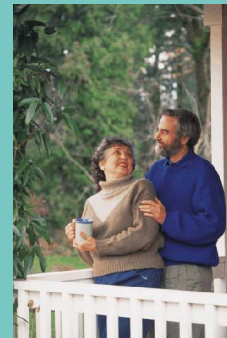
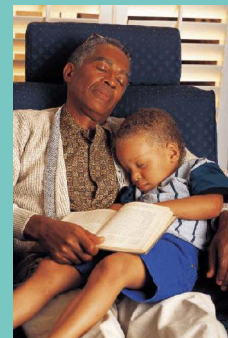
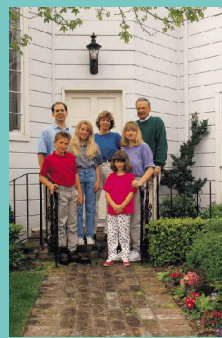
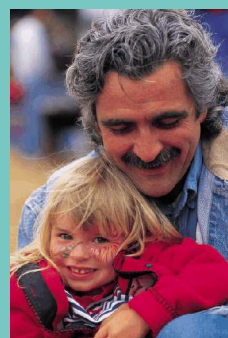
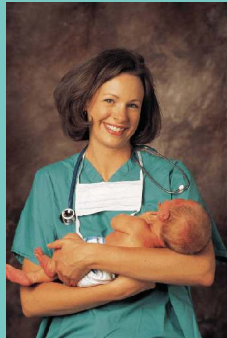
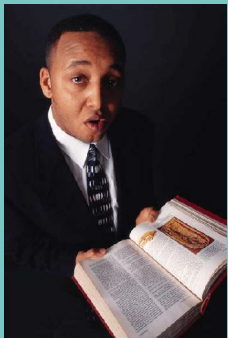


Needs Assessment Report

St. Tammany Parish

Northshore Task Force for Health & Community Services
2005



2005 St. Tammany Parish Needs Assessment Report

Project Partners:

Catholic Charities
Archdiocese of New Orleans
Represented by: James R. Kelly



St. Tammany Parish
Government
Represented by: John Tobin



United Way for the Greater
New Orleans Area
Represented by: Beth Lee Terry



Additional Sponsors:

St. Tammany Parish Hospital

Compiled by:

ResourceWorks, Inc.

Consultants: Lisa Kaichen, Christina Crutcher, Susan Delle, and Shakeeb Shariff
Assisted by: Melanie Waddell and Susan Laborde

Acknowledgments:

This report was made possible by a partnership between Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans, the United Way of Greater New Orleans, and the St. Tammany Parish Government. The data presented throughout the report was obtained through the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center, the U.S. Census Bureau, and many state and local government agencies. Mapping was done by the St. Tammany Parish Government Information System (GIS) Department.

The opinions and viewpoints about the needs of St. Tammany Parish were obtained through interviews and focus group meetings with area citizens and community leaders. While it wasn't possible to obtain the viewpoint of every service provider or citizen, a dedicated attempt was made to involve a wide variety of people with topical expertise, experience, and insight. Clearly, the results show that the respondents who participated are very committed to St. Tammany Parish and to creating an excellent system of health and community services.

Special thanks go to the following people who participated in focus groups or interviews:

Jeanne Abbott, Northshore Families Helping Families
Tom Aicklen, concerned citizen
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Annie Brown, concerned citizen
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Hazel Casmere, Work Initiative Network (WIN)
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Charles Dalferes, concerned citizen
Kevin Davis, St. Tammany Parish President
Jean Dawsey, concerned citizen

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Tracy Desselles, Louisiana Office of Community Services
Louise Draper, JD, 22nd Judicial District Court
Sharon Dry, Volunteers of America
Maral Ducre, Sr., COAST
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Allen Fridley, concerned citizen
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Monnie Greer, St. Tammany Project Christmas
Tammie Groover, Covington Housing Authority
Rebecca Handford, Florida Parishes Human Service Authority
Marlene Hanks, Northshore Homeless Coalition
Kathy Hayward, Louisiana Partners in Prevention
Mary Holland, The Caring Center
Darlene Jiles, Department of Health & Hospitals
Joseph Keller, concerned citizen
Cheryl Klein, Louisiana Public Health Initiatives
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Harry Lowenburg, New Heights Therapy Center
Judy Loyde, Regina Coeli Child Development Center
Sandra MacDonald, Kiwanis & YMCA
Yadi Mark, National Spinal Cord Injury Association
Susan H. May, St. Tammany Parish Hospital
Kathy McWhorter, St. Tammany Parish Hospital
Emile R. Meilleur, concerned citizen
Stacey Mequet, Youth Service Bureau
Mr. & Mrs. Rob Mingo, Catholic Charities Board of Directors

Gwendolynn Moore, Southeast Hospital
Mayor Ben Morris, City of Slidell
Alfreda Mouton, St. Tammany Parish School Board
Bill Oiler, St. Tammany Parish Government
Ginger Pine, Office of Community Services
Johnny Prentice, Office of Youth Services
Mayor Eddie Price, City of Mandeville
Edward Rainey, concerned citizen
Clarence Ramago, City of Covington
Walter Reed, St. Tammany Parish District Attorney
Tekla Reichel, St. Tammany Gov. Dept. Of Community Action
Jan Robert, Covington City Council
Jan Sagona, St. Tammany Parish Hospital
Erin St. Pierre, Covington Head Start
Stephanie Schedler, Memorial Hospice & Palliative Care
Sen. Tom Schedler, Louisiana Senate
John Schulte, Sr., concerned citizen
Dawn Schiro, Memorial Hospice & Palliative Care
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Gayle Sloan, St. Tammany Parish School Board
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Evelyn Snyder, Home Instead Senior Care
Len Snyder, Home Instead Senior Care
Michael Soniat, St. Tammany Parish School Board
Ann Stone, St. Tammany Office of Family Support
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Melanie Watkins, Florida Parishes Human Services Authority
Candace Watkins, Mayor, City of Covington
Roy Whittorf, Office of Youth Services
Judy Wischkaemper, St. Tammany Parish Hospital
Rep. Diane Winston, Louisiana House of Representatives
Nancy Wood, Habitat for Humanity

NORTHSHORE TASK FORCE ON HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

The Northshore Task Force includes representatives from St. Tammany and Washington Parishes. It provided guidance throughout the needs assessment project.

Sandy Bloom, Washington Parish Human Services Commission
Rev. Rodney Bourq, St. Luke the Evangelist
Jane Brewer, Catholic Charities
Rev. Ronald Calkins, V.F., Mary, Queen of Peace
Sam Caruso, Former Slidell Mayor
Debbie Coleman, Samaritan Center
Ann Creighton, St. Luke the Evangelist
Leroy Divinity, Folsom Ministerial Alliance
Deborah Heffernan, LPC
James R. Kelly, Catholic Charities
Robin Mingo, Catholic Charities Board Member
A.J. Luter, Florida Parishes Human Services Authority
Jan Robert, City Council, City of Covington
Adrienne Smoot, St. Tammany Community Action Agency
Nancy Stamilio, YWCA
Beth Lee Terry, United Way for the Greater New Orleans Area
John Tobin, St. Tammany Parish Government, Office of Social Services
Keith Villere, Former Covington Mayor
Pastor Gene Wellington, Community Christian Concern

DISCLAIMER as of November 1, 2005

The Northshore Needs Assessment Report for St. Tammany Parish was completed just prior to the hurricane. It has not been updated since Hurricane Katrina, therefore the influx of evacuees and emergency needs is not included. Also, some of the agencies listed in the Resource Directory are not yet operative.

Most important, however, is the fact that this report is incredibly useful in establishing the baseline 'state of the parish' immediately prior to the storm. The census statistics included are the most recent available, and the critical social services needs identified by the focus groups and community leaders are not solved, but rather magnified by the current crisis. This report will provide valuable data for program planning and grant writing in the critical months to come.

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For additional data and information, you may want to go to:
 U.S. Census Bureau <http://www.census.gov/>
 GNO Community Data Center <http://www.gnocdc.org>

“The central decision for all organizations is: What is the best way to portion out the available resources, including time, money and organizational efforts to meet all the demands – the needs – that compete for them? Such decisions may be based on intuition, political pressures, past practices, or personal preferences and they may be made by boards or managers, but the most effective way to decide such issues is to make needs assessment the first stage of planning”

-Belle Ruth Witkin, Author, Planning & Conducting Needs Assessments, A Practical Guide

INTRODUCTION

In 2004, pastors in the Northshore Deanery, which represents sixteen Catholic Churches in St. Tammany and Washington Parishes, petitioned **Catholic Charities** to expand its services on the Northshore to meet the increasing needs of the poor on the northshore. At the same time, the director of **St. Tammany Parish Social Services** sought expanded statistical evidence of human service needs and available private service agencies. Concurrently, the **United Way** opened an office in Covington with the intent of better serving the northshore community. The three organizations – Catholic Charities, St. Tammany Parish Social Services, and the United Way agreed to collaborate on an innovative Health & Community Services Needs Assessment project.

ResourceWorks, Inc., a Mandeville-based consulting firm, was contracted to conduct the Health & Community Services Needs Assessment. Each collaborating agency, plus St. Tammany Parish Hospital, provided financial support for the project. Principal consultants through ResourceWorks included Lisa Kaichen, Christina Crutcher, Susan Delle, and Shakeeb Shariff. Support staff included Melanie Waddell and Susan Laborde. Data assistance was provided by the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center and St. Tammany Parish Government-GIS Department.

Most important of all, a wealth of information was obtained from citizens and service providers who served on the steering committee, participated in focus groups and gave individual interviews which provided a human face to the needs on the northshore.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Northshore Health & Community Services Needs Assessment is to provide Catholic Charities, the United Way, and St. Tammany Parish with useful information so that all can work in concert with non-profit agencies, churches and volunteers to better serve the poor and vulnerable. It is our hope that the needs assessment will increase the likelihood of optimally utilizing existing resources and creating new resources to address unmet human service needs.

METHODOLOGY

This report is based upon the outcomes of past pertinent needs assessments combined with the current beliefs and thoughts of knowledgeable interviewees - all framed by pertinent, current demographic and risk information. This process was not designed to produce absolute agreement on human service priorities, nor is it a process where incontrovertible scientific answers are produced. This needs assessment was able to capture the consensus of local community leaders and was also able to generate tremendous ownership of the project and enthusiasm toward future human service needs fulfillment.

As the first step in the process, a *Task Force* was recruited by Catholic Charities, St. Tammany Parish Government, Department of Social Services and United Way of Greater New Orleans. This group met on a regular basis to review progress and make suggestions to the consulting team.

Second, previous health & community service-related *needs assessments were gathered and synthesized*. This included assessments conducted by various entities during the past five years. These reports helped to inform the needs assessment process.

Third, human services related *statistical data was collected and compiled* into user-friendly charts and tables for power-point presentations and the final report. It was determined that data would be classified according to the AIRS Taxonomy, which is utilized by many information and referral agencies across the nation. Primary sources of

data included the U.S. Census Bureau, the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center, St. Tammany Parish, and state and parish departments.

Fourth, *Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews* were used to obtain more in-depth information. There is no better source for hearing true-life descriptions of the needs of clients or even family members. This gives critical interpretation and meaning to the statistical data. Nine focus group meetings were held in St. Tammany Parish, each targeting specific geographic locations, including west St. Tammany (Covington), east St. Tammany (Slidell), north St. Tammany (St. Benedict), and south-central St. Tammany (Lacombe). Participants included community leaders, professional service providers, community members, and many public officials. Thirty-two key informants were interviewed – each being one of the area’s leading experts on various communities and their needs. Information was also obtained through attending the local Governor’s Summit on Poverty, an addictions workshop and a community resource fair.

Fifth, *current resources* were identified, primarily through contact with VIA LINK, the SLU Data Center, and the Northshore Homeless Coalition.

Sixth, *this report was compiled* so that planners, grant writers, researchers, administrators and community leaders will have a useful information tool to dramatically improve services. The information was classified into selected sections based on service categories in the AIRS Taxonomy.

PARISH OVERVIEW: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

St. Tammany Parish's history was greatly influenced by the abundant sources of water within the parish. The fertile banks of Lake Pontchartrain provided campsites for the Choctaws who were visited by Europeans exploring the future site of New Orleans. The rivers provided navigable routes to Lake Pontchartrain for the early settlers to develop their new industries, including timber, boat building, brick molding and farming. These waterways brought St. Tammany's first settlement to Bayou Bonfouca in 1852.

During the antebellum years, St. Tammany's economy flourished, and New Orleanians flocked to L'Autre Cote du Lac ("the other side of the lake") to take advantage of the fresh air and prosperous lifestyle. St. Tammany boomed as a healthful resort community with hotels, inns and restaurants for guests coming from New Orleans. Daily boat excursions across the lake became popular. By 1880, New Orleanians were able to travel by railroad to St. Tammany Parish, many coming to sample the artesian water that had legendary healing powers for the Indians. This same water is now the key ingredient in two thriving parish products - Abita Water and Abita Beer.

Today, people continue to venture to St. Tammany Parish for the same reasons...a change of pace. The completion of the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway in 1956, spanning 24 miles, made driving to and from the city a forty-minute commute. Because of this, thousands of New Orleanians

have relocated to the North Shore. St. Tammany Parish is today the fastest-growing parish in Louisiana. Residents, old and new, strive to preserve the special qualities that have historically drawn people to the parish. (*St. Tammany Tourist Bureau, 2004*)

St. Tammany Parish is the fifth largest parish in the state and has been the fastest growing parish in Louisiana since the 1970s. In fact, the population has nearly tripled since 1970 and is considered one of the fastest growing communities in the nation. The growth rate over the last 10 years has averaged over 30 percent. The population is poised to exceed 245,000 by 2009 if the current growth rate continues. (*St. Tammany Economic Development Foundation, 2004*)

The growth in population can be attributed to a number of factors: proximity to New Orleans, low business costs, availability of labor, excellent schools, low crime rates and a strong medical community. The economy of St. Tammany Parish is primarily residential, bringing an influx of retail and service-based industries such as banking, insurance and medical, corporate headquarters and retail trade. Residents of the parish are employed in diverse industries, ranging from agriculture to space technology. The largest employer in the parish is the public school system. The two largest employment sectors are health care and retail sales.

The cost of doing business, in terms of labor costs, in the St. Tammany region is considerably lower than in other southern metropolitan areas. The mean hourly earning rate for all occupations was \$16.47 in the St. Tammany region, 4.3% less than the national average of \$17.18 per hour. Economic diversification is being led by headquarter relocations, information technology, “back offices” and retirement communities. In 2003, St. Tammany saw \$102 million investments in commercial construction and 1,649 new jobs. *(St. Tammany Economic Development Foundation, 2004)*

THE HISTORY OF HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES IN ST. TAMMANY PARISH

The history of health and community services in St. Tammany Parish provides a rich backdrop to the current needs assessment report. Issues such as good health, mental illness, transportation, and literacy have been concerns for almost two centuries, and were addressed then, as they are now, by the civic action of churches and volunteers.

The first Catholic priest to set foot on the northshore was a Jesuit, Father John DuRu, in April of 1700. It wasn't until more than a century later that Father Adrien Rouquette developed a mission working with the Choctaw Indians. In 1843 land was acquired to build St. Peter Church. By 1890 there were six Catholic churches in St. Tammany Parish, with a seating capacity of 650 parishioners.

The advent of churches of all denominations gave rise to benevolent societies which helped the poor. Half Moon Baptist Church, with a log chapel and clay floor was the first Baptist Church in Louisiana. It was built in 1811. A Methodist Church was chartered in 1834. Christ Episcopal Church, established in 1847, is considered to be the oldest continuously occupied non-residential building in the parish.

The first school in the parish was established in 1820. In 1837, the Covington Female Academy was formed. Later in the century Catholic schools appeared. By 1884 there were 23 schools in operation for 583 white children and nine schools for 310 Black children.

The Farmer newspaper (which went to press in 1874 and is the oldest continually operating business in St. Tammany Parish) used to rally area citizens around various community projects, such as schools, a town hall, and especially good roads and bridges.

Among the businesses listed in Covington in 1880 were 3 doctors, 4 saloons, 1 billards room, 1 dentist, 2 lawyers and 1 music teacher.

The legal system moved forward with the appointment of the first judge, Honorable T.C. Warner in 1811.

Slidell's jail was established in the mid 1800's as well as its first public school.

In regards to community health, in the mid-1800's the U.S. government noted that the northshore was the second healthiest place in the country, because there were so few deaths from malaria and yellow fever here. Around that time there was a state law that appropriated a sum of money to support indigent people. It wasn't until after the New Deal, however, that organized public social services came to the parish. An old age pension was made available, but many people were too proud to use it. In the 1950s there was a public health office in Covington and a mental health office in Mandeville. Prior to that, mentally ill people were shipped to Jackson. There were no legal aid programs until recent times.

The MCB (Minerva's Chosen Band) Book Club had a lending library in the early years of the 20th century. In 1946 the Covington Business and Professional Women's Club sponsored the idea of a parish library as their annual project. Four years later, after the Police Jury passed an ordinance, the St. Tammany Parish Library demonstration project opened with eight branch libraries.

A grassroots effort by the Women's Progressive Union of Covington established the St. Tammany Parish Hospital. For eight years this group talked to churches, missionary circles, home economics clubs, farmers and sewing circles about the need for a community hospital. A bond was approved by the voters in 1951, and the groundbreaking was held in 1954. When construction was almost complete, officials realized that they did not have enough money to

operate the hospital – so the people once again came forth to raise money, donate items, and even landscape the grounds.

Another interesting historical fact is that Governor Earl K. Long was committed to the state mental hospital in Mandeville in 1959. His sanity hearing was held at the old C.J. Schoen Middle School, where the PTA served lemonade to spectators!

In more recent years, branch offices of Catholic Charities, Family Services, Volunteers of America and the United Way were opened here. Many other non-profit organizations, such as PRIDE (Parents Resource Institute for Drug Education) and the Regina Coeli Child Development Center, which administers all of the area Head Start programs, were spurred by citizen action.

(Sources: Websites for the St. Tammany Parish Hospital, the Parish, The St. Tammany Parish Library, an article in Inside Northside Magazine by Ann Gilbert, A Brief History and Description of St. Tammany Parish, the Louisiana Historical Review, and St. Tammany Parish - L'Autre Cote Du Lac by Judge Frederick S. Ellis. Judge Ellis was also interviewed by telephone)

CHALLENGES AHEAD:

Today many of the issues of the past remain current: the need for the benevolence of the churches, for literacy programs, for a strong legal system, for care for the elderly and more. Clearly, while progress has been made, change is needed in many arenas.

Community respondents were asked what barriers they saw to implementing changes in human services. The primary responses were:

1. The general public seems unaware of the problems. Some participants said that there is a 'gated community' or subdivision mentality among many area residents, who do not realize the extent of need within a few miles of their homes. People with problems are often 'invisible'. There is some 'geographic' bias and 'turfism' between the municipalities, particularly evident among teenagers.
2. There is a perceived lack of coordination and integration of services, which leads to gaps, overlaps, and funding which is spread too thin.
3. While volunteers are actively involved in many agencies and churches, there is not any sort of centralized recruitment, training or coordination.
4. Lack of funding is a barrier. There is a perception that because St. Tammany Parish is perceived as wealthy and 'care-free', that philanthropic dollars get directed to Orleans Parish.
5. Transportation is perceived as a huge barrier. It affects access to services, jobs and healthcare.
6. Literacy is reported to be a problem in certain areas which spirals into a host of other problems such as unemployment and inability to support a family.
7. Mental health is reported as an area that is not talked about, however it crosses all socio-economic lines. There is still a perceived stigma attached to mental illness. There is also a lack of public awareness of the comprehensive mental health issues.

The Format of the Report:

The following sections correspond with service categories found in the AIRS Taxonomy, e.g. Housing, Education, Health and so on. Each section includes:

- Relevant quotes from participants
- Community concerns from focus groups and interviews
- Demographic support
- Indication of need
- Priorities
- Service availability

The Mapping segment of the report shows where particular populations reside. The "resource list" includes a more detailed description of available services.

ST. TAMMANY PARISH BASIC DEMOGRAPHICS

St. Tammany Parish - Households by Type

Total Population	191,268
Female	51.0%
Male	49.0%
Total Households	69,253
Family Households	52,727

Age Analysis

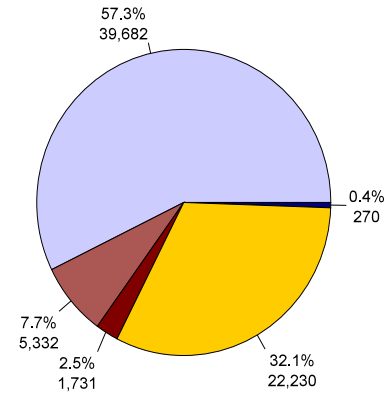
Less than 5 years old	8.6%
Ages 6 to 17	19.8%
Ages 18 to 34	19.4%
Ages 35 to 64	42.2%
Ages 65 and over	10.0%

Population in Poverty (2000)

Total Population	188,661
Percent Living in Poverty	9.7%
Total Population Ages 0-5	16,024
Percent Living in Poverty	13.1%
Total Population Ages 6-11	18,249
Percent Living in Poverty	11.0%
Total Population Ages 12-17	19,297
Percent Living in Poverty	12.9%
Total Population Ages 18-64	116,956
Percent Living in Poverty	8.5%

Elderly in Households in St. Tammany Parish

Total	18,176
Living Alone	25.5%
Living in Family Households	72.3%
Percent Living in Poverty	10.1%



- Households without Children <18
- Male Householder w/Children <18
- Married Couple w/Children <18
- Non-Family Household w/Children <18
- Female Householder w/Children <18

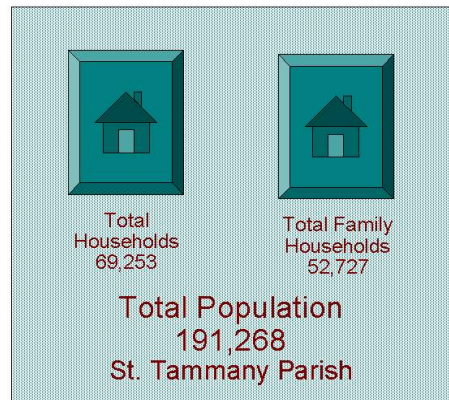
Household Income

Wage or Salary	79.7%
Self-employment	13.6%
Social Security & Supplemental Security	26.3%
Public Assistance	1.9%
Average Household Income Reporting < \$200,000	\$54,421
Average Household Income Reporting > \$200,000	\$310,485
Earnings of \$0 to \$19,999	19.1% (22.1% US)
Earnings of \$20,000 to \$49,999	32.8% (36% US)
Earnings of \$50,000 to \$99,999	32.5% (29.6% US)
Earnings of \$100,000 to \$199,999	12.8% (9.9% US)
Earnings of \$200,000 or more	2.8% (2.4% US)

Statistics drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center

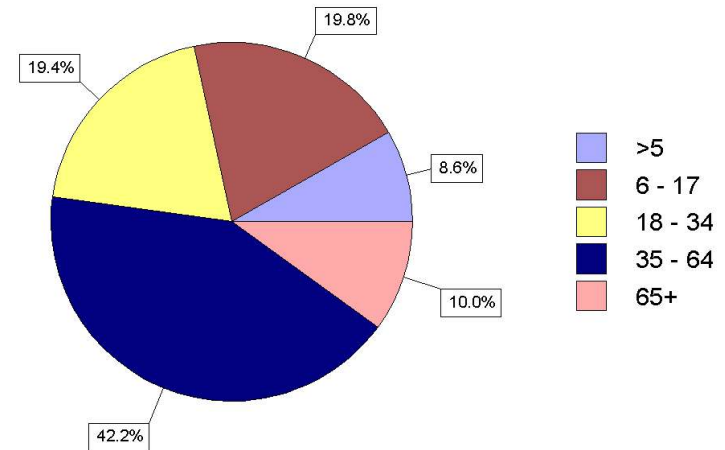
Total Numbers

2000 Census



Statistics drawn from <http://www.state.la.us/census> and Greater New Orleans CDC

Age Analysis



Statistics drawn from <http://www.state.la.us/census> and Greater New Orleans CDC

Racial and Ethnic Diversity

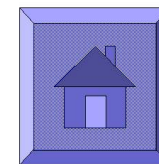
2000 Census

White	85.3%
Black or African American	9.8%
Hispanic	2.5%
Other	1.3%



Statistics drawn from <http://www.state.la.us/census> and Greater New Orleans Community Data Center

Elderly in Households

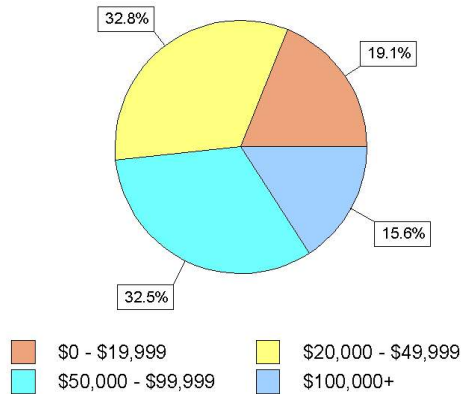


18,176
Residents Age
65 or Older

- ➔ 25.5% are living alone
- ➔ 72.3% are in family households

Statistics drawn from <http://www.state.la.us/census> and Greater New Orleans Community Data Center

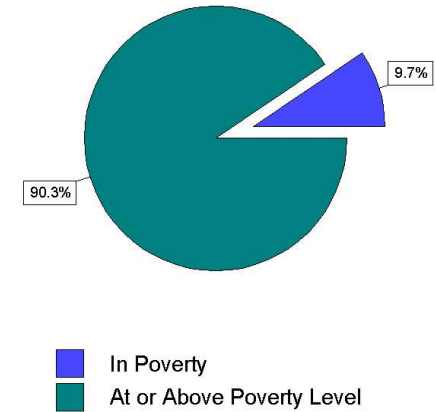
Distribution of Income



Statistics drawn from <http://www.state.la.us/census> and Greater New Orleans Community Data Center

Snapshot of Parish Poverty

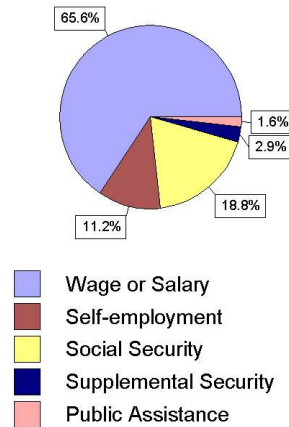
- Total Population in St. Tammany: 188,661
- Total Population in St. Tammany Living in Poverty: 18,261



Statistics drawn from <http://www.state.la.us/census> and Greater New Orleans Community Data Center

Source of Household Income

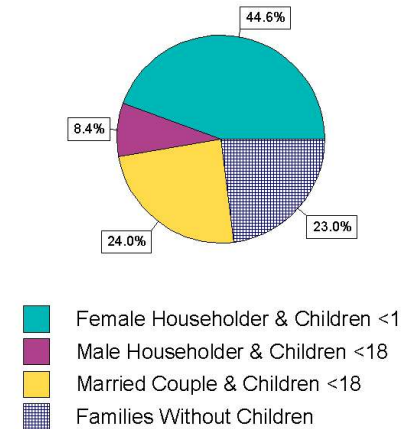
Total Households:
69,281



Statistics drawn from <http://www.state.la.us/census> and Greater New Orleans Community Data Center

Families in Poverty

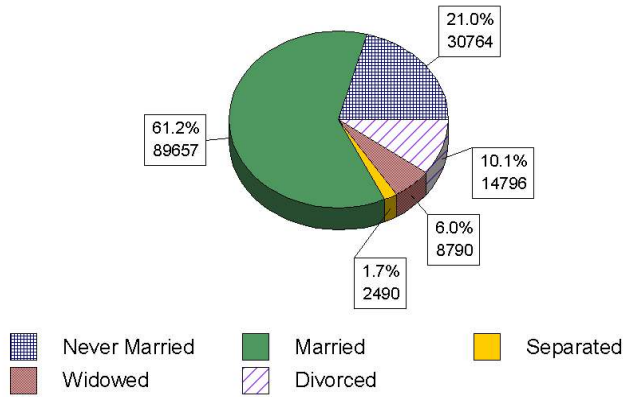
- Number of Families Living in Poverty in St. Tammany Parish: 4,041



Statistics drawn from <http://www.state.la.us/census> and Greater New Orleans Community Data Center

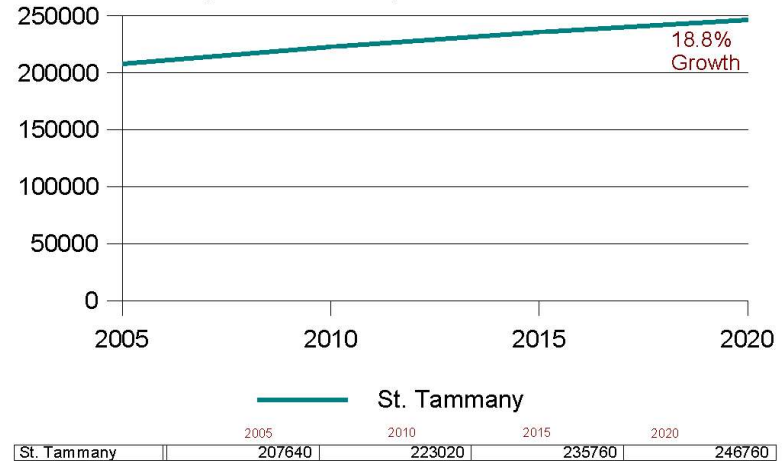
Marital Status

Population 15 Years and Older



Statistics drawn from <http://www.state.la.us/census> and Greater New Orleans Community Data Center

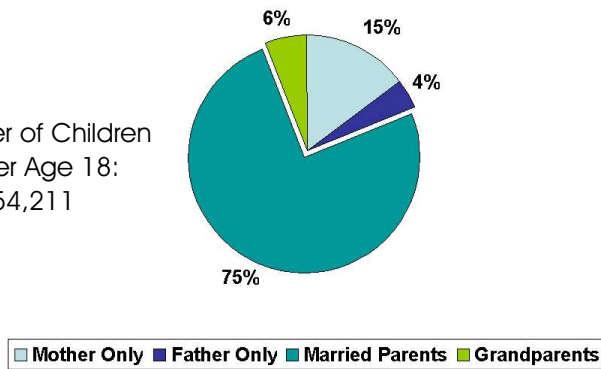
Projected Population Growth



Statistics drawn from <http://www.state.la.us/census> and Greater New Orleans Community Data Center

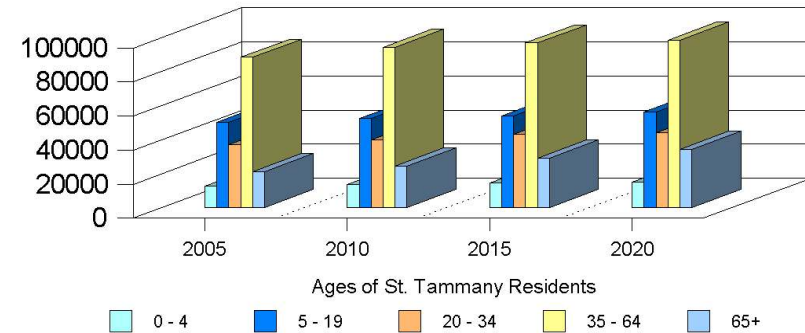
With Whom Do The Children Reside?

Number of Children Under Age 18:
54,211



Statistics drawn from <http://www.state.la.us/census> and Greater New Orleans Community Data Center

Population Projections



0 - 4	12320	13260	14140	14670
5 - 19	49810	52000	53570	55990
20 - 34	36550	39760	42740	43850
35 - 64	87940	93760	96530	98170
65+	21020	24240	28750	34080

Statistics drawn from <http://www.state.la.us/census> and Greater New Orleans Community Data Center

OVERVIEW OF PREVIOUS NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

In conjunction with the Needs Assessment Project, consultants reviewed past reports and needs assessments. This included reports by the City of Covington, the St. Tammany Social Services Commission, the Northshore Homeless Coalition, the Louisiana Children’s Trust Fund Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Plan, the Washington Commission on Human Services, the St. Tammany Coalition on Juvenile Justice and the Louisiana Commission on Juvenile Justice.

Since all of the past assessments were done by different groups, there was no standardized format for gathering information; however, it was possible to recognize common themes regarding needs.

The most prevalent need reflected by all five reports (City of Covington, Northshore Homeless Coalition, St. Tammany Social Services Commission, Washington Commission on Human Services and the Louisiana Children’s Trust Fund) had to do with various forms of education. Included in each were:

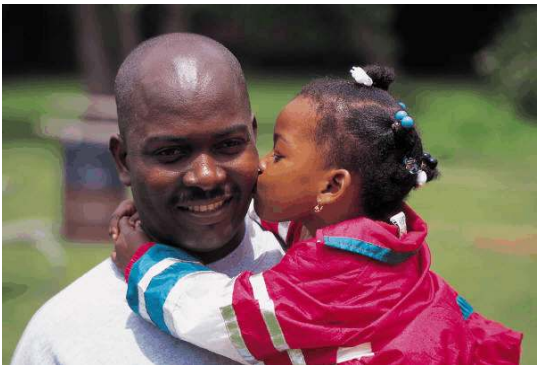
- general awareness of resources
- parent education
- life skills for adults, children and youth
- child abuse awareness & prevention education

- substance abuse prevention education
- tutoring for youth
- education for youth

The needs reflected by four of the five also included transportation, housing and substance abuse control. Mental health was also a significant concern.

Past Needs Assessments				
Past Studies/Reports	Transportation	Housing	Education	Substance Abuse Control
Northshore Homeless Coalition	★	★	★	★
City of Covington	★	★	★	★
Commission on Human Services - Washington Parish	★	★	★	★
St. Tammany Parish Social Services Commission	★	★	★	★
Louisiana Children’s Trust Fund			★	

The following report builds on the information contained in the previous reports by confirming many of their findings.



Housing



Housing

"In a Parish as wealthy as St. Tammany, it is hard to imagine that such seriously blighted housing could be found. But, in certain parts of Covington, Lacombe, and Slidell and in rural areas, there are some sights that would astound you. Can this exist in the United States?"

-HD, Northshore Resident, 2004

"Homelessness is quite a substantial problem and no one is funded to do outreach."

-Marlene Hanks,
Florida Parish Homeless Coalition, 2004

"Even through I work as a massage therapist in Mandeville, I couldn't find an affordable place to rent. I finally found a trailer in my price range in Bush"

-K.K. Northshore Resident, 2005

AIRS Housing Definition:

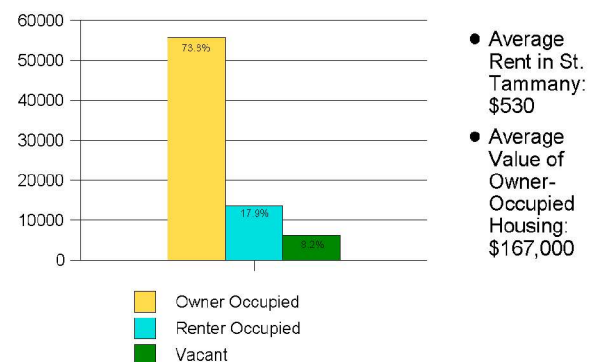
Programs that seek to meet the basic shelter needs of the community by providing temporary shelter for people who are in emergency situations, home improvement programs, housing location assistance and a variety of housing alternatives.

Community Concerns:

The following concerns were identified by the focus group members and key informants.

- *Housing in St. Tammany is so costly that many employed individuals and families cannot afford even to rent.*
- *Housing for the elderly and disabled has special design requirements which compound the issue.*
- *Elderly people are faced with very few living arrangement choices as they become unable to care for themselves.*
- *There are not enough shelters for people in crisis (homeless, victims of abuse, and "throw-away" youth) and most of the existing shelters them do not take males.*
- *People do not know how to find help.*

Status of Available Housing



Statistics drawn from <http://www.state.la.us/census>, GNOCommunity Data Center and St. Tammany Economic Development Foundation.

HOUSING: What Does the Data Show?

Occupancy Status

Total Housing Units	75,398
Owner Occupied Units	55,719
Renter Occupied Units	13,534
Vacant Units	6,145

Homeless - Age or Quantities Statistics Not Available

Household Types

Family Households	57,727
% Female Head of Household	17.8%
Non-family Households	16,526

Average Household Size

Average Family Size

Households with Individuals Under 18 Years

Households with Individuals 65 Years and Over

Housing Data

Built 1990-2000	31.6%
Built 1980-1989	27.6%
Built 1970-1979	20.7%
Built 1960-1969	9.8%
Built 1950-1959	4.6%
Built 1949 or earlier	5.7%

Housing Units in Multi-Unit Structures

Average Rental Housing Rate Per Month

Average Value of Owner-Occupied Housing

Home Ownership Rate

Median Household Income

Persons Below the Poverty Threshold

Housing Affordability

30% or more of household income is spent on housing expenses.

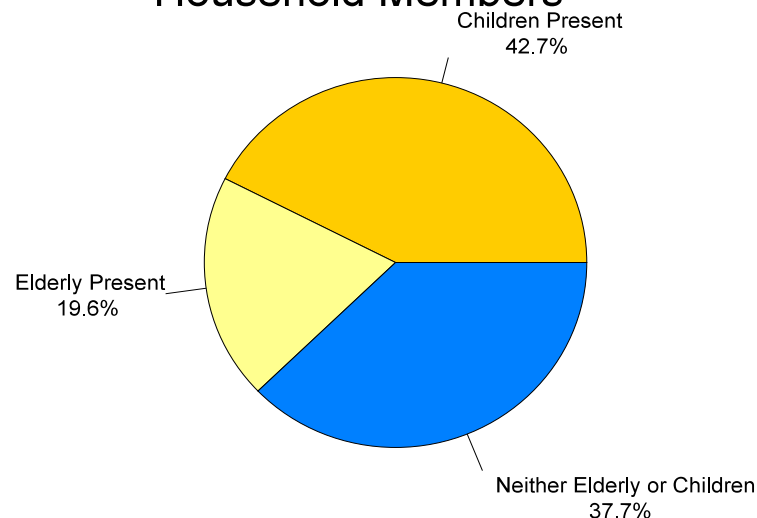
Owner Occupied	64.8%
Renter Occupied	35.2%

Occupancy Turnover - Length of Residency of Occupied Housing Units

Moved in 1999-2000	17.8%
Moved in 1995-1998	32.3%
Moved in 1990-1994	19.9%
Moved in 1989 or earlier	29.9%

Housing Statistics are drawn from the 2000 U.S. Census and the Greater Covington Community Data Center web site, 2004.

Household Members



Population in Poverty (2000)

Total Population	188,661
Percent Living in Poverty	9.7%
Total Population Ages 0-5	16,024
Percent Living in Poverty	13.1%
Total Population Ages 6-11	18,249
Percent Living in Poverty	11.0%
Total Population Ages 12-17	19,297
Percent Living in Poverty	12.9%
Total Population Ages 18-64	116,956
Percent Living in Poverty	8.5%
Total Population Over Age 65	18,176
Percent Living in Poverty	10.1%

INDICATION OF NEED

While St. Tammany Parish is perceived as the 'land of plenty', there are 18,300 residents of St. Tammany Parish living at or below the federal poverty income guidelines: 6,600 are children; 9,941 are people between 18 and 64; and 1,817 are age 65 and over. In St. Tammany, 3% of the homes are lacking basic functions: 190 of houses lack plumbing facilities, 247 lack kitchen facilities, and 1,532 have no telephone service.

Most experts agree that the Census' definition of poverty is somewhat flawed. However, the Census Bureau still uses the federal definition of poverty that was first created in 1964. The original calculations were based on studies from the early 1960s that indicated that family food costs were about one third of a family's budget. At that time, no similar

studies of family's housing existed. So, the federal government simply estimated the cost of a nutritionally adequate diet in 1964 and multiplied that by three to come up with a minimum family budget. But housing costs have risen much faster than food costs since 1964. Today food costs are estimated to be only 20-25% of a family's budget, so multiplying food costs by three would not be enough to pay for basic needs today - yet that is the assumption behind the current poverty estimates. However, until poverty data calculations are changed, this is still the best place to start when describing need in your community. (*Greater New Orleans Community Data Center website, 2004*)

The financial picture in St. Tammany includes a full spectrum of incomes. 68% of the people, who own their own home are paying 30% or more of their monthly income for housing. The median household income for St. Tammany is \$47,883. The average price of an owner occupied house is \$167,000 and a condo/townhouse is \$113,092. The average gross rental cost is \$646. Within these ranges, there are many people struggling to obtain safe and affordable homes for their families.

St. Tammany's housing prices are 20% below the national average. In 2003, the average price per square foot for residential dwellings in Mandeville and Madisonville was \$93.00, whereas the average price per square foot in Slidell and Covington was \$72 and \$85 respectively. As in many cases, the 2005 costs are anticipated to be much higher.

Since there are 1,817 elderly people at the poverty level, the conclusion can be made that there is also a great need for assistance with home repairs or at least weatherization. When the elderly poor become less and less able to care for themselves, the most common next step is the nursing home. This is a costly alternative and not always a good solution for the elderly individual. Alternative programs dedicated to providing home maintenance and other forms of in-home assistance would not only prolong the independence of the elderly, but would be cost effective.

Homelessness is not a problem that is evident to the public, but area agencies report that it is an increasing problem in St. Tammany Parish. Low cost housing, as well as crisis shelters and transitional housing, could be of great benefit in helping keep families in crisis together and safe. The monthly costs of home rental or ownership are very high in this area. It is often not feasible for low income and single parent families to afford quality housing.

Housing Critical Needs:

- Create new incentives and laws that foster the development of affordable housing
- Enhance programs for the elderly and disabled that allow them to remain in their own homes (in-home assistance, day care, home maintenance, etc.)
- Expand emergency, transitional and permanent housing options for people in crisis
- Develop additional housing units for low income people, including families and senior citizens

Some Local Resources for Housing

Agency	Phone
Caring Center of Slidell	985-646-1368
Catholic Charities - Rouquette Lodge	985-626-5217
Catholic Charities - St. Peter's the Fisherman	985-641-4914
Community-Based Residential Homes	985-641-4976
Covington Housing Authority	985-898-0345
Habitat for Humanity - East St. Tammany	985-639-0656
Habitat for Humanity - West St. Tammany	985-893-3172
Safe Harbor	985-871-9942 or 1-888-371-3400
Slidell Housing Authority	985-726-9000
St. Tammany Community Housing Resource Board	985-649-3859 985-893-6838
Sunshine Village Housing Corporation of Slidell	985-781-6080
Supportive Housing - Mandeville	985-727-7767



Education



Education

"I moved to St. Tammany Parish because of the wonderful public school system."

-KL, St. Tammany resident, 2004

"Our school system is considered to be one of the best in the state, but we still have too many children who are sliding through the cracks. One of my children gets special services to address his educational needs and is thriving. My other child slid through every crack and eventually dropped out."

-KMF, St. Tammany resident, 2005

"Our PTA is parental involvement at its best. Over half of the state's PTA membership is in St. Tammany Parish and this number is growing. The number of volunteer hours donated through PTA is invaluable."

-District PTA Board Member, 2004

AIRS EDUCATION DEFINITION:

Programs that provide opportunities for people in the community to acquire the knowledge, skills, desirable qualities of behavior and character, wisdom and general competence that will enable them to fully participate in and enjoy the social, political, economic and intellectual life of the community.

Community Concerns:

The following needs were identified by the focus group members and key informants.

- *There are too many high school dropouts*
- *There are many unskilled workers who are unable to provide for themselves and their families*
- *Illiteracy is a significant problem*
- *Children are not getting the help from home that they need to succeed in school*
- *Many homes do not have computers and many parents are unable to use computers*
- *Learning differences continue to be unaddressed*
- *Life skills training is urgently needed*
- *People are not aware of educational resources, such as literacy training.*
- *Early intervention programs are critically needed*
- *School buildings are under-utilized during out-of-school time hours and could be sites for community-based programs/partnerships.*

EDUCATION: What Does the Data Show?

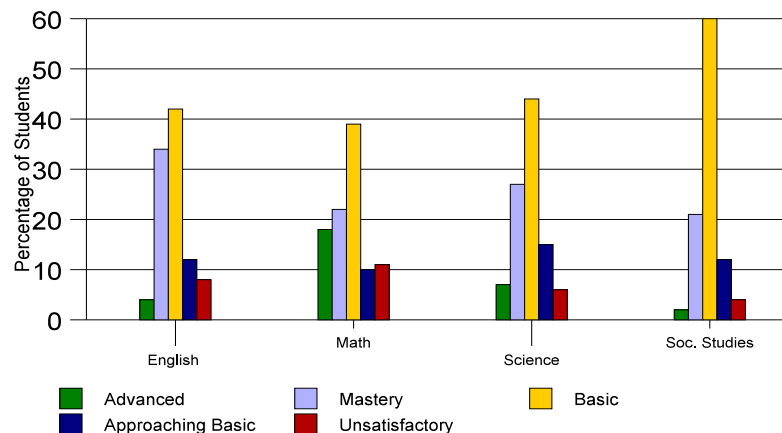
Public School Enrollment, 2004	36,169
Female Students	17,393
Male Students	18,776
Number of Public Schools	51
Percentage of Students in Public Schools	84.5%
State Average	84.3%
Number of Private Schools	16
Number of Students	6,251
Approved Homeschooled Students	319
Homeschooled Students-Statewide	6,252

Public School Students by Ethnicity	
White	80.7%
Black	16.5%
Native American	0.2%
Asian	1.0%
Hispanic	1.6%

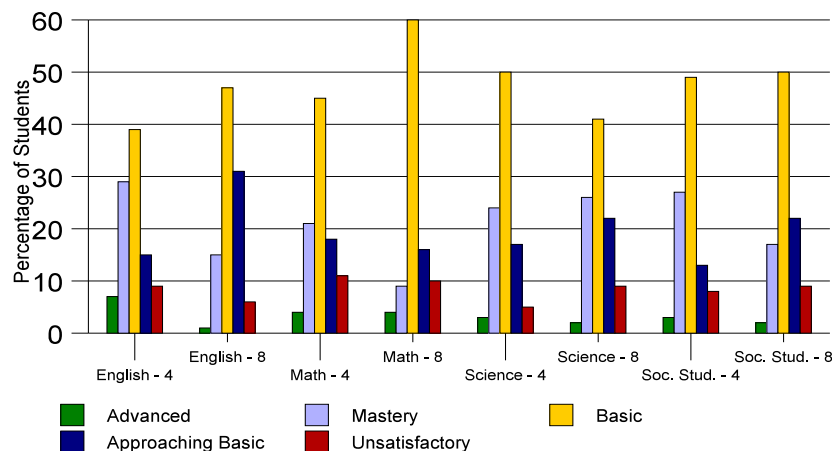
Number of Public High School Graduates, 02-03	1,834
Total Population Age 16-19	10,690
%Not Enrolled in School and Without Diploma	9.9%

ACT Test Results 2003-2004 (Average Composite Score)	
Covington High School	20.8
Fontainebleau High School	22.2
Mandeville High School	22.2
Northshore High School	22.8
Salmen High School	20.1
Slidell High School	21.3
District Average	21.6
State Average	19.8

GEE 21 Test Results
St. Tammany Parish Public Schools



4th & 8th Grade LEAP 21 2004
St. Tammany Parish Public Schools



College Readiness in 2003-2004

First Time Freshmen	1,834
Enrolled in Development Courses	26.1%

Attendance Matters, 2003-2004

High School Dropouts	3.8% (1,374)
Suspended In-School	9.6% (3,472)
Suspended Out-of-School	7.4% (2,677)
Expelled	0.3% (109)
% of Freshman Who Transfer/Graduate ...	Unknown

District Responsibility Index, 2002-2003

School Improvement	Unsatisfactory
LEAP 21 Passing Rate	Good
Summer School	Excellent
Certified Teachers	Excellent
Overall Index Label	Very Good

District Performance Score from LA Dept. Of Education (03-04)

St. Tammany Parish	108.9
State Average	82.6

Class Size in Public Schools (2002-2003)

1-20 Students	38.8%
21-26 Students	35.8%
27-33 Students	25.4%

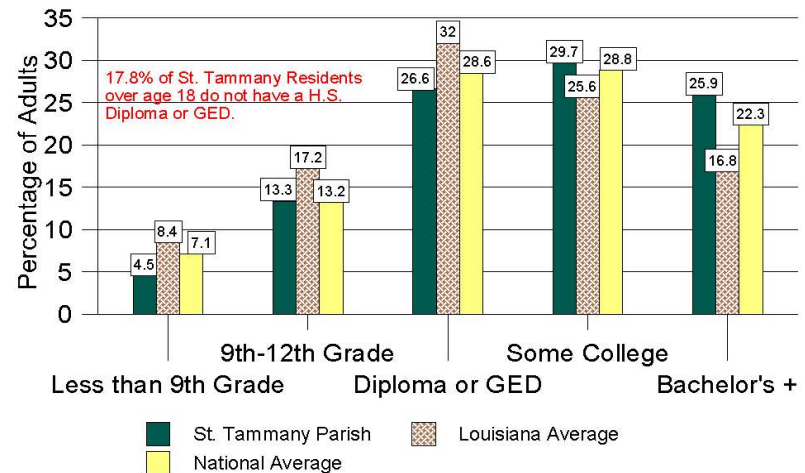
**Average Full-Time Public School Teacher Salary (2002-2003)
(Without Extra Compensation)**

St. Tammany Parish	\$39,785
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Percentage of Public School Core Classes Taught By:

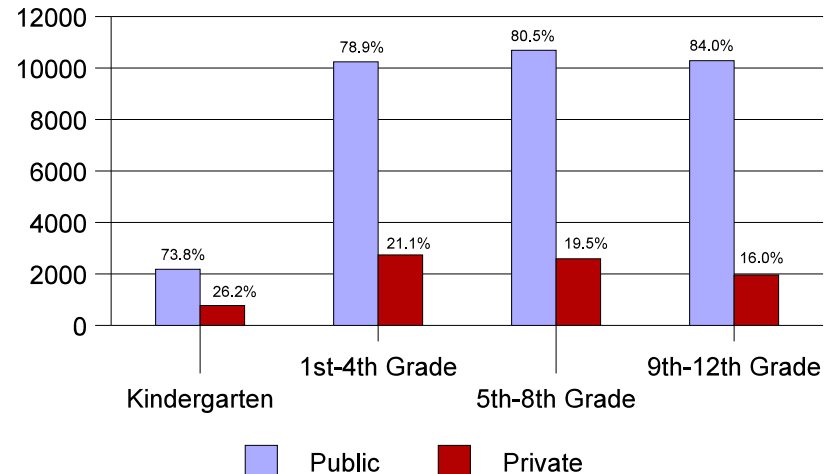
Highly Qualified Teachers	92.9%
Faculty with Master's Degree or Higher	46.7%

Educational Attainment



Statistics drawn from <http://www.state.la.us/census> and Greater New Orleans Community Data Center

Public vs. Private Enrollment



Data obtained from www.gnocdc.org/st_tammany/edattainment.html.

Racial Diversity of Public School Full-Time Faculty/Staff

Black	12.9%
White	85.9%
Hispanic	0.9%
Asian	0.2%
Native American	0.1%

Educational Attainment Level for Adults

Total Population Age 18 or Older	136,926
No High School Diploma or GED	17.8%
Louisiana Average	25.6%
High School Diploma or GED	26.6%
Louisiana Average	32.0%
High School Diploma, GED or Less	44.4%
Louisiana Average	57.6%
Some College/Associate's Degree	29.7%
Louisiana Average	25.6%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	25.9%
Louisiana Average	16.8%

Colleges with St. Tammany Campuses:

- Delgado Community College
- Southeastern Louisiana University
- Tulane University College
- University of New Orleans

Data in the Education section was obtained from the Louisiana Department of Education web site, U.S. Census Bureau, and GNO Community Data Center, 2004

INDICATION OF NEED:

There are over 36,169 children enrolled in the 51 St. Tammany Parish Public Schools. This number represents 84% of the school age children in the parish. The 16 private schools serve an additional 6,251 students and 319 are homeschooled. The district's students do very well on standardized testing. In fact all of the high schools have ACT test results which are higher than the state average and less than 20% of the 4th and 8th grade students' LEAP scores are considered unsatisfactory. 30.6% of the public school students are eligible for the free or reduced lunch program because their family's income meets the low-income threshold. All public schools in St. Tammany are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) as is the entire School District.

19% of the St. Tammany Parish Schools are rated four stars; 35% are rated three stars and 46% are rated two stars. The district performance score from the Louisiana Department of Education is 108.9, whereas 82.6 is the statewide average. 26% of the Parish's graduates go on to receive a Bachelor's degree or higher. Yet even with these good marks, 10% of the population ages 16-19 are not enrolled in school and do not have a diploma. The truancy reduction program at the Youth Service Bureau anticipates serving 700 students from kindergarten to 5th grade next year.

Participation in high-quality early childhood education is also an important in a child's development and can help low- and middle-income children prepare for school and is

associated with better performance in the early years of school (National Research Council, 2000; Reynolds, 1994; Sheehan, et al, 1991; Warash & Markstrom-Adams, 1995).

Conversely, inadequate care leaves children unprepared for school and can leave children with negative feelings toward teachers and fellow students. Children with inadequate childcare are more likely to face future rejection by peers, which has been shown to be a predictor of long-term problems such as delinquency and school dropouts (Carnegie Corporation, 1994).

Louisiana child care centers are licensed through the Louisiana Department of Social Services. NAEYC accreditation is a status intended for those demonstrating a commitment above the minimum standards and only 7 of the 84 licensed centers have achieved this certification.

Overall, St. Tammany Parish has a well-educated population. 82.2% of the adult population has a high school diploma, GED or above. 55% have some college and 25.9% have a bachelor's degree or higher. The national average for high school diplomas is 74.8% and the national average for persons holding bachelor's degrees or higher is 18.7%. In St. Tammany, 46.7% of the public school faculty have master's degrees or higher. 92.9% of the teachers at the St. Tammany public schools are considered "highly qualified" which is a designation that considers both degrees and additional certifications. Delgado, UNO, Tulane and SLU all offer credit and non-credit courses in St. Tammany Parish. Sullivan Vo-Tech and Louisiana

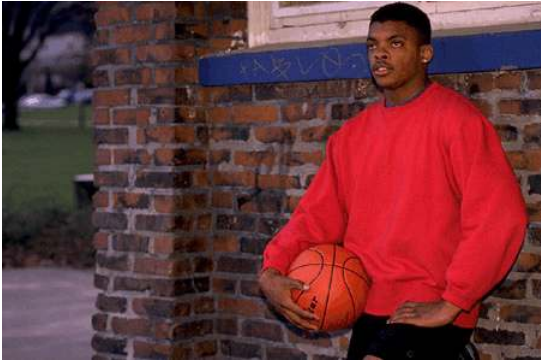
Technical College offer vocational programs. There are also several private vocational schools.

Education Critical Needs:

- Expand current adult literacy efforts throughout the parish
- Increase supportive services to preschool children and their families, through avenues such as LA-4, Zero-to-Three, Success by Six and Head Start.
- Increase efforts to retain students in high school who are not college bound and expand offerings of vocational training.
- Increase ancillary programs such as life skills, after-school tutoring, parent training and community wellness programs at school sites through partnerships with community agencies.

Some Local Education Resources

Adult Education Covington	985-892-3422
Adult Education Harrison	985-892-7626
Adult Education Louisiana Technical College	985-616-6430
Adult Education Mandeville	985-626-5225
Adult Education Slidell	985-646-6430
Adult Vocational/Rehabilitation - STARC West	985-727-9439
Adult Vocational/Rehabilitation - STARC East	985-641-0432
Catholic Charities Counseling	985-641-8120
Center for Development and Learning	985-893-7777
Child Development Center - Covington YMCA	985-809-2799
Consumer Credit Counseling Services	985-641-4158
Cooperative Extension Service - St. Tammany	985-875-2635
Covington Early Head Start	985-893-0053
Covington Head Start	985-892-8638
Head Start Program (Lacombe & Mandeville)	985-882-5610
Louisiana Technical College	985-646-6430
Rainbow Child Care Center	985-646-0718 985-646-1603
Slidell Head Start	985-649-5352
St. Tammany Literacy Assistance Program	985-649-9818 800-897-3690
St. Tammany Public Schools	985-898-3297
STARC Early Childhood Division	985-643-6227
Work Initiative Network	985-867-1213
YMCA Pre-School Learning Centers	985-624-8115 985-893-4800
Youth Service Bureau - Truancy Reduction/FINS	985-893-6113



Health



Health

"I am a divorced, professional woman who cannot afford health insurance. I had to go to Bogalusa for my annual health exam and for each follow-up. It's a long drive."

-KKM, a Mandeville resident, 2005

"Health care is leading the parish economically. We really need an Allied Health School here."

-Patti Elish, CEO,
St. Tammany Parish Hospital, 2004

"St. Tammany has historically been the place 'to get better'. We need to capitalize on that fact."

-Diane Winston, State Representative, 2004

AIRS HEALTH CARE DEFINITION:

Programs whose primary purpose is to help people in the community achieve and maintain physical well-being through the study, prevention, screening, evaluation and treatment of people who have illnesses, injuries or disabilities; and the provision of family planning, maternity and other services that relate to human reproduction.

Community Concerns:

The following concerns were identified by the focus group members and key informants.

- *Many people do not avail themselves of wellness services (including prenatal care)*
- *Reportedly, some people see a doctor only in emergency rooms*
- *Many elderly, mentally ill and uninsured persons are unable to afford to fill prescriptions*
- *It is difficult for the elderly to negotiate the health care system.*
- *Dental health is an issue for the poor and working poor.*
- *Families caring for seriously ill persons in their home have little assistance or respite opportunities*
- *Sexually transmitted diseases are prevalent among youth and adults.*
- *Poor nutrition and obesity are on the rise.*
- *Medicaid thresholds are too high.*

HEALTH: What Does the Data Show?

Medicaid

% of Population = Eligible	13.0%
in Louisiana	22.0%
Eligible Population	27,048
in Louisiana	990,544
Recipients	26,418
in Louisiana	951,366

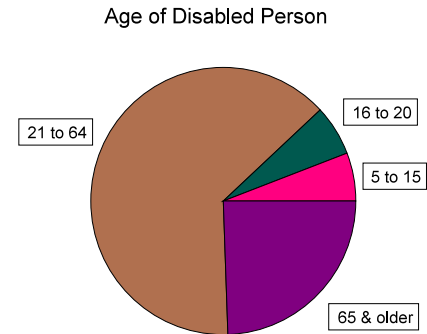
Maternal & Child Health (2001)

Live Births	2,695
in Louisiana	65,193
Birth Rate per 1000 Population	13.9
in Louisiana	14.6
Births to Teens 15-19 years	10.2%
in Louisiana	15.8%
Low Birthweight Babies	7.5%
in Louisiana	10.3%
Women Receiving Adequate Prenatal Care ..	84.8%
in Louisiana	77.8%
Infant Mortality Rate per 1000 Births	4.8
in Louisiana	9.8
Up-to-Date Immunizations	48%
in Louisiana	47%

Persons Reporting Disabilities, 2000

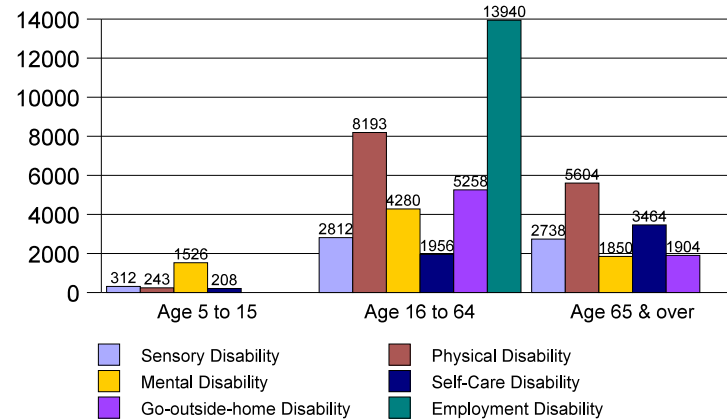
With a disability-age 5 and over	30,815 (17.6%)
Louisiana	880,047 (21.8%)
Nationally	257,167,527 (19.3%)

Disabilities By Life Stage



Statistics drawn from Greater New Orleans Data Center:
http://www.gnocdc.org/st_tammany/disabilities.html

Type of Disability by Age



Statistics drawn from Greater New Orleans Community Data Center:
http://www.gnocdc.org/st_tammany/disabilities.html

Estimates of Uninsured Persons

Population of Children Under Age 19	56,902
Estimated Number Uninsured	4,345
Percentage of Children Uninsured	7.6%
Working Adults Uninsured Statewide	417,000
Overall LA Adults Without Health Insurance	23%

Top Five Cancers Diagnosed & Number of Cases-All Ages

Breast Cancer	616
Prostate Cancer	604
Lung Cancer	596
Colon & Rectum Cancer	445
Bladder	182

Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Prevalence (2002)

(Rates per 100,000 persons)

Early Syphilis	2.0
Gonorrhea	66.0
Chlamydia	143.0

HIV/AIDS - Persons Living with HIV/AIDS 2004 248

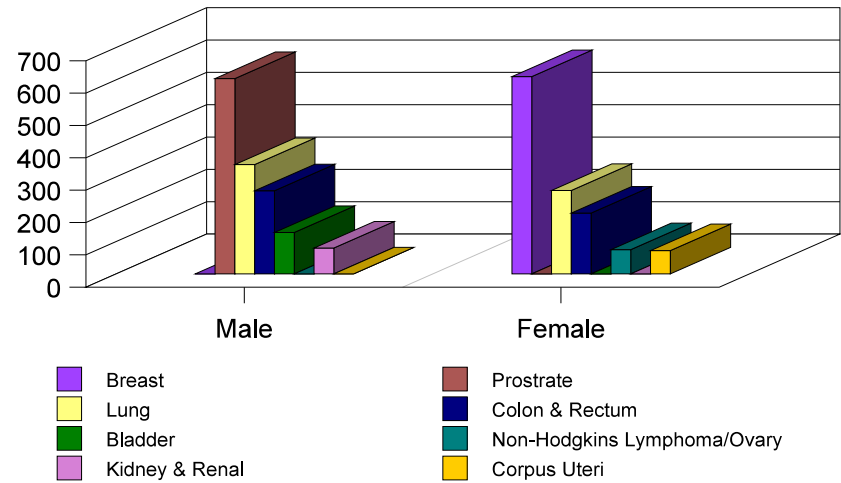
Inventory of Primary Care Providers (2003)

Family Practice	38
General Practice	9
Infectious Disease	1
Internal Medicine	122
Obstetrics & Gynecology	38
Pediatrics	51
Psychiatrists	34
Social Workers	214
Dentists	145

Acute Care Medical Services

Number of Licensed Beds	782
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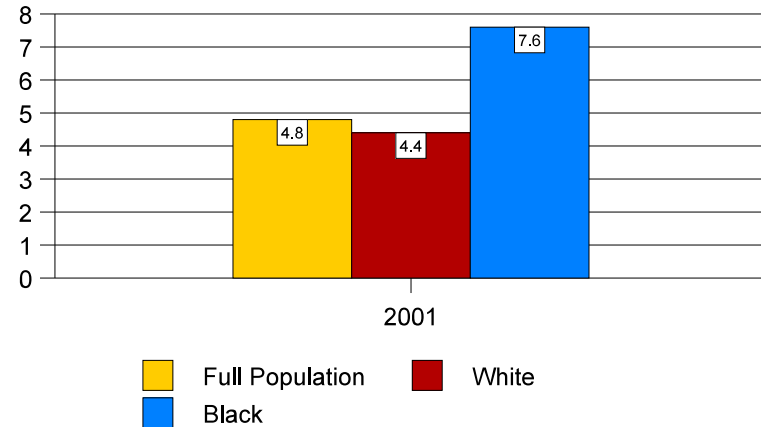
Top Five Cancers in St. Tammany By Sex



2003 Louisiana Health Report Card, Louisiana Office of Public Health

Infant Mortality Rate by Race of Mother

Number of Deaths per 1,000 Births



2003 Louisiana Health Report Card

Low Income Children's Services (*LA Kids Count & 2003 OPH*)

Receiving FITAP(Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program	518
In Louisiana	34,054
Food Stamps	6,755
In Louisiana	324,825
Kinship Care	113
In Louisiana	6,656
WIC	3,953
In Louisiana	105,305
Child Care Assistance	1,070
In Louisiana	48,607

INDICATION OF NEED:

According to the Louisiana Hospital Association, some of the finest health facilities in the state exist in St. Tammany Parish (2004). There are many people who are unable to take advantage of these services because they are uninsured. For people who are poor or uninsured, free services can only be found outside of St. Tammany Parish. It is reported that the use of these services also entails waiting several hours to be seen by a physician. Recent reports estimate 417,000 working people in Louisiana do not have health insurance. Louisiana is now in a tie for 2nd place as the “most uninsured” state (*WWL-TV, 2005*). It is very important to find ways to ensure that there are wellness, emergency, and routine health services available ‘close to home’ for all of our citizens.

According to the most recent census, 15.2 percent of the pregnant women are still not receiving adequate prenatal care. 10.2% of the births annually are to teenagers between the ages of 15 and 19. There are 3,953 children in St. Tammany currently receiving WIC (Women, Infants & Children Program) services.

There are numerous health care practitioners in the parish, including 122 internal medical practitioners, 51 pediatricians and 145 dentists. For those who do not have the means, care must be sought at free clinics - the closest of which is in Bogalusa or New Orleans at the LSU-Charity Hospitals. Additional Federally Qualified Health Care Units are needed and would be well utilized. Even for the elderly on Medicare, there are gaps in services if they are not fortunate enough to have a supplemental insurance policy.

There are 30,815 people (over age five) in St. Tammany Parish with some form of disability. In total, 17.6% of the parish population over age five has some sort of disability.

Health Critical Needs:

- Promote health services (clinics/centers) and programs (La CHIP/MOM) available to the poor and elderly
- Expand programs that transport the indigent to needed medical services and provide respite for caregivers
- Explore development of additional federally qualified health clinics, especially one-stop centers.
- Enhance health education in the areas of nutrition, dental health, sex education and physical fitness.

Some Local Health Resources

All Saints Free Community Medical Dental Clinic	985-893-3003
Catholic Charities - St. Peter the Fisherman, Community Home for Developmentally Disabled Adults	985-641-4914
COAST, Medical Alert Devices	985-892-0377
Deaf Action Center - Northshore	985-892-2581
Hospice Foundation of the South	985-847-0174
Hospice of St. Tammany	985-871-5946
Lakeview Regional Medical Center	985-867-3800
Louisiana Heart Hospital	985-690-7500

Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center	985-875-2234
Northlake Crisis Pregnancy Center	985-893-4281
Northshore Regional Medical Center	985-649-7070
Pregnancy Institute	985-649-0397
Sick Kids Need Involved People of Louisiana	985-649-0882
Slidell Memorial Hospital	985-645-2900
St. Tammany Hospital Home Health	985-898-4414 800-233-7117
St. Tammany Hospital Wellness Clinic	985-871-6030
St. Tammany Parish Hospital	985-898-4000 985-486-7259
St. Tammany Parish Public Health Unit	985-646-6445 985-646-6448

In addition to those sources listed above, there are many home health and hospice companies operating in St. Tammany Parish and can be found in the telephone directory.



Mental Health



Mental Health

“The already high numbers of children on psychotropic drugs is expected to triple in the near future.” “We need a huge outreach clinic which would either provide pick-up services; provide gas vouchers and/or provide in-home services.”

-Julie Eudy, Office of Youth Services, 2004

“Our biggest emergency room need is in dealing with emergency mental health and substance abuse situations.”

-Patti Elish, CEO,

St. Tammany Parish Hospital, 2004

AIRS MENTAL HEALTH CARE & COUNSELING DEFINITION:

Programs that provide preventive, diagnostic and treatment services in a variety of community and hospital-based settings to help people to achieve, maintain and enhance a state of emotional well-being, personal empowerment and the skills to cope with everyday demands without excessive stress. Treatment may include emotional support, introspection and problem-solving assistance utilizing a variety of modalities and approaches, and medication, as needed, for those individuals who range from the severely chronically mentally ill through those who are experiencing difficult life transitions or who are having problems in coping with daily living.

Community Concerns:

The following concerns were identified by the focus group members and key informants.

- *Adequate mental health care is a huge gap and is needed across all populations, including short and long term care*
- *The mental health pharmacology budget is not adequate*
- *There are not enough in-home mental health services; case management services; crisis intervention services and acute care beds*
- *Cross training as well as service integration among health and mental health professionals*
- *Transportation to services*
- *People do not know how to get help*

MENTAL HEALTH: What Does the Data Show?

Mental Health Providers, 2003	
Psychiatrists	34
Social Workers	214

Number of State Psychiatric Inpatient Beds	1,158
Located in St. Tammany (but available to full state):	
Child Beds	9
Adolescent Beds	16
Adult Beds	112
Per Capita LA Mental Health Agency Expenditures	\$45

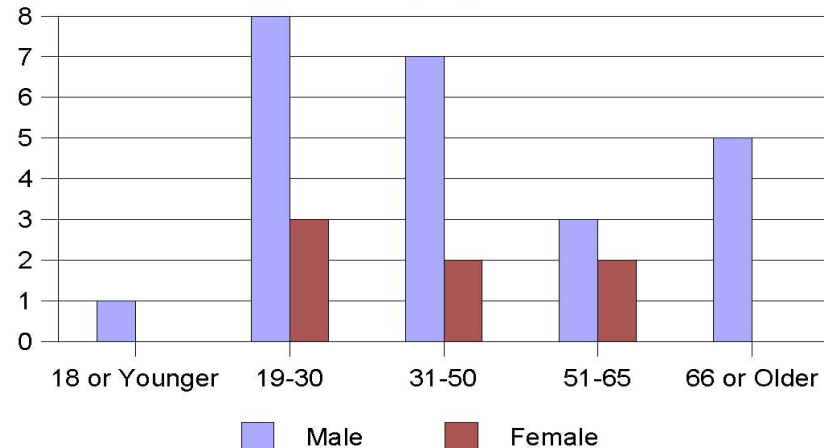
Louisiana Children Identified as needing Mental Health Services	110,000
Percent receiving services	7%
Child Adolescent Response Team Participation - Crisis Intervention (OMH CART Pilot Program 2004)	
Regional IX (5 Parishes)	220 cases
St. Tammany Parish	123 cases

Patients Treated at Lurline Smith Mental Health Clinic in 12 month period (2004):	
Child/Adolescent	410
Primary Diagnosis: ADHD	30%
Primary Diagnosis: Major Affective Disorders	20%
Adults	1000+
Primary Diagnosis: Major Affective Disorders	40%
Primary Diagnosis: Psychotic Disorders	30%

Deaths Classified as Suicide 2000-2004	156
Highest Prevalence, Completed	White male, mid-fifties
Highest Hospitalization, Attempted Suicide	Age 15-19

Suicide Methods Used	
Firearms	73%
Suffocation	12%
Poisoning	10%
Other	4%
Cut/Pierce	1%

2004 Suicides By Age and Gender



2005, St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office

Information obtained from Louisiana Federation for Families with Children's Mental Health, 2004; OMH CART, 2004; Kaiser Family State Health Facts, 2004; STOPS, 2004; St. Tammany Parish Coroner's Office, 2005; and the 2003 Louisiana Health Report Card.

INDICATION OF NEED:

Mayor Ben Morris (along with the majority of interviewees) feels that the greatest human service need on the North Shore is for mental health care. He would like to see a facility which could provide long term care when necessary (2004). Many respondents point to mental health problems as the main factor in homelessness.

Good mental health care is available to the wealthy and to people who are insured but for the working poor and the uninsured, services are very sparse. Even when services are available through mental health clinics, their lack of proximity and the clients' lack of transportation are problems. For example, intake for Slidell Mental Health is through Lurline Smith Clinic in Mandeville. Although, there are low cost counseling programs available through some nonprofits, many people cannot afford the minimal \$10.00 fee.

Professionals are optimistic that many of the current problems will be solved by the Florida Parishes Human Service Authority. However, their efforts will take several years to bear fruit and are totally dependent on state funding until they are able to qualify for other funding sources. The Human Service Authority is responsible for administering not only mental health programming but also programs for treatment of substance abuse and programming for the developmentally disabled. In the interim, collaborative efforts by public and private

organizations will be helpful in identifying and closing gaps and planning for the future.

Another disturbing area within mental health is suicide. St. Tammany Parish is considered to have the highest suicide rate in the state. Since the year 2000, 156 deaths in St. Tammany Parish have been classified as suicides. 35 people committed suicide here in 2003, with an age range of 13 to 92. The age-group most at-risk to commit suicide has been the middle-age, Caucasian male. Statewide the picture is similar as 79% of suicides are by white, non-Hispanic males. However, the data indicates that males, age 20-24 years are the most prevalent suicide victims on a statewide basis.

It should be noted that suicides are often under-reported. In many cases the intention is not clearly obvious, such as cases of one car accidents or mixtures of drugs and alcohol, i.e. Oxycontin and alcohol combined can be fatal (Becky Roniger, STOPS' ASIST Trainer). It is believed that, particularly, many young people will commit suicide without leaving a note therefore the numbers are probably higher than records are able to confirm. STOPS (St. Tammany Outreach for the Prevention of Suicide) reports that St. Tammany Parish has the highest rate of suicide in the state (2004). It is the third leading cause of death of adolescents in both Louisiana and the nation. Within a typical high school classroom, it is likely that three students (one boy and two girls) have made a suicide attempt in the past

year. (Louisiana Dept. Of Health & Hospitals, Adolescent Suicide Prevention Task Force).

It would be beneficial for the mental health community, including practitioners, health care providers and hospitals, law enforcement and the coroners office to do some holistic problem solving while the Florida Parish Human Service Authority develops comprehensive mental health offerings.

One out of every four persons in the State of Louisiana needs mental health treatment, according to Louisiana Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health. Although St. Tammany Parish has an abundance of mental health professionals, there are at least 4,345 uninsured children in St. Tammany and numerous uninsured adults (LaCHIP). This data, along with citizen input regarding lack of state-funded treatment, paints a bleak picture. Children with mental illness are often struggling in school and adults with mental illness are often unable to work.

Mental Health Critical Needs:

- Ensure local points of entry or transportation provided to service
- Explore the development of a continuum of mental health services from prevention through residential mental health services for adults and children.
- Identify and utilize a common mental health screening tool for general service providers
- Initiate the LA-YES family mental health case management program in St. Tammany
- Maximize the collaborative efforts of those providing prevention, intervention and treatment services to establish a more comprehensive approach

Local Mental Health Resources

Agency	Phone
Catholic Charities Counseling Services	985-641-8120
Catholic Charities, St. Peter's Group Home	
Family Services of GNO	985-893-1025 985-641-7185
Kids in Crisis Project, Inc.	985-792-1920
Lurline Smith Mental Health Center	985-624-4450
St. Tammany Guidance Center	985-626-1796
Slidell Addictive Disorder Clinic	985-646-6401
St. Tammany Outreach for the Prevention of Suicide (STOPS)	985-898-2124
Volunteers of America	985-727-7767
Youth Service Bureau	985-893-2570