

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: COMMUNITY IMPACT BASELINE REPORT (2009)

The Community Impact Investment Model represents the commitment of Berkshire United Way (BUW) to promote real and sustained change in the Berkshire region. The model uses a community-defined aspiration as the basis for how BUW's community investments are targeted. The community aspiration – "*Making Berkshire County a community of hope and opportunity, where every individual and family lives, works and thrives*" -- and supporting priorities are the result of BUW's collaboration with over 400 community representatives over the past several years.

The intent is to direct investment to the highest priorities of the community and then measure and monitor the results of hard work and investment over time. The measurement process begins now with the actual measures or baseline data. Significant examples are highlighted in this summary. As you will see, here in Berkshire County there is good news and troubling news. Also included are model details, community priorities, outcomes, and indicators by which to measure community progress.

Going Forward

Community Impact is an ongoing process. Berkshire United Way has and will continue to work in partnership with community resources to engage stakeholders and support effective, sustainable, results-oriented activities that meet specific goals and anticipated outcomes.

Each year, Berkshire United Way's funded-partner organizations will report on their impact on the community in their service area. The baseline report -- which will be updated and maintained on a calendar-year basis -- will assist by providing a snapshot of the regional context within which the programs were operating. Funded partners will be able to use this report as a data reference as they describe the performance of their program activities and the impact on the people with whom they worked.

At a larger level, data tracking and evaluation will, over time, allow Berkshire United Way and its many partners and supporters to see the impact of investments in the goals and outcomes that form the basis of the Community Impact work.

The Community Impact Model

The logic and motivation behind the Community Impact model can be explained through three key concepts:

1. *Social problems are complex and interwoven.*
2. *Investment should be directed to activities that address root causes of problems.*
3. *Data can be used to help understand action priorities and impacts.*

How Is the Model Organized?

The Community Impact Model is organized into five increasingly specific tiers, as described below.



Community Impact Priorities

Goal Area 1: Helping Children and Families Succeed

What Outcomes Do We Want To See?

- All children will arrive at kindergarten ready to learn.
- All young adults successfully transition to work, higher education or training.

Sample Indicators

- Infants born healthy; Children enter kindergarten healthy; Students perform to their full potential in school

Sample Measures

- Physical health; Stable home life; Poverty; Achievement at grade level; Graduation rate

Goal Area 2: Promoting Financial Stability and Independence

What Outcome Do We Want To See?

- All individuals are empowered to define and achieve their goals for financial independence and career success.

Sample Indicators

- Individuals successfully pursue career goals; Individuals achieve financial stability

Sample Measures

- Unemployment; Educational attainment; Housing

Goal Area 3: Meeting Basic Needs

What Outcomes Do We Want To See?

- Individuals move from a crisis situation, where their basic needs are met by the "safety net" of service providers, to independently meeting their own needs, and demonstrating an increased ability to manage family resources.

Sample Indicator

- Individuals are able to meet their nutritional and housing needs

Sample Measure

- Emergency food system use; Housing stability

Baseline: The Community Today

On the positive side:

- In 2007, third graders performed comparably to their peers in the state in math and English. The same year, however, Berkshire fourth graders lagged behind their peers statewide in both math and English test scores.

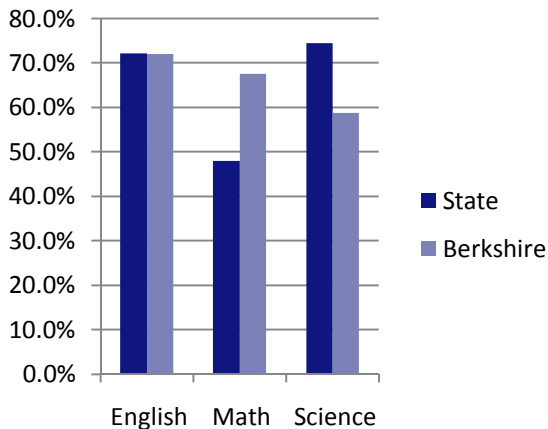
Percent Students Earning a Proficient Score, 2007

MCAS Test		State	County
English	Grade 3	59.0%	61.1%
	Grade 4	55.9%	51.1%
Math	Grade 3	59.8%	60.1%
	Grade 4	48.0%	41.0%

Source: MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2009

- High school students perform on par with their peers in the state in English, fare better in math, but lag in science.

Grade 10 Tests Scores, Berkshire County 2008



Source: MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2009

- Full-day kindergarten enrollment for the 2008-2009 school year ranged from 95-100%, far above the state average of 75%.
- 79.5% of mothers had at least a high school education in 2007, slightly better than in the state overall (78.4%).
- During the 2007-2008 school year school attendance rates ranged from 92.7% to 96.4% by district, with the majority near the statewide average of 94.6%.
- Four-year graduation rates have held steady with state levels.

Four-Year Graduation Rates, Berkshire County (2006-2008)

Year	County	State
2008	80.8%	81.2%
2007	79.8%	80.9%
2006	80.1%	79.9%

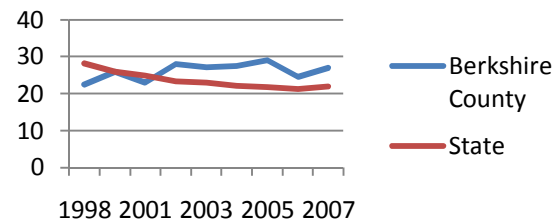
Source: MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2009

- Since 2000, the unemployment rate in Berkshire County has been lower than in the state as a whole.

Of concern, however, is the following:

- In April 2009 there were 800 children waiting for a subsidized care slot for early childhood education.
- In 2007, children under five years of age were twice as likely to be living in poverty (30.4%) than in the state as a whole (15.4%).
- The likelihood of teenage girls (15-19 years) in Berkshire County giving birth increased 20.5% in the past decade while the rate in the state steadily decreased 21.7%.

Teen Birth Rate,* Berkshire County (1998-2007)



Source: MA Department of Public Health, MassCHIP, 2009

- Adults have lower levels of education attainment than the state as whole for all degree levels.
- Home heating assistance demand has increased each year from 2006 to 2008.

Home Heating Fuel Assistance Demand, Berkshire County

	2006	2007	2008	% Increase (06-08)
All Households	6,087	6,315	6,813	12%
Elder Households	1,714	1,709	2,336	36%

Source: Berkshire Community Action Council, 2009

For complete details see the full report on line: www.berkshireunitedway.org.