

Priority Population Plan, 2005-2010

A study by the Somerset County Department of Human Services, called the Priority Population Plan, reviewed the needs of some of the county's underserved population groups and came up with recommendations on how to meet those needs. The Priority Population Plan took more than a year to compile and looks specifically at population groups such as the physically and mentally disabled, the homeless, low-income residents, substance abusers, at-risk families, senior citizens and new immigrants. The suggestions on how to help those specific groups is listed below.

Children & Families at Risk

Need: Affordable housing

Recommendations:
 ■ Increase numbers of Affordable Housing and Section 8 vouchers.
 ■ Replace Section 8 voucher slots when slot leaves the county, to maintain consistent number of slots.

Need: Child Care

Recommendations:
 ■ Expand availability of quality affordable child care.
 ■ New Resource/Kinship Families will be guaranteed subsidized child care.
 ■ Increase the reimbursable rate so programs will accept vouchers, especially the infant/toddler rate and infant resource family child-care rate.
 ■ Secure adequate child care for children out of placement.

Need: Parenting and mentorship programs

Recommendations:
 ■ Make prevention referrals and participate in activities/programs before problems occur.
 ■ Provide education events/programs in social problem issues.
 ■ Increase funding for Parenting Programs.
 ■ Create a Parent Mentorship Program.

Need: Transportation

Recommendations:
 ■ Increase availability of transportation of all working poor and WorkFirst Families.
 ■ Educate the Somerset County community more on the public transportation system.
 ■ Reduce fares to income-eligible families.

Need: Substance Abuse Education

Recommendations:
 ■ Increase availability of substance abuse treatment prevention for children and their families.

Mental Health Population

Need: Affordable Housing

Recommendations:
 ■ Expand affordable housing, both independent and supervised, for mental health population.

Need: Additional psychiatric time for children and adolescents

Recommendations:
 ■ Increase psychiatric time for adolescents and children with psychiatrists trained specifically in these age-related groups.

Need: Increase psychiatric time for all populations

Recommendation:
 ■ Increased psychiatric services available to individuals.
 Need: Transportation Recommendation:
 ■ Expand transportation services to mental health clients.
 Need: Substance abuse, expand MICA services Recommendation:
 ■ Expand Drug Recovery Intensive Outpatient Services.

Developmentally Disabled

Need: Affordable housing, supervised and supportive

■ Increase amount of respite care available to each family.

Need: Employment

Recommendation:
 ■ Expand existing employment programs.
 ■ Increase capacity for supported employment (not center-based).
 ■ Add job coaches.
 ■ Offer tax incentives to employers.
 ■ Improve the quality of employment opportunities.
 ■ Increase marketability of clients through training.

Need: Job training and education

Recommendation:
 ■ Enhance/expand job training programs.
 ■ Continually seek ways to expand the job training options for people with developmental disabilities.
 ■ Ensure that educational programs prepare students for employment.

Need: Transportation

Recommendation:
 ■ Expand and diversify transportation services (public and private) to increase access.
 ■ Expand transportation services to include social and recreational trips.

Homeless Populations

Need: Emergency shelter

Recommendations:
 ■ That all motels and shelter placements are reviewed periodically for suitability.
 ■ Develop emergency facilities that are better suited to special needs populations.

Need: Ability to meet basic needs

Recommendations:
 ■ Develop a resource guide to advise people where to access services.
 ■ Develop resources in areas of need that have been identified.
 ■ Maximize transportation resources available.
 ■ Screen all potentially eligible clients for government programs such as Food Stamps and Work First New Jersey.

Need: Employment

Recommendations:
 ■ Somerset County Board of Social Services will assess all Temporary Aid for Needy Families and General Assistance recipients.
 ■ One Stop will assess those not served by the board.
 ■ Support the Workforce Investment Board's efforts to expand job opportunities for all county residents.
 ■ Provide case management services to all employable individuals requesting this service.

■ Examine barriers to employment on an administrative level and attempt to develop broader remedies.
 ■ Encourage flexibility of employers e.g. flex time, van pools, on-site child care.

Need: Substance Abuse Treatment

Recommendations:
 ■ Increase detox and rehab services available locally.
 ■ Establish a safe haven as part of a continuum of care for the homeless substance abuser.
 ■ Establish a community outreach service that engages homeless individuals in the community and supports and encourages their decision to enter and continue in treatment.
 ■ Continue to maintain a positive relationship with local housing providers to ensure shelter is available to this vulnerable population.
 ■ Develop a pilot project of court/all diversion for homeless substance abusers accused as disorderly persons.
 ■ Expand rehab services available to uninsured populations, especially individuals with co-occurring substance abuse and mental health diagnoses.
 ■ Twenty-four-hour assessment and referral system.

Low-income Populations

■ Maximize transportation resources.
 ■ Screen potential clients for programs such as Food Stamps and Work First New Jersey.

Need: Job training and education

Recommendations:
 ■ Explore opportunities for on-the-job training.
 ■ Develop distance learning and other innovative programs that reduce educational barriers.
 ■ Maximize participation in all career advancement programs.

Need: Medical

Recommendations:
 ■ Ensure that services exist for the low-income population.
 ■ Increase outreach to the low-income population.
 ■ Work through the basic needs committee to ensure that this service continues to be available to the low-income population and eventually expanded.

Need: Employment

Recommendations:
 ■ Somerset County Board of Social Services will assess all Temporary Aid for Needy Families and General Assistance recipients.
 ■ One Stop will assess those not served by the board.
 ■ Support the Workforce Investment Board's efforts to expand job opportunities for all county residents.
 ■ Provide case management services to all employable individuals requesting this service.
 ■ Examine barriers to employment on an administrative level and attempt to develop broader remedies.
 ■ Encourage flexibility of employers (e.g., flex time, van pools, on-site child care).

Physically Disabled Population

Need: Affordable housing

Recommendations:
 ■ Increase all types of housing options.
 ■ Provide a continuum of supportive services within different housing models.
 ■ Ensure quality of care through appropriate training, reimbursement rates and supervision.

Need: Ability to meet basic needs

Recommendations:
 ■ Assess client needs.
 ■ Identify gaps in services.
 ■ Provide each person with a case manager.
 ■ Expand services to fill gaps.

Need: Job training & education

Recommendations:
 ■ Enhance/expand job training programs.
 ■ Continually seek ways to expand the job training options for people with physical disabilities.
 ■ Ensure that educational programs prepare students for employment.
 ■ Increase workplace options for people with physical disabilities.

Need: Medical/dental

Recommendations:
 ■ Ensure access to adequate insurance.
 ■ Ensure access to medical care including dental (transportation, competence of providers in dealing with disabilities, etc.).
 ■ Remove financial barriers to obtaining treatment.
 ■ Preventive care.

Need: Transportation

Recommendations:
 ■ Expand and diversify transportation services (public and private) to increase access.
 ■ Increase number of vehicles able to accommodate people with physical disabilities.
 ■ Expand transportation services to include social and recreational trips.

Substance Abusers

Need: Emergency shelter, safe haven, men's shelter
 Recommendation:
 ■ Develop and create safe haven

Need: More halfway house service for men and women with children

Recommendations:
 ■ Additional halfway house beds for men and women with children.

Need: Increased psychiatric time

Recommendations:
 ■ Increase psychiatric services available for individuals.

Need: Substance abuse treatment; intensive case management

Recommendations:
 ■ Develop intensive case management services for substance abusers.
 ■ Recruit certified alcohol and drug counselors who are licensed.

Need: Substance abuse treatment/mental health treatment, services for Drug Recovery Intensive Outpatient Services clients

Recommendations:
 ■ Expand Drug Recovery Intensive Outpatient Services.
 Seniors

Need: Increased supportive and Section 8 Housing

Recommendations:
 ■ Maintain current Section 8 housing and expand access to case management and personal assistance and additional Section 8 slots.

Need: Dependent Care, expanded adult day care

Recommendations:
 ■ Increase number of affordable day care slots.

Need: Affordable Assisted Living

Recommendations:
 ■ Increase options for seniors to affordable assisted living.

Need: Medical, prescription assistance

Recommendations:
 ■ Expand opportunities for seniors to obtain prescriptions.

Need: Increased Independent Living Services

Recommendations:
 ■ Affordable flexible options regarding home health aids, nurses, companions, nutritionists.
 ■ Accessible medical care and psychiatric care.
 ■ Increased caregiver supports.

New Immigrants

Need: Affordable Housing

Recommendations:
 ■ Increase programs that provide housing subsidies (for example, Section 8).
 ■ Encourage building of additional rental housing stock.
 ■ Raise the minimum wage.
 ■ Decrease housing discrimination through education and enforcement.

Need: Employment

Recommendations:
 ■ Reduce language barriers by increasing access to affordable ESOL classes.
 ■ Change immigration laws so that people can obtain documents needed for employment.
 ■ Increase minimum wage.
 ■ Move workers to payrolls with the requisite benefits and eliminate "under the table" payments.

Need: Job training & education

Recommendations:
 ■ Make English as a Second Language classes available in every community.
 ■ Advertise local GED classes.
 ■ Provide information on the one-stop career centers, vocational schools and county colleges.

Need: Medical/dental

Recommendations:
 ■ Provide a list of physicians and dentists with bilingual services.
 ■ Provide a list of clinics in the communities with affordable care.
 ■ Provide a list of hospitals in the area.
 ■ Create a list of traveling bilingual nurses and physicians in the area.
 ■ Provide bilingual health education.