2011
Social Services
Needs Assessment

Lake County, Ohio

Completed by:

Lifeline, Inc.

Lake County's Community Action Agency

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Lifeline, Inc. History & Mission

Lifeline was founded on June 19, 1973 with the mission of helping Lake County's low-income residents by providing assistance and life skills programming that was designed to increase self sufficiency. In 1980, Lifeline became a participating agency of the United Way of Lake County and in 1987 Lifeline was designated as Lake County's Community Action Agency by the Ohio Department of Development. Most recently, in 2008, Lifeline, Inc. was certified as a mental health agency by the Ohio Department of Mental Health as a provider of other mental health services.

Today Lifeline continues with much the same mission of helping families and individuals break the cycle of poverty and achieve self sufficiency. In 2008 the Lifeline staff and its Board of Trustees completed a strategic planning process for the agency's future resulting in a reaffirmed motto and programming goals. Lifeline's motto "First to help, then to teach" recognizes Lifeline's diverse programming in the areas of emergency services and self sufficiency. Lifeline strives to help families in crisis and then teach them to become self sufficient.

Lifeline's Board and staff strongly believe that self-sufficiency means something different to every consumer who walks through our doors. To some it might mean securing safe, affordable and stable housing so that they have a place to sleep, shower and call home. To others it might mean being able to access prescription medicine and other healthcare services so that they can maintain their physical and mental health. And to others it might mean furthering their education or learning a basic skill. In an effort to promote self-sufficiency in a variety of ways, Lifeline provides a wide array of programs in the areas of healthcare, housing, energy and consumer education.

As a Community Action Agency, Lifeline also believes that it is uniquely poised to serve two distinct purposes in Lake County: to act as an advocate for our consumers and to ensure that as an agency, we are meeting critical community needs. Lifeline's Board and staff feel that it is essential that our consumers have a voice. Lifeline, Inc. regularly advocates on behalf of our consumers, both by discussing poverty-related issues with our local legislators and providing seats on our Board to low-income representatives. Lifeline strives to fill gaps in services within Lake County and ensures that we are meeting critical and emerging needs through its regular needs assessment process and consumer satisfaction surveying.

Lifeline, Inc. is significantly funded by the Community Service Block Grant and the Home Energy Assistance Program, both via the Ohio Department of Development and through the HOME Funds Program and Community Development Block Grant granted through the Lake County Board of Commissioners. Additional funding is allocated through the United Way of Lake County, and provided by the Lake County ADAMHS Board, the City of Mentor, the Lake County Department of Job & Family Services, the CVS Foundation, the Western Reserve Junior Service League and the Bikers Aiding Local Diabetics. Lifeline also hosts several of its own fundraising events each year and an annual campaign drive each fall.

Lifeline, Inc. 2010 Statistics

Lifeline, Inc., Lake County's Community Action Agency, served 1,250 unduplicated low-income families, or 2,260 individuals through its community services division, in 2010 according to the agency year end report.

Of the 2,260 individuals served within the community services division in 2010, 72% were Caucasian, 18% African-American, 7% Hispanic and 3% represented other ethnicities. Fifty-eight percent of all individuals served were female.

Of the individuals served within community services, 26% fell within the 0-17 age range; 56% fell within the 18-54 age range; 14% fell within the 55-69 age range; and 4% fell within the 70 years and older age range.

Of individuals age 24 and older, 32% had a high school diploma or GED; 29% had some post-secondary education in addition to a high school diploma or GED; 20% were non-graduates completing some high school; 11% had only education levels through 8th grade and 8% had completed a two or four year degree.

Of the 1,250 households assisted in 2010, 55% were single person homes; 19% were single-parent households headed by a female; 8% were two-parent households; 8% were couple households; 1% was single-parent households headed by a male and 9% were other types of households.

Other pertinent stats include: 46% of individuals served had no health insurance and 13% of individuals served were disabled. Of the 1,250 households served, 68% rented housing; 13% owned their own home; and 19% were homeless.

Several notable shifts in customer demographics were seen in 2010, possibly as a result of the changing economy and the changing face of need in Lake County. Likely the biggest shift Lifeline saw in 2010 was in the education level of our customers. The number of customers who have had some post-secondary education also grew, from 19% in 2007 to 29% in 2010. Overall, Lifeline has seen customers with a much higher level of education than in previous years.

Nearly every community within Lake County was served during 2010. Of the 2,260 individuals served, 45% were Painesville/Painesville Twp. residents; 16% were Mentor/Mentor on the Lake residents; 13% were Willoughby/Willoughby Hills residents; 7% were Eastlake residents; 5% for Madison residents; 4% were Wickliffe residents; 3% were Fairport Harbor residents; 2% each were Willowick and Perry residents; 1% Concord residents; and less than 1% each were Timberlake, Kirtland/Kirtland Hills, Grand River and Leroy residents. No residents were seen from Waite Hill or Lakeline.

Another shift Lifeline has seen in 2010 is that the customer base is continuing to spread out of Painesville and its surrounding areas. For each of the last few years, Lifeline has seen fewer Painesville residents, but more customers from other areas of Lake County. Particularly in 2010, our customer bases grew in western Lake County.

Lifeline, Inc. Needs Assessment Methodology

The data for the 2011 Needs Assessment have been collected in three different ways.

Focus Groups: Four focus groups were held to obtain the input of service providers on the needs and gaps in services within Lake County. In total, there were 29 participants in attendance, representing 16 Lake County non-profit, social service agencies.

The nominal group technique is a decision making process that encourages participation from all group members and allows for individual and group brainstorming, while also quickly making a determination for results. The process begins with individual group members silently writing their observations of the community needs on note cards. In a round-robin fashion, the cards are presented to the group for discussion and additional brainstorming. After all note cards are presented and discussed, participants begin to rank the needs in order of greatness. The group results are then tallied by Lifeline's staff facilitators.

We feel that the nominal group technique is advantageous because it allows for independent idea brainstorming followed by idea sharing, group discussion and ranking. We feel that this provides all participants an equal opportunity to have their opinions and observations presented to the group, which also spurs additional brainstorming during the group discussion. The ranking of the discussed needs allows Lifeline to easily evaluate the needs of our community as presented by the focus group participants.

Customer Surveying: We asked 16 of Lifeline's collaborating agencies to survey consumers at their organization so that we could evaluate the needs of the consumers from their own point of view. In order to assess a variety of needs, these 16 agencies included health clinics, mental health agencies, faith-based organizations, government service providers, educational assistance facilities and emergency service providers. A total of 320 surveys were sent to 16 agencies and 153 surveys were returned by 11 of them. This is a 48% return rate.

Survey participants were asked to answer several demographic questions, including questions about their family and housing types, and their type of health insurance. We also surveyed to see if they fit any specific population groups, including veterans, mental health consumers, ex-offenders, physically disabled and victims of domestic abuse. These surveys were all completed anonymously and privately.

In addition, we also asked participants to answer questions about their specific needs, including what services for which they were currently applying for assistance, what barriers have prevented them from receiving assistance in the past and what the biggest concern is for their family right now. We also asked them to identify what services they are in need of that they cannot obtain right now and would like to see available in the future.

Real Data: In addition to surveying consumers and asking service providers for their observations and opinions, data was also collected from a variety of credible sources. This data includes demographics and statistics for Lake County and the State of Ohio. A resource listing of this data is in the back of this assessment.

Lake County Demographics & Statistics

Lake County, located in northeast Ohio along the shore of Lake Erie, boasted an estimated population of 230,041 in 2010, according to the Lake County Profile prepared by the Ohio Department of Development. This makes Lake County the eleventh most populous county in Ohio. The population has steadily increased each year for the past ten years and is projected to continue to increase through 2020, with a projected population of 234,520 in 2020.

The median household income for Lake County residents in 2010 was $54,616, up from $48,763 in 1999. However, 23.7% of the population made under $30,000 in 2010.

Ratio of Income in 2010 to Poverty Level

Below 50% of poverty level	8,986	3.9%
50% to 99% of poverty level	8,837	3.8%
100% to 149% of poverty level	13,038	5.6%
150% to 199% of poverty level	18,597	8.0%
200% of poverty level or higher	182,762	78.7%

In early 2010, a coalition of partner agencies, led by the Lake County General Health District, assembled to begin the process of developing a Community Health Assessment for Lake County. Surveying was done throughout the fall and winter of 2010 and the document was completed in early summer 2011. The assessment shows the responses to up to 111 questions, answered by 2,568 respondents from a variety of income levels, geographic locations, ages and ethnicities throughout the county.

In the 2011 health assessment, respondents were asked to evaluate the top five community issues that have the greatest effect on the quality of life in Lake County from a list of 27 choices. The top responses overall and by income level are shown below. Additional top voted issues overall included immigration, homelessness, availability of positive teen activities, domestic violence and dropping out of school. These responses show that Lake County residents overwhelmingly see need in all areas including healthcare, employment, housing and education/child care.

Top Issues that Have the Greatest Impact on Quality of Life in Lake County

	Overall	$0-$34,999	$35,000-$74,999
1	Unemployment (59.4%)	Unemployment (53.2%)	Unemployment (56.8%)
2	Affordable Health Services (41.7%)	Low-income/Poverty (41.4%)	Affordable Health Services (40.5%)
3	Low-income/Poverty (39.2%)	Affordable Health Services (37.5%)	Low-income/Poverty (34.7%)
4	Inadequate Health Insurance (32.0%)	Inadequate Health Insurance (29.3%)	Inadequate Health Insurance (32.2%)
5	Unsupervised Children/Youth (26.8%)	Homelessness (29.2%)	Unsupervised Children/Youth (28.8%)

Data provided by the Lake County Community Health Assessment 2011

Self-Sufficiency in Lake County

Lake County continues to be a very expensive place to live, particularly for low income individuals and families. According to the 2011 Ohio Self-sufficiency Standard, it takes an annual wage of between $19,640 and $61,868 to support various family types in Lake County. In one instance, when a household has one adult and one preschooler, the self-sufficiency standard for Lake County is the 14th highest in Ohio at $$36,751 needed to maintain self-

sufficiency. For families with one adult, one preschooler and one school age child, Ohio ranks the 9th highest, with a wage of $45,987 needed to maintain self-sufficiency.

The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Lake County, 2011

MONTHLY COSTS	Adult	Adult + Preschooler	Adult + Infant Preschooler	Adult + Preschooler School age	Adult + School age Teenager	Adult + Infant Preschooler School age
Housing	$639	$770	$770	$770	$770	$986
Childcare	$0	$672	$1,336	$1,119	$447	$1,783
Food	$246	$374	$490	$561	$650	$661
Transportation	$216	$223	$223	$223	$223	$223
Healthcare	$162	$413	$431	$437	$459	$455
Miscellaneous	$126	$245	$325	$311	$255	$411
Taxes	$247	$510	$737	$679	$405	$986
Earned Income Tax Credit (-)	$0	$0	$0	$0	-$116	$0
Child Care Tax Credit (-)	$0	-$60	-$100	-$100	-$63	-$100
Child Tax Credit (-)	$0	-$83	-$167	-$167	-$167	-$250
SELF-SUFFICIENCY WAGE						
Hourly	$9.30	$17.40	$22.98	$21.77	$16.28	$29.29
Monthly	$1,637	$3,063	$4,044	$3,832	$2,865	$5,156
Annual	$19,640	$36,751	$48,530	$45,987	$34,376	$61,868

Healthcare in Lake County

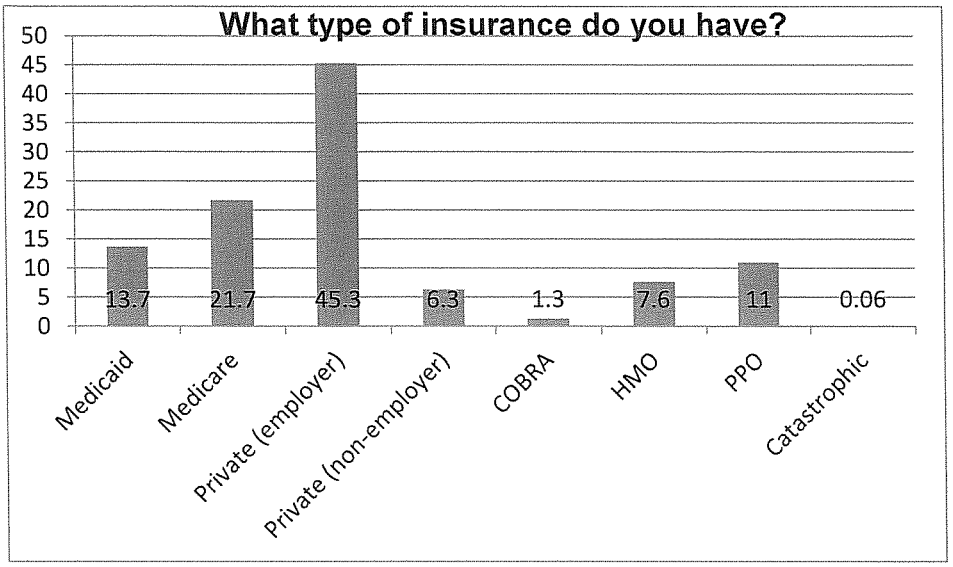
One of the early questions evaluated in the Lake County Community Health Assessment was what respondents viewed as the most important health problems facing Lake County. Respondents were able to choose five responses from a list of 28 issues. The top responses overall and by income level are shown below. Additional top voted problems overall included alcohol addiction, heart disease/heart attack, cancer, teenage pregnancy and diabetes.

Top Health Problems Facing Lake County

	Overall	$0-$34,999	$35,000-$74,999
1	Adult Obesity (53.4%)	Drug Addiction (44.6%)	Adult Obesity (54.1%)
2	Drug Addiction (44.4%)	Alcohol Addiction (43.0%)	Aging Problems (44.9%)
3	Mental Health (42.2%)	Adult Obesity (41.7%)	Child Obesity (42.7%)
4	Child Obesity (42.2%)	Mental Health (37.4%)	Mental Health (39.5%)
5	Aging Problems (39.9%)	Child Obesity (30.5%)	Drug Addiction (34.4%)

Data provided by the Lake County Community Health Assessment 2011

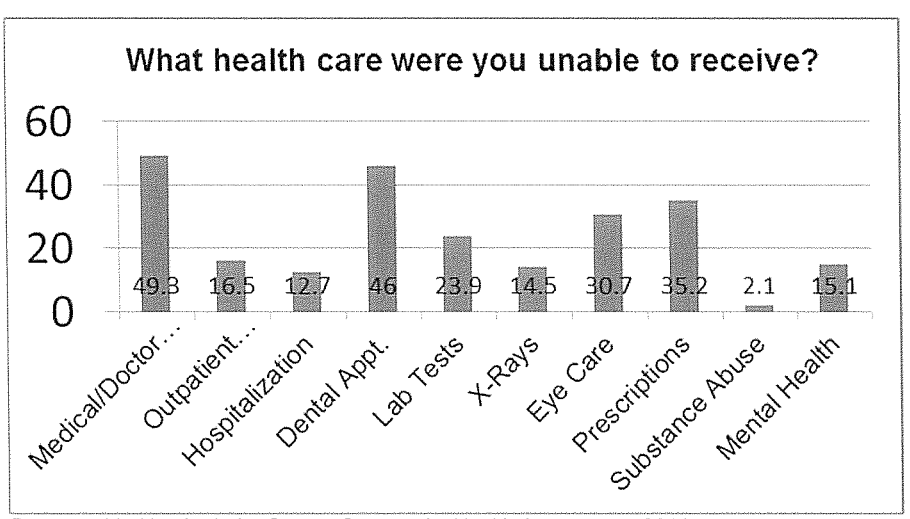
A key component of the Health Assessment asked respondents a series of questions about health insurance and access to health care services. Of those who answered, 86.9% said that they do have health insurance, while 13.1% did not. The chart below shows what types of insurance survey respondents said they have.



Data provided by the Lake County Community Health Assessment 2011

According to Lake County Department of Job & Family Services, the number of Medicaid recipients in Lake County has also steadily grown, rising over 10,000 in the last four years. In 2007, Lake County JFS reported 38,415 Medicaid recipients in Lake County. That number grew to 40,280 in 2008, to 43,751 in 2009 and to 48,424 in 2010.

Health Assessment survey respondents were asked what barriers to health care services they have encountered. Of those who answered, 33.6% said that they didn't receive services because they didn't have insurance. An additional 31% said it was because their insurance wouldn't cover the cost of the needed service and 26.9% said that they couldn't afford their medications. The chart below shows what types of services respondents were unable to receive.



Data provided by the Lake County Community Health Assessment 2011

Respondents were also asked a series of questions about their access to prescription drugs. Of those surveyed, 62.8% said that they do take prescription medications daily. When asked if their prescriptions were covered by their insurance, 83.1% answered that they were. When respondents were asked if they had any problems filling any medically necessary prescriptions in the last 12 months, 13.6% replied that they had—this jumps to 20.1% in those respondents with income under $34,999. The majority of those who answered that they did have problems filling prescriptions overwhelmingly sited that they either lacked insurance, their insurance didn't cover what was needed or that their share of the cost was too high. When asked how much they spend out of pocket on prescriptions each month, 67.7% said they spend 0-$50/month; 11.7%

said they spend$51-$75/month; 5.4% said they spend $76-$100/month; and 15.2% said they spend over $101/month.

Employment in Lake County

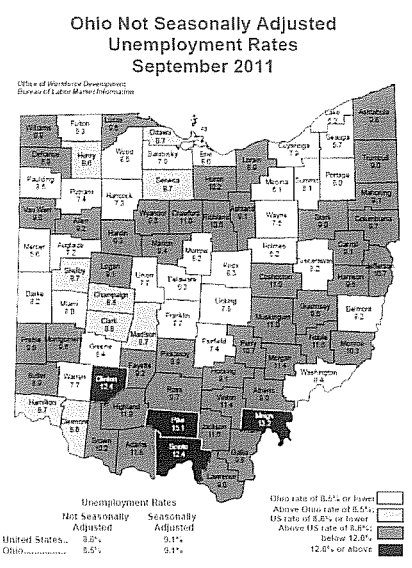
Historically, the unemployment rate in Lake County has been low. The chart below shows a historical perspective of the civilian labor force in Lake County and how it has grown between 2006 and 2010.

Lake County Civilian Labor Force

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Civilian Labor Force	132,300	134,400	134,700	134,000	133,600
Employed	125,800	127,200	126,600	122,700	122,300
Unemployed	6,500	7,200	8,100	11,300	11,300
Unemployment Rate	4.9	5.4	6.0	8.4	8.4

Ohio Labor Market Information

In looking at the Ohio Labor Market's monthly data for 2011, the unemployment rate has remained high, peaking at 9.1 in January 2011. Lake County's unemployment rates are historically lower than the statewide rates. For September 2011, Lake County had a civilian labor force of 134,500, 126,000 of whom were employed and 8,500 of whom were not employed and an unemployment rate of 6.3. Comparatively, Lake County recorded an unemployment rate of 7.1 in August 2011 and 7.7 in September 2010. Ohio recorded an unemployment rate of 8.5 and the United States recorded an unemployment rate of 8.8 for September 2011. The map below shows comparative unemployment rates for the various counties in the State of Ohio in September 2011.



Major employers in Lake County continue to be manufacturing companies ABB, Inc., Avery Dennison Corp., Lincoln Electric, Lubrizol Corp. and STERIS Corp.; health systems, including Lake Hospital System; utility provider First Energy Corp.; and government entities, the Lake County government, the Mentor Exempted Village Board of Education and the Willoughby-Eastlake Board of Education.

Housing and Homelessness in Lake County

The Lake County Profile shows that in 2010, 94.5% of all housing units were occupied and that 77.3% of them were owner-occupied and 22.7% were renter-occupied. An additional 5.5% were vacant. Of owner occupied homes, 11.26% were valued at under $99,999; 32.4% were valued between $100,000 and $149,999; 46.2% were valued between $150,000 and $299,999; and 9.33% were valued at over $300,000. The median value of homes in Lake County is $159,100.

Home ownership continues to be a struggle for low-income residents as foreclosures have been on the rise in recent years. Since 2000, the number of foreclosure filings throughout Lake County has climbed consistently, nearly doubling between 2000 and 2006. As the chart below indicates, the number of foreclosure filings surpassed 1,000 in 2006.

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Foreclosures Filed	580	655	788	783	864	918	1,141	1,395	1,517	1,695	1,728

Data provided by Lake Co. Continuum of Care Home Is In Sight Plan and the Lake County Federal Grants Office

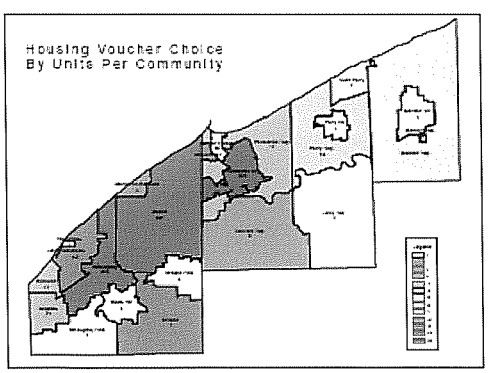
Rental housing in Lake County is higher than the Ohio average, making it challenging for low-income residents to secure safe and affordable housing. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the Fair Market Rent for a two bedroom apartment in Ohio is $704/month. In Lake County, the FMR is $720 for a two bedroom apartment. The annual income that is needed to afford the FMR in Lake County is demonstrated in this chart.

Annual Income Needed to Afford the FMR

0 Bedroom	$20,600
1 Bedroom	$23,920
2 Bedrooms	$28,800
3 Bedrooms	$36,920
4 Bedrooms	$39,240

Data provided by the National Low Income Housing Coalition

Further compounding the high cost of housing in Lake County is the current demand for both public housing and housing choice vouchers. According to data from the Lake Metropolitan Housing Authority, currently Lake County has 240 public housing units, 236 of which are filled and have a waiting list of approximately 831 households. Lake County has 1,304 residents receiving housing choice vouchers, but the waiting list is currently closed with approximately 872 households on the waiting list. The waiting list for housing choice vouchers has been closed since October 2009 and LMHA does not anticipate re-opening it anytime in the next six months.



Map provided by the Lake County Federal Grants Office

Homelessness continues to exist in Lake County. According to the January 2011 Point in Time study done by the Lake County Continuum of Care, 29 families with dependent children were homeless. There were 98 households without children identified as homeless, comprising 96 individuals and two couples. A total count of 127 homeless persons was identified as homeless on January 25, 2011.

Of those homeless surveyed, 41.3% identified themselves as chronically homeless and 53.7% estimated that they have been homeless for more than 90 days. Of those surveyed, 87.2% were homeless with shelter, leaving 12.8% unsheltered. The overwhelming cause of homelessness, of those surveyed, was loss of job or income source (46.0%). Further causes of homelessness are displayed in the chart below.

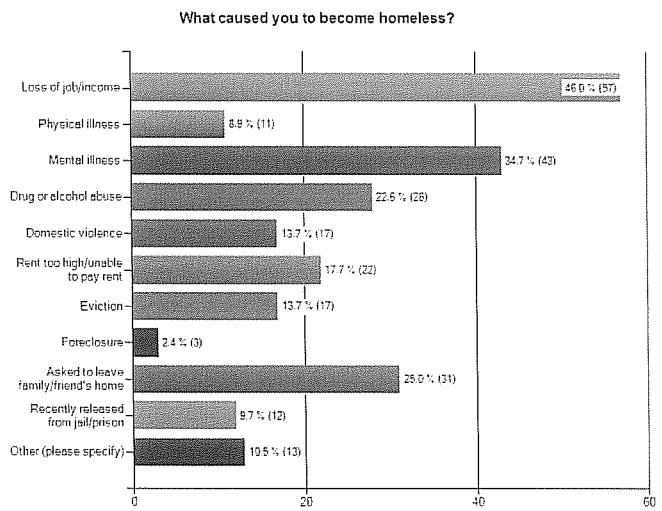


Chart provided by the Lake County Continuum of Care 2011 Point in Time Study

The Lake County Continuum of Care's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness, which was approved and submitted in October 2010, identifies five components of care and the gaps in services associated with each. These components include: outreach, prevention, emergency shelter, transitional housing, and supportive services. Notable gaps in services related to housing included providing 24 hour emergency shelter, as opposed to the 12 hour shelter that is currently available; expanding current emergency shelter to include more than the current 35 beds; to provide separate emergency shelter for homeless families; to provide additional transitional housing programs for both men and pregnant women; provide payee services to the mentally ill; provide medication reminder calls to those with mental illness; increased transportation opportunities so that homeless have a means of getting to and from appointments and job opportunities; expanded day shelter or community center that can provide mailboxes, showers, washers/dryers, computers and daycare services to the homeless; and expanded dental and medical care for the homeless.

Food in Lake County

The need for assistance with food has also continued to rise in Lake County over the last four years. In October 2007, there were 11,764 recipients of Food Assistance through the Lake County Department of Job and Family Services. That number grew to 13,206 in 2008, to 18,677 in 2009 and to 21,685 in 2010—a growth of nearly 10,000 recipients in just four years.

The need for additional help with food has also continued to rise, particularly with referrals to food pantries and soup kitchens within the county. Lake County is fortunate to boast 42 food pantries, located throughout the County. The chart below shows referrals made by 211 Lake County for various food programs between 2007 and 2010.

211 Lake County Food Referrals

Referral Type	2007	2008	2009	2010
Emergency Food Pantries	4,533	5,297	5,427	5,193
Government Surplus Food	194	254	251	422
Food Supplements/Baby Food	73	57	42	45
Home Delivered Meals	56	56	73	90
Soup Kitchen Meals	86	99	89	140
Food--Other	11	171	151	128
TOTAL Referrals	**4,953**	**5,934**	**6,033**	**6,018**

Data provided by 211 Lake County

In the Lake County Community Health Assessment, respondents were asked a series of questions about their consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables. In the initial question, respondents were asked whether they consumed fresh fruits and vegetables daily. Of respondents who had a household income of less than $34,999, 64.8% indicated that they did; of respondents who had a household income of between $35,000 and $74,999, 75.8% indicated that they did; and of respondents who had a household income over $75,000, 80.4% indicated that they did. This data leads us to believe that the higher the income level, the more likely one is to obtain and consume fresh fruits and vegetables.

Respondents were also asked what prevented them from eating fresh fruits and vegetables daily. Of those who responded, 39.8% indicated that they would spoil before they were eaten; 37.1% indicated that the cost prohibits them; 14.9% indicated that they do not like them; and 13.1% indicated that they lacked access and availability.

Lake County is fortunate to have several local farmers markets held weekly throughout the County. Survey respondents were asked whether they knew about them and 83.5% indicated that they did, while 16.5% indicated that they did not. Of those who answered that they did know about them, 80.1% indicated that they have visited one.

Transportation in Lake County

Laketran is the regional transit authority for Lake County and was established as such in 1974. Laketran's primary funding source is a .25% local sales tax that comprises 70% of their agency budget. Laketran strives to serve the people of Lake County with a special emphasis on meeting the transportation needs of senior citizens and people with disabilities and features a fleet of 112 buses. Laketran's three core services include six local fixed routes, four commuter express routes to Cleveland and para-transit services, known as Dial-A-Ride. Of Laketran's over one million passengers each year, approximately 40% utilize the fixed routes and 35% utilize the Dial-A-Ride program.

Laketran's fixed routes are used frequently by Lake County's low-income residents. Laketran's statistics show that of those who utilize the fixed routes, 57% use it between four and six times per week; 27% use it between two and three times per week; and 12% use it once per week. Their data shows that the most common use of the fixed route buses is to get to work (32%), followed by shopping (25%), recreation (13%) and school (10%). Fixed route data shows that 50% of riders were male. Of the male riders, 91% of them had a household income under $30,000.

Dial-A-Ride is used frequently by Lake County's low-income population for getting to and from places that are not on the fixed route bus schedule. Laketran's statistics show that of those who utilize Dial-A-Ride, 33% use it between one and three days per month; 23% use it between four and eight days a month; and 24% use it more than nine days per month. Their data shows that the most common usage of Dial-A-Ride is for health/medical appointments (47%), followed by work and shopping (13% each) and recreation (7%). Dial-A-Ride demographics show that 65% of riders are female and that 67% of female riders are over the age of 65. Of the female riders, 73% of them have a household income of under $30,000.

What Laketran provides, they do very well. However, due to funding constraints, their services have been limited beyond the needs of low-income residents. Both the fixed routes and the Dial-A-Ride buses only operate Monday through Friday from approximately 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. No bussing is available on weekends, or for those working second or third shift to get to and from work. While Laketran provides six fixed routes, several key areas of the county are not included, including a large industrial area in Mentor, where many low-income residents look for factory work.

211 in Lake County

Based on annual reports provided by 211 Lake County, call volume has steadily increased over the last four years. Actual numbers are shown in the chart below.

211 Lake County Call Data				
	2007	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**
Total Calls	30,097	36,570	40,165	43,446
Average Calls/Week	579	703	772	836

Information provided by 211 Lake County Annual Reports 2007-2010

The top needs that consumers called for in 2010 included food (14% of needs), utility assistance (9.5%), housing payment assistance for both rent and mortgage (8.5%), emergency shelter (7.5%) and material goods like clothing, furniture and household goods (7%).

2011 Lifeline Needs Assessment Focus Group Data

Top Social Service Needs:

1.	Access to and expansion of Transportation Options	82 votes*
2.	Increased access to medical and dental services	62 votes*
3.	Access to, or retention of, safe and affordable housing	44 votes*
4.	Employment	33 votes*
5.	Increased Mental Health Support	23 votes*

* ***Recommended as a need in all four focus groups***

Additional needs that received significant vote totals:

- Additional Emergency Utility Assistance programs
- Taxable Items programs
- Access to legal representation
- Documentation assistance (access to birth certificates, photo IDs, etc.)
- Increased access to food/nutrition programs
- Additional Emergency Services (clothing, furniture, laundry vouchers)

More details on top social service needs:

Transportation included two specific needs, including public transit and private automobile assistance. In regards to public transit, two prominent needs were for expanded routes and hours of operation and assistance with the cost of paying for transit. Because of limited hours and routes, clients often struggle to utilize public transportation to and from medical appointments, job interviews and work. And, while Laketran strives to keep fares low, clients often need help with bus tokens, particularly for the Dial-A-Ride program. Transportation also included votes for additional funding to help customers who do own vehicles with maintenance and repairs, as well as with gas voucher and drivers' license fees.

Increased access to medical and dental services also included a wide variety of needs. The need for additional and continued funding for prescription assistance and healthcare services for those who lack insurance were heavily voted for. The need for emergency adult dental care and oral surgery was also listed as a high need. Other specific needs receiving votes included chronic care for the undocumented population, concerns about the cost of doctor visits and the availability of healthcare services for those who do not qualify for Medicaid or Medicare.

Access to and retention of safe and affordable housing encompassed many observations. Many of these included the need for more affordable rental housing units in Lake County, more funding for emergency rent assistance, additional transitional housing programs and higher income guidelines for securing assistance. More specific areas of interest included basic housing/maintenance skills for tenants (budgeting, cooking, cleaning), renter education, housing mediation and assistance with the cost of moving.

Employment was a significant need that came up in every focus group. Specific concerns mentioned included additional job training programs, employment coaching and job seeking support services, and additional vocational guidance and training programs. Also included in this category was the need for increased income via higher paying jobs.

Increased mental health support included a wide-array of concerns, including a payee program for mentally ill persons, more group homes for mental health consumers, school age prevention programs, transitional support for residents recently released from the hospital or treatment facilities, conflict mediation, and an in-county detox facility.

Expanded assistance with utility bills included the need for year round assistance, particularly during non-HEAP months, as well as higher income guidelines for assistance. Also mentioned were the need for utility deposits and preventative utility assistance (non-emergency).

2011 Lifeline Needs Assessment Consumer Survey Data

Seven key barriers to service delivery were identified by consumers who participated in the survey. Several of these are issues that could be addressed by the various service providers, while some issues are customer-related. These barriers included:

1. Didn't meet income guidelines
2. Lack of transportation to the agency
3. Needed help faster than the agency could provide services
4. Client background (ex-offender, citizenship, etc.)
5. Client lacked the required paperwork to complete an application
6. Agency hours didn't fit client schedules
7. Agency staff didn't speak my language

2011 Consumer Survey Data

	Total Replies	% of Total Replies
Housing type:		
Rent	76	50%
Staying with someone	19	13%
Currently homeless	28	18%
Own	24	16%
Did not answer	6	3%
TOTAL	**153**	**100%**
Access to healthcare:		
Public insurance	66	43%
No insurance	61	40%
Private insurance	26	17%
TOTAL	**153**	**100%**
Household type:		
Single	65	42%
Couple	41	27%
Single parent with minor children	41	27%
Age 65 & over	3	2%
Did not answer	3	2%
TOTAL	**153**	**100%**
What type of service are you applying for today?		
Food	59	
Utility assistance	35	
Rent or housing assistance	29	
Clothing	26	
Mental health/drug/alcohol services	26	
GED or adult education	21	
General health concerns	17	
Reproductive health services	11	
Legal assistance	10	
Nutrition	10	
Child care	7	
Diapers	5	
Other	7	
TOTAL	**263**	

	Total Replies	% of Total Replies
Please check: I am...		
A high school graduate	85	56%
A mental health consumer	32	21%
A domestic violence survivor	24	16%
Physically disabled	16	11%
A parent of a child with mental health issues	10	7%
A veteran	5	3%
Recently released from prison	3	2%
TOTAL	**175**	

2011 Consumer Survey Data

The Biggest Concern for My Family Right Now is:
The high price of gas
Job loss/getting a job/job security
No medical insurance for myself or my children
Finding a place to live
Keeping up on medication, diabetes, blood pressure
How my family will be able to pay for food, worried about where our next meal will come from
Housing! Help for housing is very difficult to obtain
Clothing for the children
Just had a baby and I'm concerned about the formula and diapers for him
Problems paying utility bills, recovering from winter heating costs
Just recently lost my home to foreclosure
Trying to get caught up on bills (utilities, credit card debt, etc.)
Medical costs: Medication, doctor co-pays and hospital bills take all of my income
Job training programs
Transportation--I can't afford to put gas in my car to get to and from work
Paying for college
How I am going to be able to afford retirement
Because we're not financially ready to have children, pregnancy prevention is paramount
Health Insurance

Additional Services I'd Like to See Become Available in Lake County are:
More job training programs
Help for ex-felons (jobs, counseling, housing)
More tranportation options
More affordable housing, better quailty housing
Additional Free Clinic services/locations
Assistance with hearing aids
Classes to teach online bill-paying/online banking
For the Section 8 waiting list to open up and be more available
Help with clothing & shoes for kids for school
Help for single moms--like a support group
More programs to help adults with no minor children
More assistance with childcare
More transitional shelter to help adults get on their feet
Additional food sources
Assistance with other utilities (water, sewer, phone, garbage)
Dental care
Legal Counseling

What has prevented you from getting help in the past?	
My income was too high	25
I didn't have transportation	32
I needed help faster than the agency could provide it	21
My background (felony record, citizenship, etc.)	10
I didn't have the correct paperwork	8
Agency hours didn't fit my schedule	7
They didn't speak my language	4
TOTAL	**107**

Resources

2-1-1 Lake County Caller Statistics—2005-2010

Civilian Labor Force Estimates April 2005-2011: Prepared by the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services, Bureau of Labor Market Information

Faces of Laketran: Prepared by LakeTran, March 2011

Home Is In Sight: Lake County's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness: Prepared by the Lake County Continuum of Care, Oct. 2010

Lake County Community Health Assessment: Issued by the Lake County General Health District, August 2011

Lake County, Ohio Profile: Prepared by the Ohio Department of Development, Office of Policy, Research and Strategic Planning

Lake Metropolitan Housing Authority housing data: provided by FSS Coordinator Katie Meholick, November 2011

The National Low Income Housing Coalition: www.nlihc.org

Point in Time Count—January 2011, The Lake County Continuum of Care

The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Ohio 2011: Prepared for the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies

The State of Poverty in Ohio: A Path to Recovery: Issued by the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies, May 2011

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Forbes House
Lake County Department of Job & Family Services
Lake County Free Medical Clinic
Lifeline, Inc.
Painesville City ABLE
Project Hope
Salvation Army