reduction of Poverty and NOAH-Nashville Organized for Action and Hope are advocacy organizations formed in recent years in response to the elevated poverty and disparity in Davidson County. Both organizations use and share information about poverty and unmet needs in various areas, including data from the Community Needs Evaluation. Both are dedicated to

improving the quality of life for Nashville's needy.

voice logo



[A VOICE for the Reduction of Poverty](#) is an emerging grassroots alliance of Nashvillians committed to reducing poverty in our community and eradicating the devastating effects it has on far too many among us.

[A VOICE](#)'s Mission is to create a well-educated and clearly articulated communal voice that speaks loudly to the need for a dramatic reduction in poverty. It is a voluntary alliance of individuals and organizations interested in poverty reduction and alleviation.

voice representatives



On April 4, representatives from A VOICE for the Reduction of Poverty made a [presentation](#) to the Metropolitan Council's Ad Hoc Affordable Housing Committee.

The presentation described the shortage of affordable housing in Davidson County, with data showing that many formerly affordable units have dramatically increased in cost.

NOAH logo



[Nashville Organized for Action and Hope](#) (NOAH) is a faith led coalition that is multi-racial and interdenominational comprised of congregations, community organizations, and labor unions that work to give voice to traditionally marginalized people.

[NOAH](#) engages ordinary people in the political and economic decisions affecting their lives, acting as a unified voice for the faith and justice community to act on its values in the public arena.

[2016 Human Relations Awards](#) - Congratulations to the 2016 Human Relations Award Nominees:

Reverend Bill Barnes – founding pastor of Edgehill United Methodist Church and tireless advocate for affordable housing and the reduction of poverty.

Rashed Fakhruddin – president of the Islamic Center of Nashville and founding member of the American Muslim Advisory Council.

Abby Rubenfeld – former board member of the ACLU of Tennessee and Nashville attorney handling the landmark case to recognize same-sex marriage.

Hershell Warren – former board member and interim director of the Metro Human Relations Commission and Senior Advisor to Mayors Dean and Barry.

coming soon



In the coming weeks, Metropolitan Social Services-Planning, Coordination & Social Data Analysis will release detailed data by Metro Council Districts. This data will provide demographic, employment, financial, educational, household and other data specifically for Metro's 35 Council Districts.

Details will be announced in a future newsletter.

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