

The Region's Growing Need: Basic Human Services demand increases in 2008

Brief Overview

- More than **one out of four people** in Buffalo are poor with one of the **highest poverty rates** in the nation.
- **22% of Buffalo's children are surviving in "extreme poverty"**-- a standard of living so low that it is half of the federal poverty level -- or about \$10,000 a year for a family of four.
- The number of **food stamp households** in Erie County in which the families are working poor has **skyrocketed 64% since 2000**, to more than 40,000 households.
- From 2007 to 2008, the number of calls to 211 **increased by 48%**. (The 211 system provides social services referrals the same way 911 provides emergency services and 411 provides directory assistance). Since July 07, 211 has received almost **52,000 calls**.

Providing Shelter

- Buffalo City Mission's Men's Community Center **occupancy is up 38%** for both emergency shelter and transitional housing.
- City Mission's Women's shelter is full. They **turn away between 80-110 women** (or women with children) every month due to emergency space limitations. This is even after they doubled their space with Cornerstone Manor in 2006.

Feeding the Hungry

- At Community Action Organization (CAO), the total number of **families receiving emergency food rose 51.5%** from 07 to 08.
- Food Bank of WNY expects to redistribute more than 12 million pounds of food this year – **an 11% increase over 2007-** to 400 agencies in Erie, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, and Niagara counties.
- The number of meals served by St. Vincent De Paul, one of the Food Bank's largest clients, has grown to **1,500 meals per month**.
- St. Luke's Mission of Mercy has been serving 700 lunches and dinners per day since August. **Meals run about \$2,500 per week**.
- Erie County's **Food Stamps caseload increased 9.7%** from 2007 to 2008.
- For the first time in known history, in October, the **City Mission had to close the food pantry** before the end of the month because of lack of food.

Family Emergency services

- At CAO, the total number of **families receiving emergency services increased by 37.5%**.
- Decreases in funding for services lead to rationing based on the highest levels of need. CAO anticipates a rise in demand for services as a result of the economic down turn by **at least 10% above last year's service demand**.

Medicaid

- The Medicaid caseload for Erie County Dept of Social Services has **increased by 5,000 cases since 2007**. The Medicaid unit is averaging 3,100 new applications per month (compared to 2,800 in 2007.)

Increasing Self-Sufficiency

- Goodwill states referrals from Erie County Social Services has **doubled since 2006**. A projected 650 clients will be served in 2008, compared to 475 in 2007 and 300 in 2006.
- October's **unemployment rate was 5.7%**, compared to 4.3 in October '07. Goodwill clients will require even higher-level skills to be competitive, even at entry level jobs.
- The collapsing economy has hurt Goodwill's donations and contract opportunities. Increase in new clothing donations plummeted to 9.3% in November after averaging 22.5% YTD through October. This translates to **2,565 fewer donors**.