



The mission of MSS Planning & Coordination is to provide current data, supplemental information, technical assistance and collaborative leadership for long-term social service planning.

This effort will be used to facilitate positive change through effective collaborations and to create a knowledge foundation that can be used by policy makers, service providers and others in the community to develop programs to meet existing and emerging social service needs..

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## Count Everyone, Everyone Counts

The 2010 Census questionnaire will be one of the shortest ever used. It will have only 10 questions and take only about 10 minutes to complete. Please encourage your customers, colleagues, friends and neighbors to complete the form when they receive it next year. For many federal programs, the census counts are used to determine how much funding will be provided for counties and states. It is important that each of the residents of Davidson County be counted. Information collected by the census is confidential because the Census Bureau is not allowed to share personal information about anyone, including things like immigration status.

People in poverty, homeless people, documented and undocumented immigrants are all under-counted in the ten-year Census. Numbers from the Census are used to distribute more than \$400 billion in federal funds to local, state and tribal governments each year, and to make decisions about what community services to provide.

The Decennial Census is conducted every year, with supplemental projections provided annually through the American Community Survey. For example, the 2008 report estimates the population of Davidson County was 626,144; the average family size was three; there were 61,843 foreign-born residents; and 326,601 people age 18 and over were in the workforce.

For additional information: <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/>

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### THANKSGIVING

"It is therefore recommended ... to set apart Thursday the eighteenth day of December next, for solemn thanksgiving and praise, that with one heart and one voice the good people may express the grateful feelings of their hearts and consecrate themselves to the service of their divine benefactor ..."

-- *Samuel Adams, father of the American Revolution on November 1, 1777 (adopted by the 13 states as the first official Thanksgiving Proclamation)*

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## 2009 Community Needs Evaluation Released

Metropolitan Social Services (MSS) Planning & Coordination recently completed its first Community Needs Evaluation Report, which is available online at [www.nashville.gov/sservices/planningcoordination.htm](http://www.nashville.gov/sservices/planningcoordination.htm)

The report focuses on the policy areas of Workforce & Economic Opportunity, Food & Nutrition, Housing, Home & Community Based Services and Transportation.

It provides an overview of social service needs, discusses the resources available to meet the needs, identifies current and anticipated needs based on trends in the community and shows changes in the magnitude and patterning of poverty and well-being in recent years and among diverse social and demographic groups of Nashvillians.

## Homelessness and Hunger



Each year, the U. S. Conference of Mayor's publishes a Hunger and Homeless Survey Report, with data from 25 cities. The 2008 report (for the year ending September 30, 2008) indicates that most of these cities experienced an increased demand for emergency food and an increase in homelessness over the previous year. Since that time, the unemployment rate and number in poverty have increased.

The report described the tremendous increase in calls for emergency assistance (also reported in the MSS 2009 Community Needs Evaluation. The Hunger and Homeless Survey report is available at: [http://usmayors.org/pressreleases/documents/hungerhomelessnessreport\\_121208.pdf](http://usmayors.org/pressreleases/documents/hungerhomelessnessreport_121208.pdf). The report also noted that 27% of Nashville's homeless are veterans, 44% are employed, 38% are mentally ill, and that homelessness increased because of more foreclosures.

### **Who is in poverty in Nashville?**

In 2007, families with young children were at greatest risk of being poor. People in Davidson County living in poverty:

10.4% of all families

24.7% of families with related children under age 18

34.6% families with related children under age 5

10.0% of people age 65 and over

*Source: U. S. Census Bureau, 2007 ACS*

## U. S. Poverty Higher with Revised Formula

On October 20, Associated Press reported that the level of poverty in America is even worse than first believed. Their report explained that the National Academy of Science used a different method of calculating poverty which factored in medical costs and geographic variations, identifying a U. S. poverty rate of 15.8%. By using the original Census formula (which does not consider the rising cost of medical care, transportation, child care or geographic variations), the U. S. poverty rate was 13.2%. The revised formula show that approximately 47.4 million Americans last year lived in poverty, 7 million more than the government's official figure.

### **Parents Training Day**

The Department of Exceptional Education of Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools will host a "Parents Training Day" for parents of children with disabilities. Funded through a grant from the State of Tennessee, this collaborative day of learning will include a variety of workshop opportunities regarding effective practices for students with disabilities. Lunch, free parking, and a notebook will be provided to participants. For additional information or to register, please contact Betty Holmes, [Betty.Holmes@mnps.org](mailto:Betty.Holmes@mnps.org), 615-259-8705.

## Eat Healthy and Save Money!

In the MSS 2009 Community Needs Assessment surveys and focus groups of customers, there were many comments about need for healthy food, including the need for more affordable fresh food for low-income families. Good nutrition contributes to lower infant mortality, better health for children of all ages, reduction of obesity and cholesterol problems, and improved school performance of children and adults.

Nashville' Farmer' Market has been the place to go for economical farm-fresh produce and food since 1828. It moved to its present location north of town as part of the Bicentennial Mall development in 1995. Today it covers 16 acres, and is open every

day, Monday through Sunday, from 8am to 6pm. It's closed on Christmas Day, Thanksgiving and New Year's Day.

In the newly renovated inside, there are many eateries and food shops. On weekends there's a flea market. However, the best part of the Market is the seasonal selection of produce from local farmers.

There are also special events often at the Market, such as Shopping with Chefs, which features a local chef using local farm products to prepare a meal. For recipes, news about special events, and more, sign up for their newsletter at [www.nashvillefarmersmarket.org](http://www.nashvillefarmersmarket.org).

### Planning & Coordination is a Process

Pennie G. Foster-Fishman, Professor, Department of Psychology at Michigan State University, has researched systems change, investigated human service delivery reform, multiple stakeholder collaboration, coalition development, resident empowerment and comprehensive community initiatives.

Dr. Foster-Fishman has found that there are different ways community organizations can form alliances and work together. These can range from a limited type of informal networking (with limited interaction and each agency continuing to protect its turf) through a continuum all the way to collaboration (organizations work together with a common mission and goals to share projects).

Before effective collaboration occurs, there are incremental steps which first involves multiple agency cooperation (making intentional efforts to work better with other agencies).

The next step is coordination, in which organizations share information and support the work of others involved. Cooperation may involve project-specific planning, with each agency assuming specific complementary roles. Dr. Foster-Fishman's work documents the improvements in service delivery systems which occur through effective coordination: increased service coordination, increased access to services, reduced fragmentation and identification of service gaps. MSS has a document Dr. Foster-Fishman provided which provides additional details about the inter-organizational alliance efforts. To receive this document, please request it by emailing [MSSPC@nashville.gov](mailto:MSSPC@nashville.gov)

### November Facts

The birthstone for November is the topaz.

The flower that represents November is the Chrysanthemum.

Lincoln's Gettysburg address was given in November 1863.

The Berlin Wall began to come down on November 9, 1989.

### Events of Interest

October 30, 2009, 7 pm—Haunted History Tour of Ft. Negley.

Fridays/beginning October 2, 2009 (continuing on November 6, December 4, February 5, March 5, April 2) - Free College Counseling-First Friday @ Nashville Public Library. A Princeton Review expert will be in the Teen Center to answer questions and give advice about the college admissions process and standardized exams. Both students and parents are welcome.

November 8, 2009—2009 Roger T. Noe Lecture on World Peace by Councilman Erik Cole @ Vine Street Christian Church.

November 14 and December 12, 2009. 1-4 pm—Nashville Shakespeare Festival Readings @ Nashville Public Library.

Please let us know if you have January-March 2010 events to include in the Spring Newsletter.

### Brenda Venson, Planning Analyst, Retires

Brenda began her 30-year career with Metro Social Services in October, 1979 and has experienced several job roles from Senior Social Worker with Richland Village, to Director of the child care center. With organizational changes, Brenda became Program Manager for the Intake and Assessment Unit in July, 2005 and was later promoted to a Social Services Planning Analyst in 2007.

As Planning Analysts, Brenda and her team members recently completed a comprehensive community needs assessment. She sees this assessment as a strong foundation to further guide Planning & Coordination to facilitate positive change in the community.

Brenda's dedication to children and families in need and her commitment to quality service made a positive contribution to MSS and the community. She will definitely be missed.

## Long-Term Impact of the Recession

In the September 30, 2009 briefing paper “Economic Scarring: The long-term impacts of the recession,” John Irons explains that there are lasting consequences from high unemployment, falling income and reduced economic activity. This “scarring” is long-lasting damage to the economic situation of individuals and to the economy.

One example of the detrimental effect of unemployment and income loss is on educational attainment (through insufficient early childhood nutrition, inability of families to provide a supportive learning environment and by impairing college attendance. In addition, the increase in poverty that occurred because of the recession will have lasting consequences on children, resulting in long-lasting costs on the economy. The paper also described other consequences as the reduction in private investment and impairment of entrepreneurial activity and business formation.

The full report is available at: <http://www.epi.org/publications/entry/bp243/>

## What is Social Work?

The practice of baccalaureate social work is the professional application of social work theory, knowledge, methods, principles, values and ethics and the professional use of self to restore or enhance social, psychosocial or biopsychosocial functioning of individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations and communities. (TCA 63-23-102a)

Social workers assist people by helping them cope with issues in their everyday lives, deal with their relationships, and solve personal and family problems. Some social workers help clients who face a disability or a life-threatening disease or a social problem, such as inadequate housing, unemployment, or substance abuse. (USDOL)

## Benefits of Community Coordination

There are many examples of initiatives to improve services through community coordination. For example, Alignment Nashville developed a model of collaboration to align the resources of organizations with the strategic plan of Metro Nashville Public Schools, resulting in resources directed toward common goals.

Community coordination provides benefits to the community, including enhanced systems of communication, greater consistency in the local response to needs, shared vision to improve services and inter-agency accountability.

Despite the positive effect of community coordination, there are potential challenges in creating a community coordination effort. Potential pitfalls include a loss of focus over time if a specific task has been achieved; lack of consistent participation with coordination efforts (sending representatives with no history with the group or who may not be empowered to make decisions), disagreement in philosophy or approach to issues, inadequate resources, etc. Most of these challenges can be addressed through planning, realignment, policy and commitment to the process.



*Pictured above are the staff members from MSS Planning & Coordination. From left to right, Dinah Gregory, Lee Stewart, Brenda Venson, Gloria Nance and Abdelghani Barre.*

*The P&C staff has decades of cumulative experience providing direct social services. As a result, their approach incorporates the perspective of service providers and those who need services.*