

**United Way of Greater Rochester**  
**United for Impact 2020 - Listening Session 4**  
**August 8, 2018**  
**Red Cross Canteen Room 1-3pm**



United Way of Greater Rochester worked with CGR to conduct a community needs assessment to help guide our new investment plan to begin in August 2020. Listening Sessions to hear thoughts from the community on the report were held to help guide strategic investment plans moving forward.

**What things did you feel were on target in the report?**

- Poverty – regional problem not just city.
- Education is a critical factor. Need equity – key driver.
- Trauma – pervasive factor – Lifespan perspective birth to aging.
- Affordability of basic needs – housing and transportation.
- Moving the needle – not happening despite the money invested.
- The gap has gotten bigger.
- Lack of cohesive power of leadership. Need gains by funders, community – need cohesive leadership.
- Encouraged that disparities were mentioned but then what. It's about our work and us.

**What things in the report were surprising or missing?**

- Non-profits are part of local infrastructure/not recognized by ROC.
- Impact of addiction – opiates.
- Don't forget alcohol, tobacco, pot on young ones and role of addiction on mental health.
  - Issue of stigma.
- Jobs available but need people with the necessary skills.
- Report did not mention impact on children (FAS, NES).
- Non-profits often cannot offer living wage salaries.
- Initiatives in community not well known. Can UW facilitate communication between groups?
- What are factors behind low birth rate/infant mortality? Can we address those?
- Converging of poverty and trauma based services – what keeps young people from seeking services?
- Issue of navigating all the programs. So many systems to navigate.
- We need more than a couple of days of training.
- Consistent care for people of all races – the effect of racism.
- How are other community stakeholders engaged in this process?
- Engage churches – they are at grass-roots level.
- Include more “voices” at the table.
- Terminology “poor” can be stigmatizing.
- Demographics shifts are significant – especially with older adults
- Raise more awareness on aging – how issues affect other people – add aging lens on all issues.
- Perspective of impact of issues on persons with disabilities lacking.

- Legal services not mentioned in report. Only 37% of legal services in NYS met – leads to infringement of rights.
- Justice for All pilot attempting to give legal access to everyone. J. Saunders is on advisory committee. Will identify gaps/barriers?
- Report does not address needs of undocumented immigrants, trauma, and lack of access to housing and legal services. Legal residents are now forced to choose between residency and access to services.
- It is a “crime” to be poor – lack of access to identification (driver’s license is a basic need) has large ramifications on work and other aspects of life.
- The interrelated of homelessness and addiction.
- Non-profit populations pitted against each other for funding. Part of why we can’t move the needle.
- Need for financial planning, budget training, and skill building early in life.
- Need to engage/involve private sector to help. UW can help break down barriers/silos across sectors and amongst non-profits. Bring us all to the table.
- Livable community: one that’s good to grow up in and grow old in.
- The effect of eviction on creating poverty.
  - Eviction prevention needed.
- NYS has a segregated education system.
- Can UW split up cycle – hard to wait 3 years?
  - More frequency of awards.
  - Reach out to smaller/newer agencies.
- Pull out mental health – especially for young men.
  - How is mental health being addressed?
  - Mental health issues leading to problems in schools/education.
  - Mental health and education are intertwined.
- Evidenced based practices that’s not tested with community/subpopulation.
- Transportation: having only access to public transportation limits access to available jobs. Needs to be addressed.
- Gentrification of some city neighborhoods forcing residents out to suburbs taking their issues with them.
- Older adults healthier now – how do we keep them engaged, tap into their talents and use them to help with community issues (wisdom, volunteering)?
- Are we dealing with “low hanging” fruit that will move the needle?
- Small resources can make a difference.
- One area that wasn’t addressed in the report was the increase in the Latino population (56 percent since 2000). There is a large Spanish speaking population that is underserved, and it is even more challenging to navigate the system with a language barrier. This obviously affects Puerto Ricans as well as immigrants from different countries (Latino or other countries).

**What is United Way doing well/should keep doing/or other roles United Way could play?**

- UW best when convener - uses its voice.
- Hold people accountable to the outcomes.
- Access to funding limited for small agencies. Open UW dollars to new agencies.

- UW should be the united way to the future.
- Form workgroups around issue areas – groups to develop a plan in specific areas to come up with solutions.
- Bring young and older together.
- Peer lead services – hiring people with life experiences not just degrees so people are hired from the community.
- Capacity building of agencies to support hiring from community.
- Develop shared initiatives – not promote silos.
- Survey the top 1000 donors and see what they would support.
- Create separate pot of money for emerging organizations annually. Make sure to evaluate.
- Look at successful initiatives done at a grass-roots level.
- UW needs to listen, engage voice of the community members and service recipients on an ongoing basis.
- UW should “match-make” between small and large organizations working on similar issues/same neighborhoods.
- Partnerships need to be authentic especially when bringing larger and smaller organizations together.
- Start with collective vision.
- UW should evaluate how effective collective impact initiatives are working together and how to improve.
- Raise more money in campaign.
- Regain the power of fundraising and United Way philanthropy potential.
- Engage companies in volunteerism.