

WCCAO Planning Session
February 3, 1988

The group had been given a homework assignment to consider certain factors relating to specific populations. Factors include:

KEY FACTS

TRENDS

RESPONSE TO "SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Populations include:

GENERAL POVERTY POPULATION

HOMELESS

FAMILIES WITH ONE OR TWO PARENTS

SENIORS

GENERAL POVERTY POPULATION

Key Facts:

- 12% of the population of Wn.Co. is in poverty
- 4% of the Co. is on public assistance
- 15% of Oregon's population requested food assistance in 1987.
- At least 50% of low-income households has an employed head of household.
- There is a 24% High School drop-out rate in Washington County.
- 14% of the income of low-income people is spent on fuel. (This is three times as much as others.)
- 64.6% of poverty households are headed by women.

Trends:

- Wn. Co. is growing and it is anticipated that the poverty population will grow at a commensurate rate.
- A continued proliferation of low paying jobs.
- Decreasing government support at all levels.
- Less available low-income housing.
- An increased demand for food assistance and less food available for distribution.
- An increase in jobs without benefits.
- Increasing demand of health and mental health care and additional restrictions for indigent care.
- More women in the work force.
- Increased competition for human service funds.
- Consistency in the high school drop-out rate.
- Increased child care needs.

So what's the problem?

- People can't obtain basic human and material needs. (there was group consensus that this is the major problem; the others are causes.) ***
- People do not have adequate income due to a lack of available employment and a low minimum wage.
- There are more people to serve, fewer resources and less access to services.

- There is more competition for services; more rules and more exclusions.
- More people are working and are still poor.
- There is still discrimination against women in the work force.
- There is still a lack of available, affordable child care.
- The poor do not have political clout.

Critical questions:

- Should WCCAO advocate for low-income in the area of economic development?
- What is a family wage?
- What is WCCAO going to do about the drop-out rate.
- What national policy and funding decisions have created economic hardships?
- Should WCCAO be in the job training business?
- What will WCCAO do about housing---rehabing, weatherization, and availability?
- Is WCCAO willing to exclude (or prioritize) certain populations?
- How much emphasis should WCCAO place on prevention? Intervention? Remediation? (emergency vs. long-term solutions)
- What resources exist in the community that we are not using?
- How long will our current resources last?
- Are we committed to economic justice?

HOMELESS

Key Facts:

- 78% decline in federal funding.
- 5.6% of county households need low income housing.
- 20% of those noted above receive government support for housing.
- 3382 mobile homes in Wn. Co. are in areas zoned for high-intensity use.
- The average Wn. Co. rent payment is \$301 while the average AFDC payment is \$306.
- In 1986, only 14-20% of those needing housing support received it.
 - There is a one to two year wait for low-income housing.
- 7% of those in poverty end up homeless.

Trends:

- Available housing is down 25% while demand is up 44%.
- Increased property taxes.
- Increasing number of poor unable to afford housing.
- Decrease in federal government support for low-income housing but an increase for support of shelters.
- Increase in the number of homeless families.
- Increase in older housing stock: increased need for rehabilitation, decreased funding and increased deterioration.

So what's the problem?

- Lack of affordable, available, adequate, accessible housing.***
- No societal commitment to long term solutions.

- Lack of money to pay for housing development.
- Continued displacement of the disabled, frail aging and those who used to be institutionalized. Support systems are not available.
- General lack of housing and emergency shelter.
- Lack of visibility of the problem in Washington County. Homeless people tend to go to Portland where services are more available and don't "camp out" on the streets of Beaverton or Hillsboro.

Critical Questions:

- Should WCCAO be in the business of advocating for housing? Providing housing?
- How much emphasis should be placed on prevention as opposed to intervention?
- Should WCCAO be advocating for housing rehab? Expansion of our own shelter program (building a new shelter)?
- What services need to be provided to special needs populations?

FAMILIES

Key facts:

- 46% of Wn.Co. poverty population are families. 64.6% are headed by women.
- 87% of children in poverty receive Medicaid.
- 41.5% of all low-income people over the age of 14 are employed.
- WIC meets 33% of the demand for service.
- 20% of the available jobs will not support a worker and two children.
- 21.2% of all children under 15 years of age are in poverty.
- 50% of poor families suffer domestic and child abuse.
- There is a large population of latch-key children in the county.
- 56% of the work force is made up of two working parents and single women heads of households.
- 34% of new births are to un-wed women under the age of 20.
- There are only two non-profit day care centers in the county. All others are for-profit and do not have sliding fee schedules.

Trends:

More women in the work force.

- Increased child care needs/diminishing resources.
- Increase in: low paying jobs; jobs without benefits; numbers of women heads of household.
- The wage gap between men and women will continue.
- Women continue to be undertrained and passed over for advancement.
- "Sandwich Generation." (parents caring for parents and children)

So what's the problem?

- Families lack income and support to meet basic needs and child care.***
- Women have lower income than men.

- Families have the same issues as those listed under the General population.
- There are more "at-risk" youth. (parents not at home)
- Less Federal support available.
- Lack of "family wage" jobs, training and education.**
- Increased number of people living "on the edge".

Critical Questions:

- Can WCCAO develop a family oriented approach to services?
- What role can/should WCCAO take in regard to child care?
- What is a family wage?
- What role should WCCAO play in economic development? Family wage? Minimum wage? Gender gap in wages?
- Should WCCAO be involved in shelter for: domestic/child abuse; at-risk youth; homeless?
- What role should WCCAO play in providing housing for large families?
- What policy decisions have created economic hardships?
- Should WCCAO have an emphasis on the needs of women?

*** Most important issues

The group will begin with "Seniors" at the next work session.

WCCAO/mb