

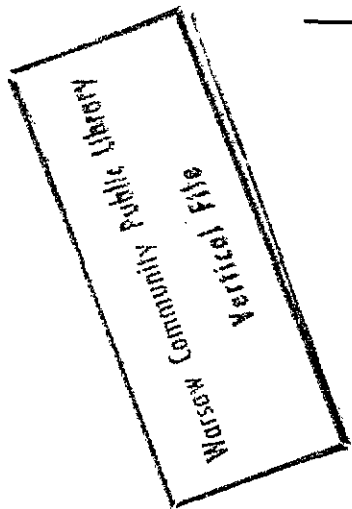
# Needs Assessment

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*for Adults with Disabilities  
and Economic Disadvantages*

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Kosciusko County, 1995



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## Introduction

Assessment of services available to adults in Kosciusko County with disabilities and economic disadvantages becomes increasingly more important as we experience changes in governmental regulations and resources at the local level. As a result, how we use our resources, and when, must be carefully considered so that these limited resources are used wisely and efficiently and are accessible to individuals needing them. The process of analyzing these resources and services includes investigating not only the services currently provided, but also those not provided. Kosciusko County is fortunate to have many community agencies providing a variety of financial, housing, health, mental health, education, vocational and recreational services. It seems unlikely, however, that any of these agencies is adequately equipped with the financial and staff resources to meet every need an individual may have. The purpose of this assessment is to focus on those unmet needs.

As concerned citizens and professionals in Kosciusko County, we sought to evaluate not only what needs are not being met for adults with disabilities and economic disadvantages, but also the frequency and severity of these needs. Furthermore, we considered it beneficial to explore possible changes in social services from the provider's perspective so as to aid in future social service and community planning. By exploring these aspects of the social service delivery system, we believe our assessment will provide additional, yet previously undocumented, data.

## Definition of the Identified Population

In an attempt to narrow the scope of this assessment and clearly define the identified population, we focused on adults with disabilities and economic disadvantages. We chose to focus on people with disabilities and economic disadvantages because the authors had a high level of personal and professional interest in the subject. We hoped by exploring unmet needs we could positively impact the social service delivery process.

We chose to focus on adults ages 18-64 because several assessments completed in recent years have addressed the needs of children and adolescents and we did not want to duplicate information. Additionally, we viewed the geriatric population (ages 65 and over) as having special, often age-related, needs. Adults make up 59.3% of the population in Kosciusko County according to the 1990 Census. This statistic alone precluded us from assessing the needs of a larger group.

We considered it important to expand the definition of "economically disadvantaged" to include not only those living in poverty, but also those receiving financial or public assistance. We chose to do this because the "working poor" and "medically indigent" may not be below the poverty line but still may not have enough money to meet their basic needs. According to the 1990 Census data, 5.3% of the adults (ages 18-64) living in Kosciusko County were living in poverty. According to the Kosciusko County United

Way Needs Assessment Executive Summary 1993-1994, 15% of the 633 respondents said they did not have enough money for basic needs. According to the Labor Market Specialist at Workforce Development Services, the 1994 unemployment rate was 3.9%. These are important concerns for a community with such a low unemployment rate.

We defined "disabled" as impairment in social, occupational, academic and/or adult living skills due to a physical, psychological or developmental limitation. With the introduction of the Americans with Disabilities Act, more people with disabilities are being accommodated in various aspects of the community, yet many continue to be users of multiple services. For example, there is an increase in gainful employment (especially in the professional fields) and educational attainment for persons with disabilities; however, this has not transferred into higher earnings (National Organization on Disability/Harris Survey, 1994).

### Creation of the Survey and Choosing Survey Recipients

A survey enabled us to make conclusions based on statistics, yet allow opportunities for service providers to more subjectively present their ideas and concerns. Primary data were collected through a direct mail survey created by Carla Nussbaum (Goodwill Industries), Lynda Miller (RR Donnelley & Sons) and Carrie Yocum (Bowen Center).

The surveys were administered and data collected from February 1995 to March 1995. Surveys were mailed to service providers and people knowledgeable about the identified population. Survey recipients included individuals providing health, mental health, safety, financial, educational, vocational, housing, spiritual and family services. The recipients also included community leaders and a private citizen recognized as a community advocate who is knowledgeable about the identified population.

A total of 54 surveys were mailed and 29 were returned. Of the 29 returned, 27 were usable surveys. As with any direct mail survey, some of the returned surveys were incomplete. Of the incomplete surveys, many had individual questions that were answered thoroughly and accurately; those questions were incorporated into the survey results. The response rate was 50% (29-2 incomplete = 27). The survey itself contained open-ended questions with mutually exclusive answers, opportunities to rank or rate the answers and open-ended questions to elicit opinions for coding. The survey recipients were also asked to indicate the mission statement of their organization.

### Discussion of Survey Results

There seemed to be a variety of organization types represented by the respondents. The exception was the absence of private, for profit organizations. Respondents indicating

the transportation needs. The "Status of Indiana Families. . . Today & Tomorrow, Kosciusko County Profile" identified various problem areas and ranked them as high, medium or low priority in the community. Transportation was listed as a high priority and housing/homeless, poverty, and illiteracy were listed as a medium priority. Workforce Development Services projects a decline in the number of high paying, low-skilled jobs in the near future. If this projection is realized, it could mean an increase in the volume of consumers needing social services and, subsequently, a larger number of service providers unable to meet these basic needs. Additionally, if service providers cannot meet these needs currently, there is concern that they cannot be met in the future and the cycle of poverty will continue.

Health, child/adult day care and mental health needs were consistently identified in the top ten needs consumers have.

A. According to the respondents, 7% are unable to provide for the health needs of their consumers. Health services are receiving considerable publicity as more attention is placed on the "medically indigent". An example of the seriousness of this problem can be found in The Needs Assessment completed by the Indiana Wesleyan Graduate Nursing Students who obtained minutes from the PATCH (Planned Approach to Community Health) Committee. The PATCH Committee is part of the Kosciusko County Health Care Task Force initiated by the Chamber of Commerce. The Committee highlighted problems associated with health care for the indigent:

- 1.0 The estimated 1992 Medicaid expenditure in Kosciusko County was \$14,546,386.
- 2.0 About 7% of Kosciusko County residents do not have major medical insurance or any means to pay for medical expenses.
- 3.0 Nearly 4% of Kosciusko County residents are enrolled in Medicaid programs.
- 4.0 There were 700 births in Kosciusko County in 1991. Thirty percent were born to women who were indigent or uninsured.

B. According to respondents, 15% cannot provide child or adult day care. The Needs Assessment Executive Summary completed by United Way of Kosciusko County (1993-1994) also identified these as needs. It indicated that child care was the second most serious need out of 58 service needs listed. Respite care for the physically disabled was the 23rd need cited, respite care for the mentally disabled was the 28th most serious need, adult day care for the mentally disabled was the 29th most serious need.

C. According to respondents, 24% are unable to provide mental health services. There are approximately 13 different agencies in Kosciusko County offering mental

health or counseling services. Additionally, there are numerous self-help and support groups available. This seems to be an indication of need as consumers have supported the continued existence of these numerous services. Another example of need comes from the "Status of Families. . . Today & Tomorrow, Kosciusko County Profile" in which the Step Ahead Council reviewed and prioritized a variety of problem areas. A 24 hour crisis hotline, lack of mental health practitioners (need for training), and drug and alcohol abuse programs were given "high priority" ratings. Health insurance not covering the cost of services was rated as a "medium priority". Given the survey responses and results of prior needs assessments, it appears mental health issues remain a concern despite the numerous services available in the community.

Respondents indicated that they were unable to provide developmental services 91% of the time; however, only four respondents even cited that developmental services were requested and, on average, they received less than three requests per month. It appears the frequency of requests is limited. Respondents indicated a variety of services they are unable to provide, but 88% reported making referrals to other agencies in Kosciusko County.

None of the respondents anticipated a decrease in the volume of consumers requiring their services in the next 12 months or 2-5 years. Furthermore, 85% of the respondents anticipated an increase in the next 2-5 years; 60% viewed the potential increase as significant. The majority, 67%, attributed this to a change in funding and population. There is concern that the funding, accessibility and availability of services may not meet the anticipated increase in need.

The majority of respondent viewed collaborative and centralized services as a means of maximizing services to consumers. Comments from respondents included hope that a "central location opens in the next five years" and concern that "too many agencies (are) trying to duplicate services." The issue of centralizing services in Kosciusko County has been discussed by local officials and seems to be an issue worth investigating further.

Interestingly, although transportation and adult day care were cited as primary needs, no respondent indicated developing programs to address these needs in the next 1-5 years. Some other new programs were identified that would indirectly address the other primary needs of housing/shelter and financial. There seemed to be several programs planned as a means of addressing a variety of issues some of which included health and mental health.

### Recommendations

- 1.0 Investigate what specific requests agencies need to refer elsewhere and what requests cannot be referred at all. The survey indicated some service providers could not meet their consumers' needs and referred these individuals elsewhere. Clarifying which services are referred most often may help to shape the service delivery system and substantiate the need for new programs.
- 2.0 Investigate further the benefit of collaboration among service providers and centralizing services. In the age of managed care, it will become more important to weigh the cost-benefit factors in providing services. Collaboration and centralization may be a means of accomplishing this.
- 3.0 Survey adult consumers in Kosciusko County who have a disability or are economically disadvantaged to determine their needs that cannot be met with present services. It may be helpful to compare the needs consumers express to those service providers identify.
- 4.0 Investigate existing transportation services because this was repeatedly cited as a primary need by survey respondents. There were no new programs being developed to meet this need in the next 1-5 years per the survey respondents.
- 5.0 Investigate existing Adult Day Care programs, or lack thereof, to determine how these needs will be met in the future.
- 6.0 Research the benefits and feasibility of establishing a Social Service Association in Kosciusko County. This association might better utilize the resources of the numerous smaller committees, boards and advisory councils that already exist in the county. The concern is that information may not always be disseminated, developing programs may not be publicized and efforts may be duplicated in the existing committees. The purpose would not be for networking but for education, communication and collaboration. This might make a good project for a future KLA group or some other interested party.
- 7.0 Another future KLA project might be to develop a Program Description Directory detailing social service programs available in Kosciusko County. This could be an expansion of the current KLA Social Service Directory by describing the programs offered rather than simply listing services and agencies.



### Conclusion

The authors tried to avoid making conclusions and assumptions based on insufficient data. Some respondents did not answer all the questions making it difficult to draw conclusions at times. In some instances, survey answers resulted in what appeared to be alarming statistics but were simply based on just a few responses. The authors recognize that the 50% return rate may not be a good representation of the total number of survey recipients. Subsequently, the needs identified through the survey results may not represent all the needs of the community as a whole because some agencies with specialized services did not respond.

The authors also recognize that, though this survey was not scientific, it was thoughtfully prepared. Every effort was made to carefully analyze and report the data obtained. The responses seemed to be substantiated by assessments and surveys completed recently by various other social service organizations. Even though the response rate was lower than desired, the majority of respondents seemed to agree on the needs of their consumers and often prioritized these needs in similar ways. A concern the authors have is that the same needs have repeatedly been identified in various surveys but there is no specific plan of action to meet those needs.

A final concern remains that if there are needs not being met now and the volume of consumers increases, will the service delivery system change proportionally to meet those needs?

The authors hope this survey will be useful in developing and changing the social service delivery system to better meet the needs of adults in Kosciusko County with disabilities and economic disadvantages.

## Appendix A

### Survey Responses

Following is a tally of responses to the survey questions.

1. Please circle your organization type.  
(27 Respondents)  
0% Private, for profit  
37% Private, not for profit  
30% City/County government  
19% Federal/State government  
14% Other (one "state mandated/county process, two churches, one "quasi-government)

2. Please check all items that apply to the majority of your consumers.

Total # responses to each item		
19	68% Receiving gov't assistance	32% Not receiving gov't ass't
16	50% Married	50% Not married
20	25% Employed	75% Not employed
18	78% Have children	22% Do not have children
15	67% 11th grade educ. or less	33% Diploma, GED, higher ed
8	25% Physical Disability	50% Emotional Disab.   25% Developmental Dis

3. Please rank the top five problems that you feel affect adults with **economic disadvantages** most often.

(22 Respondents. Answers with "\*" are those that tied and are listed alphabetically. )

1. Housing/Shelter
2. Financial
3. Transportation
4. Health
5. Child/Adult Day Care
6. Education/Literacy\*
6. Food\*
8. Mental Health\*
8. Vocational\*
10. Developmental
11. Clothing/Furniture\*
11. Social\*
13. Legal\*
13. Safety\*
13. Spiritual\*
16. Other (utilities)
17. City/Government
17. Recreational

4. Please rank the top five problems that you feel affect adults with **disabilities** most often.  
(23 Respondents. Answers with "\*" are those that tied and are listed alphabetically.)

1. Financial
2. Transportation
3. Housing/Shelter
4. Health\*
4. Vocational\*
6. Mental Health\*
6. Social\*
8. Developmental
9. Child/Adult Day Care\*
9. Safety\*
11. Education/Literacy\*
11. Food\*
13. Spiritual
14. Recreation\*
15. Other\* (one each: caregivers, utilities, lack of support system)
16. City/Government\*
16. Clothing/Furniture\*
16. Legal\*

5. Estimate the number of times per month the following services are requested of your organization.  
Also check whether or not you are able to provide these services.

Type of Service	# Responses to each item	Average # Requests/month per respondent	Services Provided	Services Not Provided
Housing/Shelter	15	9.06	75%	25%
Vocational	9	7.87	97%	3%
City/Government	2	55.00	77%	23%
Developmental	4	2.75	9%	91%
Spiritual	6	8.33	98%	2%
Legal	9	19.77	85%	15%
Mental Health	11	11.54	76%	24%
Financial	8	8.25	32%	68%
Health	8	40.37	93%	7%
Safety	8	26.37	94%	6%
Recreation	2	7.00	100%	0%
Clothing/Furniture	7	19.28	98%	2%
Child/Adult Day Care	8	6.87	85%	15%
Social	6	21.0	98%	2%
Educ/Literacy	9	6.44	90%	10%
Transportation	17	10.35	74%	26%
Food	11	24.81	88%	12%
Other: communications basic needs utilities respite care job readiness trng	9	13.88	68%	32%

6. Are the persons who you are not able to provide services to being referred to other agencies in Kosciusko County?  
(26 Respondents)

88% Yes                      12% No

If no, please circle the reason why.

66% Service is not provided in the county.  
0% Not enough information available about the service.  
33% Other: ("Not a problem.")

7. How do you see the volume of consumers requiring your services changing in the next:

12 months (23 respondents)		2-5 years (20 respondents)
26%	Will increase significantly	60%
39%	Will increase minimally	25%
35%	Will stay approx. the same	15%
0%	Will decrease minimally	0%
0%	Will decrease significantly	0%

8. On what do you base this opinion?  
(24 Respondents)

0% Change in private funding  
42% Change in government funding or grants  
25% Change in population  
0% Change in community funding  
33% Other: crime rate  
          don't expect community to change  
          observations over years  
          referral trends  
          shifting to local government  
          change in program delivery  
          change in laws

9. Do you see the funding of your organization changing significantly in the next 1-5 years?  
(24 Respondents)

50% Yes                      50% No

If yes, do you anticipate that services:  
(7 Respondents)

58% Will increase  
25% Will remain approximately the same  
17% Will decrease

10. What needs do you anticipate your consumers having in the future which you are presently unable to provide?

(19 Respondents. Answers with "\*" are those that tied and are listed alphabetically.)

1. Financial
2. Transportation
3. Child/Adult Day Care
4. Housing/Shelter
5. Education/Literacy
6. Mental Health
7. Clothing/Furniture

- 8. Health
- 9. Social
- 10. Spiritual
- 11. Food
- 12. Legal
- 13. Recreation
- 14. Safety
- 15. Vocational
- 16. Developmental
- 17. Other (one each: geriatric mental health facility, communications, parenting skills, life skills, respite care, growing de-emphasis on training/emphasis on assessing jobs, guardianship, representative payee.)
- 18. City/Government

11. Would collaboration of your services with other providers better meet your consumers needs?  
(22 Respondents)  
86% Yes                      14% No

12. Are you an advocate of bringing area agencies into one central location to provide maximum services to consumers?  
(27 Respondents)  
89% Yes                      11% No

13. What new programs do you envision your organization implementing in the next 1-5 years?

- Success by six or a derivative to assist school with their social overload
- Medicaid waiver for living arrangements
- Alternative family arrangement
- Greater community job placement
- Library cards for school children
- Adult Protective Services Advisory Board
- Meet social needs
- Back-end services- job placement, job counseling, follow-up
- Emphasis on employer-based training, less on vocational education
- Community service for offenders
- Preschool
- Parenting classes
- Private duty Home Health Aide services
- Satellite Well Child Services clinic
- Shelter Program
- Shepherding Program
- A 23 hour Transitional Bed Service to minimize unnecessary hospitalizations
- Mobile Crisis Intervention Team
- Casemanagement in Outpatient, pre- and post-admission setting
- Support Groups through local pregnancy center
- More collaboration of services
- Owner and rental rehabilitation
- Home ownership
- Single Parent Program

14. Other comments:  
-"This county appears to be behind in services for adults with disabilities who would like to live on their own."  
-"I hope the central location building opens in next five years."

- "Too many agencies trying to duplicate services. Township system set and in place and really the only agency with statutory rights to assist and manage the poor. Also, need better trustees in some cases. (Uniformity)."

- "I would anticipate the greatest need in the next few years to be child care for workers whose hourly wage is at or slightly above minimum wage. . . Perhaps more on-site child care?"

- Adult Protective Services is mandated by the state which pays for two days. Federal funding is used for a third day and St. Joe County pays the remaining amount. APS receives no funding from Kosciusko and Elkhart Counties yet investigates in those two counties. About 25% of the investigations are done in Kosciusko County. If there are no additional contributions, the position could become part-time. Subsequently, the investigation time in Kosciusko County would decrease.

## Appendix B

### Survey Recipients

Adult Basic Education Center  
Adult Protective Services  
American Red Cross  
Area Agency on Aging  
Beaman Home  
Bowen Center  
Cardinal Center  
Chamber of Commerce  
Clay Township Trustee  
Combined Community Services  
Community Care Network/KCH  
Etna Township Trustee  
First Presbyterian Church  
First United Methodist Church  
Franklin Township Trustee  
Harrison Township Trustee  
Heartline Pregnancy Center  
Home Health Care  
Hyde, Roger  
IMPACT  
Ivy Tech State College  
Jackson Township Trustee  
Kosciusko County Adult Probation  
Kosciusko County Division of Family and Children's Services (DFCS)  
Kosciusko County Health Department  
Kosciusko County Sheriff's Department  
Mayor Jeff Plank  
Med Park Center  
Mental Health Association  
Monroe Township Trustee  
Plain Township Trustee  
Planned Parenthood  
Prairie Township Trustee  
Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
Salvation Army  
Scott Township Trustee  
Seward Township Trustee  
Step Ahead  
Tippecanoe Township Trustee  
Turkey Creek Township Trustee

Survey Recipients

Page 2

United Way of Kosciusko County  
Van Buren Township Trustee  
Vocational Rehabilitation  
Warsaw Community Church  
Warsaw Housing Authority  
Warsaw Police Department  
Wayne Township Trustee  
Well Child Services  
Winona Lake Grace Brethren Church  
Winona Lake Town Coordinator  
Women Infants Children (WIC)  
Workforce Development Services



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"other" specified they represented state mandated/county process (one), church (two) and "quasi-government" (one).

The respondents indicated that the majority of people they serve are receiving public assistance, not employed, have children and have no diploma or GED. About half are married and about half have an emotional disability. It would follow, then, that these identified populations would have primary basic needs. This is substantiated by the responses to questions three and four on the survey which asked respondents to separately rank the primary needs of adults with disabilities and economic disadvantages. They identified the primary needs of both populations as housing/shelter, financial, transportation and health. Furthermore, respondents indicated housing/shelter, financial and transportation as three of the top four future needs consumers would likely have. This is undoubtedly common knowledge but a good reminder for those delivering the services

According to the "Status of Indiana Families . . . Today & Tomorrow, Kosciusko County Profile", in 1990, approximately 59% of the county's population was between the ages of 18 and 65, and 4.6% of the 17, 924 families had income below the poverty line. Further, Kosciusko County ranked 19 in the state in 1989 with a median family income of \$35,548 compared to a rank of 44 in 1979. According to the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) Division of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) Selected Assistance Programs Demographic Trend Report, Fiscal Year 1993, and the 1990 Census information, the following statistics provide an indication of the economic disadvantages of adults in Kosciusko County:

Profile Data	Kosciusko	Indiana	USA	Comment
% adults (18-64) below poverty level	5.3	9.1	11.0	below IN and USA
% receiving AFDC	1.1	3.5	5.3	below IN and USA
% receiving food stamps	4.2	9.1	9.9	below IN and USA
% population receiving Medicaid	4.1	8.0	Data not available	below IN (Data not available for adults on Medicaid)

Despite statistics that may identify Kosciusko County as a flourishing community, housing/shelter, financial and transportation were consistently cited by the survey respondents as the primary needs of the identified populations. Furthermore, 25% of the respondents are presently unable to provide for the housing/shelter needs of their consumers, 68% cannot provide for the financial needs and 26% are unable to provide for

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