

An Assessment of Regional Well Being: First Edition

**Prepared for
United Way of Central Virginia**

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Community Problem and Solution Areas

A. Successful Children and Youth	20%
B. Strengthening Families and Individuals	24%
C. Healthy and Independent Living	20%
D. People in Crisis Receiving Help	10%
E. Voluntarism/Charity/Civic Engagement	20%
F. The Natural Environment	6%

Successful Children and Youth: **Threats to Community Well Being**

- 1. High school dropout rates - especially in Lynchburg.**
- 2. Large percentage of adults who did not complete high school.**
- 3. Low per pupil expenditures in the public schools.**
- 4. The continuing gap between white and black students on all SOL scores.**
- 5. While the number of regional childcare slots is growing, the number of slots for infants is not meeting needs.**
- 6. For youth going to work out of high school work readiness skills are lacking.**

Strengthening Families and Individuals: **Threats to Community Well Being**

- 1. The high number and percentage of people living below the poverty line and all of the consequences that accompany poverty.**
- 2. The high number of non-business bankruptcies.**
- 3. The growing homeless population.**
- 4. The high number of female headed households.**
- 5. The concentration of poverty and resulting problems in the region's cities.**
- 6. For low income workers, child care and transportation continue to be serious problems.**
- 7. The large number and percentage of substandard houses.**

- 8. The numbers of new parents in need of parenting education and skills remains high.**
- 9. Changes in the TANF program will no longer exempt young mothers from working which will lead to a new set of problems for them and the community.**
- 10. Far too few resources avail for the prevention of individual and family problems.**
- 11. Low wage jobs fail to provide a living wage for individuals and families -- creating the working poor.**

Healthy and Independent Living from Birth to Aging: Threats to Community Well Being

- 1. The large number and percentage of people without health insurance.**
- 2. The high rates of infant mortality among black children.**
- 3. The high number and rates of teen pregnancy.**
- 4. The high number and rates of serious illnesses.**
- 5. The comparatively high percentage of two year olds without full recommended immunization.**
- 6. The widely held suspicion that mental health is a major, yet unmeasured, problem within the region.**

- 7. The growing numbers and percentage of elderly in the region will create new and increase existing problems such as elder abuse.**
- 8. Health problems that plague the nation as a whole are also prevalent in the region --- smoking, untreated hypertension, obesity.**
- 9. Surveys have shown that approximately 50% of citizens do not get routine dental care --- the consequences are far reaching.**

People in Crisis Receiving Help: **Threats to Community Well Being**

- 1. The high number and rates of reported child abuse and neglect.**
- 2. Law enforcement officials are of the opinion that substance abuse is an underlying factor in a huge but unmeasured portion of crimes.**
- 3. The absence of adequate mental health and substance abuse services for people of all ages but especially youth and the elderly.**
- 4. Children and youth with both mental health and substance abuse issues -- dual diagnosis -- have no local treatment options.**

Voluntarism/Charity/Civic Engagement: **Threats to Community Well Being**

- 1. The declining amount of dollar contributions per capita in the region to United Way.**
- 2. The no more than average participation in local, state, and national elections.**
- 3. Good data on the rates of voluntarism are not available.**
- 4. Rates of civic engagement --- participating in local, state, and national decision-making --- are unknown.**

The Natural Environment: **Threats to Community Well Being**

- 1. Increasing traffic congestion with resulting harm to air quality and noise levels.**
- 2. Increasing threats to water quality.**
- 3. The controversy over the use of biosolids in agriculture.**
- 4. The ever increasing volume of solid waste.**
- 5. The rapidly occurring rates of urban sprawl in the counties.**
- 6. Global warming is a worldwide threat -- including our region. Can we become a “Green City” and a “Green Region?”**

Challenges to Getting Started

- 1. Setting priorities and goals. Where do we continue working or start to work?**
- 2. How do we get organized? Who will step forward and assume leadership?**
- 3. Who needs to come to the table and how do we get them there?**