

THE REAL EASTSIDE:

All is not well in the midst of plenty.

Results from the
Eastside Human Services Alliance
Annual Assembly, 2003



Three *of*
the **richest people**
in the **world**
live *on the* **Eastside.**

But did you know *that*
over 20,000 *of*
our neighbors live
in **poverty** *and*
thousands more *are*
confronting hurts
that **dollars alone**
can't fix?

INTRODUCTION

East King County human services providers have built and sustained a strong network of services that continue to meet the diverse and challenging needs of Eastside residents. But the world keeps changing and new challenges emerge just as old ones are met. As a result, the human services system may be facing its most serious threat to date.

In an effort to help decision makers understand and address our communities' challenges, the Eastside Human Services Alliance (EHSA) recently held its first *Annual Assembly*, bringing together human services providers to collectively define and prioritize critical issues and trends facing human services in East King County.

EHSA will hold an *Annual Assembly* in the fall of each year and will publish its findings as updated versions of this 2003 edition of *The Real Eastside*. We hope this vehicle for the provider perspective will be useful to decision makers as they strive to understand and address the Eastside's changing needs.

HOW THIS DOCUMENT WAS CREATED

In October 2003, 45 EHSA members gathered to identify the critical trends and forces challenging their efforts to deliver services to the people who need them. The group also discussed forces affecting infrastructure stability, and short and long-term critical issues facing human services on the Eastside. The five community goal areas as defined by United Way and many jurisdictions were used as a structure for the group's work:

GOAL 1: Food to Eat and a Roof Overhead

GOAL 2: Supportive Relationships within Families, Neighborhoods and Communities

GOAL 3: Safe Haven from All Forms of Violence and Abuse

GOAL 4: Health Care to be as Physically and Mentally Fit as Possible

GOAL 5: Education and Job Skills to Lead an Independent Life

HOW THIS DOCUMENT WAS CREATED *(continued)*

Participants first focused on issues specific to the goal area that best matched their expertise. Participants then prioritized trends and forces, effects on infrastructure, and specific issues that warrant priority attention. This report summarizes the *Assembly's* findings, and highlights:

- ◆ Trends and Forces Challenging Human Services on the Eastside
- ◆ Priority Issues Areas
- ◆ Critical Issues by Goal Areas
- ◆ Comments about Geographic Areas and Special Population Groups

A COUNTYWIDE PERSPECTIVE

The future stability of human services in King County requires that each sub-region be functional. While numbers and magnitude of need varies throughout the county, each sub-region's need is worthy and in need of investment. Dismantling of programs and services in one area will inevitably have a rippling affect in another area. Need doesn't disappear – it just moves. Your investment in East King County will help strengthen the Eastside, as well as help maintain balance and stability in the countywide system.

TOP TRENDS AND FORCES CHALLENGING HUMAN SERVICES ON THE EASTSIDE

In recent years, the Eastside has seen powerful trends and forces that cut across all goal areas, issues, and populations. It is no exaggeration to say that the Eastside's entire human services system is at risk. Below are the most significant trends and forces identified by participants.

NO DEDICATED FUNDING. The lack of a dedicated funding source for human services perpetuates instability in the system, particularly in tough economic times when services are forsaken and demand is growing. As a result, the quality of service is compromised, there are longer wait lists, and providers are forced to offer “band-aid” solutions.

THE EASTSIDE MYTH. There is a common perception that the Eastside does not have low-income residents with unmet need. Despite evidence to the contrary, this myth is still prevalent and manifests itself in regional funding decisions.

FUNDING PRIORITY SHIFTS. Countywide funding trends don't match Eastside demographic profiles, resulting in more funds shifting away from the Eastside. Data is gathered in a way that masks pockets of extreme and growing need.

FUNDING COMPETITION. With fewer dollars available, more competition within and across agencies hurts working relationships and may inhibit collaborations.

SACRIFICING PREVENTION. Countywide funding trends are also favoring crisis management over prevention. Impressive, successful prevention programs on the Eastside, particularly in the areas of youth and family support, are being disproportionately cut.

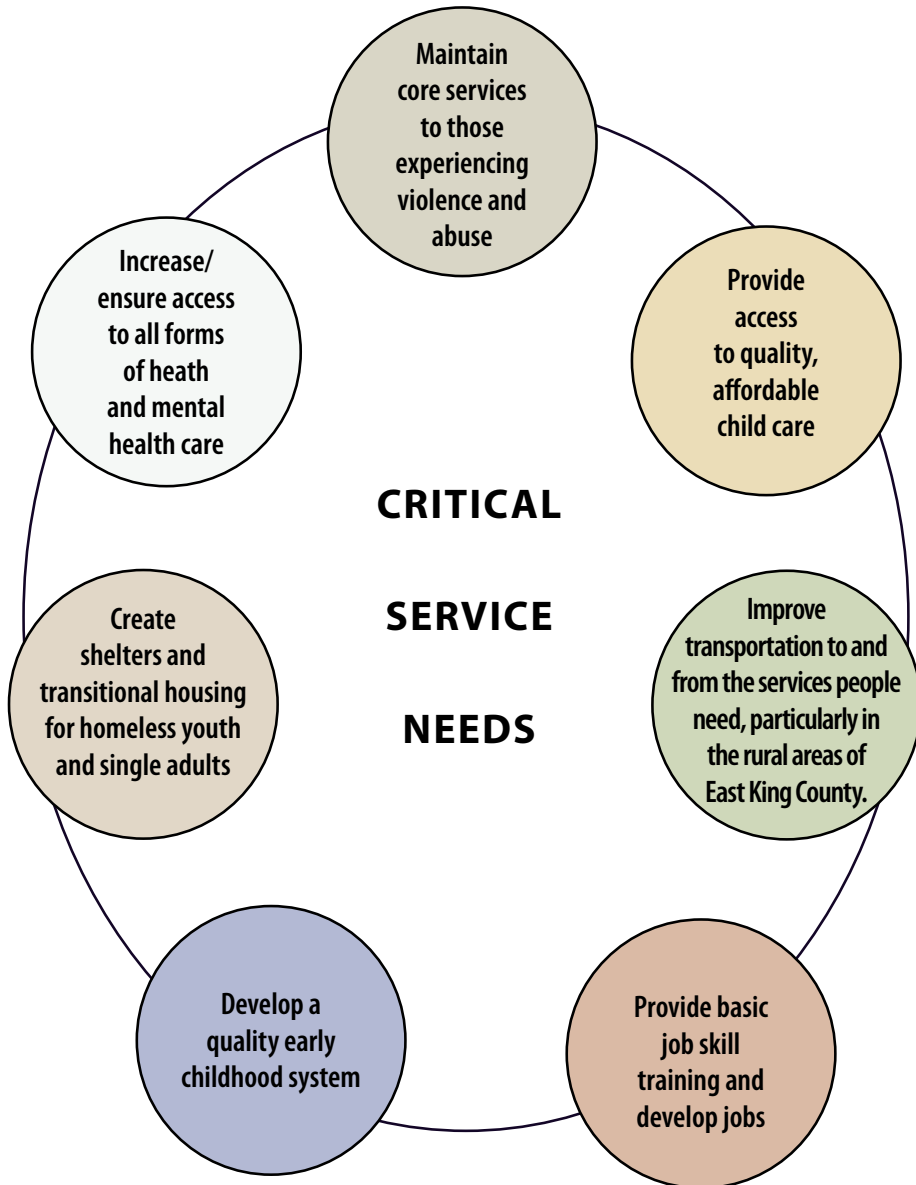
INFLUX OF IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES. The human services system on the Eastside is not equipped to effectively manage the specific and unique needs presented by the burgeoning immigrant and refugee populations.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PROBLEMS. Low pay for staff is making it difficult for human service agencies to find and keep competent, qualified workers. Staff at all levels are asked to do more with less, leading to increased stress, turnover, burn-out and low morale.

NO ONE WANTS TO PAY FOR THE BASICS. Administrative costs are not funded, making it difficult for agencies to manage and plan well. Training funds are less available for staff, creating concerns about a higher risk of liability and lower quality of services.

TOP SERVICE PRIORITIES

From the universe of critical service needs/issues identified by providers at the Assembly, the following surfaced as the highest priorities:



CRITICAL ISSUES BY GOAL AREA

Providers identified key short and long term issues specific to each of the five goal areas. Short-term critical issues are those that deserve significant attention within the next year. Long-term issues are those that realistically may take several years to affect, although improvement efforts need to begin as soon as possible. Some needs appear as both short and long term.

Goal 1: Food To Eat And A Roof Overhead

SHORT-TERM NEEDS

More sources for food donations
(current sources are diminishing due to liability concerns)

Transportation to basic services

LONG-TERM NEEDS

More shelters for single adults

Sufficient transitional housing for youth

Transportation to basic services

Goal 2: Supportive Relationships Within Families, Neighborhood and Communities

SHORT-TERM NEEDS

Prevention and support groups that can pre-empt the need for more expensive services

Better compensation to keep competent, qualified agency staff (critical now, but also a long term issue)

More high quality childcare: increased subsidies; greater availability of after-school care and activities; more training for providers

Support for families caring for someone with severe needs

Counseling and prevention services for working families when they cannot meet basic needs

LONG-TERM NEEDS

Information and referral services for non-English speakers and more translation services

Prevention services

More low cost legal services

Comprehensive services for families, including advocacy and help navigating systems

CRITICAL ISSUES BY GOAL AREA *(continued)*

Goal 3: Safe Haven From Violence And Abuse

SHORT-TERM NEEDS

Maintain core services to address persistence of violence.

Provide culturally specific services to immigrant and refugee populations, with help from those communities.

LONG-TERM NEEDS

Early prevention initiatives to preclude interpersonal violence (domestic violence, sexual assault, community violence).

Goal 4: Health Care

SHORT- AND LONG-TERM NEEDS

Access to all forms of health care: dental, mental health, medical, chemical dependency, preventive, rehabilitation, early intervention, etc.

Equitable access, culturally competent, quality care for people of color, and non-English speaking people.

Goal 5: Education And Employment

LONG-TERM NEEDS

Development of a quality early childhood system.

Focus on developing services that build self-sufficiency rather than quick fixes.

Funding for job development, basic job skill training, literacy and English language for increasingly complex jobs.

COMMENTS ABOUT GEOGRAPHIC AREAS AND SPECIAL POPULATION GROUPS

YOUTH

When English is not spoken at home, an interpreter is needed in sensitive situations.

Increase awareness about available services.

Prevention and healthy activities save later costs in the criminal justice system.

Youth need school-based health and mental health services.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Mildly disabled people do not qualify for Access transportation.

Increase awareness of services available.

Educate the public about people with disabilities. Views of disabilities vary among cultures.

Provide respite care for caregivers.

Provide foster care.

Provide more child care and after-school programs to serve children with special needs.

Help deaf people who are non-English speaking to learn about services available and how to reach them.

Acknowledge greater incidences of disabilities in the community.

Provide chemical dependency prevention and treatment services for youth.

Increase job creation for people with disabilities, including adults with head injuries.

SENIORS

Recognize the challenge of managing on a fixed income.

There is a need for specialized housing for seniors, especially in rural areas.

Sometimes, values clash with those of youth and the community at large.

Increase awareness of services available.

Develop support groups for grandparents taking care of grandchildren to prevent burnout.

Compensate for the fact that doctors are not accepting new Medicare patients.

Seniors need care for longer periods of time because they are living longer.

COMMENTS ABOUT GEOGRAPHIC AREAS AND SPECIAL POPULATION GROUPS *(continued)*

Within the critical issues, participants were asked to identify any differences or specific concerns that particularly affected different geographic regions on the Eastside or special population groups. Their comments are noted below.

RURAL

Transportation is a much greater problem in rural areas.

Access to services in general is much more difficult.

Finding quality childcare in rural areas is much more difficult.

URBAN

Increased numbers of culturally diverse populations stretch the small number of culturally competent staff available.

REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS

Translation services are lacking.

Culturally competent services are needed.

Increase subsidies for family, friend and neighbor care used by refugee and immigrant communities.

Provide culture- and language-specific domestic violence victim and batterer treatment services.

Provide funding for ESL, mental health, and acculturation and adjustment services.

Help undocumented children and families obtain health care coverage.

Recognize that more jobs require English proficiency. Allow for longer job training periods.

Provide culture- and language-specific employment services.

Eastside Human Services Alliance. . . *Building healthy communities through a strong human services network.*

Member Organizations

ARCH
Assistance League of the Eastside
At Work!
Bellevue Boys & Girls Club
Bellevue Community College
Campfire USA
Catholic Community Services
Child Care Resources
Children's Response Center
Chinese Information & Service Center
City of Bellevue
City of Issaquah
City of Redmond
Community Health Centers
Crisis Clinic
Eastside Adult Day Services
Eastside Domestic Violence Program
Eastside Legal Assistance Program
Family Resource Center
Food Lifeline
Friends of Youth
Girl Scout Totem Council
Hopelink
Issaquah Youth Y Family Network
Jewish Family Services
Kindering Center
King County Community Organizing Program
King County Mentoring & Educational Center
King County Sexual Assault Resource Center
Leadership Institute
Mt. Si Senior Center
Public Health, Seattle & King County
Salvation Army – Eastside
Seattle Mental Health
Senior Services
Snoqualmie Valley Community Network
Sno Valley Senior Center
United Way of King County
VIBES/Bellevue School District
Youth Eastside Services
YMCA of Greater Seattle
YWCA of Seattle-King County-Snohomish County

The providers of human services in East King County offer *The Real Eastside* with the hope that decision makers will factor the information in to their decision-making. For further information, please call Cindy Goodwin, EHSA Chair, 206-236-3525.