

# United Way of Pitt County

## COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

Draft and Working Document  
May 2007

*To mobilize resources and leadership to build a  
stronger community*



## A Letter from the Co-Chairs

United Way of Pitt County's (UWPC) board of directors approved the 2006-09 strategic plan on June 21, 2006. The purpose of this plan is to identify the organizational resources and infrastructure necessary to implement a Community Action Plan successfully. The four goals and strategies in the strategic plan outline and direct our move to the Community Action Plan.

Creating a Community Action Plan is a fundamental change in how United Way operates. The Community Action Plan is a strategic and tactical way to create positive long-term lasting change right here in Pitt County. The Plan explores and addresses ways to make system changes related to our community's most critical issues in order to improve lives and create a stronger community for everyone.

This new model will affect the United Way of Pitt County's organizational structure, its committees and the way we do business. Our planning and communications processes will reflect this model, and our relationships in the community will expand to help make the Community Action Plan a success. The model will change how we think about issues and solutions.

The Community Action Plan was created in response to a community needs assessment conducted in 2005, *Pitt County Voices*. Once the critical issues facing Pitt County residents were identified, UWPC worked to bring together community representatives to create the overall Community Action Plan.

Part of the new model includes the creation of Vision Councils to address each of the identified Focus Areas. Community volunteers serving on Vision Councils have identified priority issues and developed measurable goals and outcomes for each issue. Their work is the foundation of the Community Action Plan.

We are very excited about the future of this effort and have been asked to serve as Community Action Plan Co-chairs. UWPC will continue to work with community representatives to address the issues that matter most to our community and to work together to create positive, lasting change right here in Pitt County. That is the business of the United Way.

We want to recognize the commitment of the United Way of Pitt County board of directors for their support of this new model. We would also like to thank the individuals who have spent their time and energy in developing the Community Action Plan, and for their future work in achieving positive lasting change across Pitt County.

Sincerely,

Mike Raisig and Tim Nelson  
Co-chairs, Community Action Plan Cabinet

## Acknowledgements

The development of the Community Action Plan was a community-wide effort, lead by the participation of volunteers and leaders in our county. It takes a community of caring individuals to truly achieve meaningful change on issues that matter most.

### Community Action Plan Cabinet

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*Pitt County Memorial Hospital*  
Tim Nelson, Co-Chair  
*University Health System*  
Michael Aichinger  
*Community Volunteer*  
Charlotte Anne-Alexander  
*Legal Aid of NC*  
Dan Atcheson  
*Ward and Smith, PA*  
Ana Cowo  
*Pitt County Schools*  
Scott Elliott  
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Nettie Evans  
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Connie Newton  
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*Department of Social Services*  
Julie Rawls  
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*Branch, Banking and Trust*  
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Sylvia Yaw  
*Pitt County Memorial Hospital*

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Mark L'Esperance  
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*Pitt County PTA President*  
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*Legal Aid of NC*  
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Lori Jones  
*Community Development Program*  
Laura Smith  
*Literacy Volunteers*  
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Wanda Yuhas  
*Economic Development Commission*

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Chief William Anderson  
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## **Building a Safe and Healthy Community: Vision Council**

(Continued)

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*Project Safe Neighborhood*  
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*Family Violence Program*  
Mary Smith  
*REAL Crisis*  
Bob Thompson  
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Melba Tripp  
*Community Volunteer*

## **Caring for Neighbors in Crisis: Vision Council**

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Diane Waters, Co-Chair  
*Pitt County Memorial Hospital*  
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Rebecca Clayton  
*Pitt County Transit*  
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*Greenville Community Shelter*  
Tracy Kennedy  
*REAL Crisis*  
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*Pitt County Government*  
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*Ayden Methodist Church*  
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*Greenville Utilities Commission*  
Tony Potter  
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Kimberly Williamson  
*Pitt Community College*

## Background

In 2005, UWPC commissioned East Carolina University to conduct a community-wide needs assessment. The result of that work, *Pitt County Voices*, outlined issues the community identified as critical. The community needs assessment coincided with the development of UWPC's 2006-09 strategic plan, defining its future direction and focusing on four core strategic goals:

Goal 1: Develop a Community Action Plan around key, prioritized community issues.

Goal 2: Increase resources available to address the community needs identified in the Community Action Plan.

Goal 3: Build supportive, lasting relationships with the community.

Goal 4: Align all organizational resources in support of UWPC's mission and Community Action Plan.

UWPC's board of directors recognized organizational transformation was necessary to develop a Community Action Plan. In the summer of 2006, a steering committee was formed to develop an outline for the Community Action Plan and a way to align UWPC's structure and processes. After the initial assessment and research was conducted, community leaders and service providers were invited to a one-day planning retreat in November 2006 to review the research and approve the outline. Over the past five months, UWPC in collaboration with a broad range of community partners, has embarked on an effort to create a community plan that will focus on the community's most urgent needs and set visions and measurable goals that will lead to lasting positive change in the community. The Community Action Plan is a living document and will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

One of the first steps in developing the Community Action Plan was to understand Pitt County's strengths, challenges and most pressing issues. This was done by:

- 1) gathering primary data from community surveys,
- 2) reviewing statistical data and
- 3) collecting qualitative data by engaging in focus groups and community discussions.

The steering committee has used a variety of data sources of information in an effort to get a broad view of the community. Data sources included the 2005 *Pitt County Voices* and the *Eastern North Carolina Regional Index 2006*, and statistical data from the NC Office of Research and Statistics, Census Bureau and other reliable sources.

## Community Action Plan Focus Areas

After months of work, the Vision Councils, Focus Areas and specific issues were identified. Vision statements, goal statements and indicators were developed. Those Focus Areas and issues include:

### **Preparing Children and Youth for Life Success**

- 1) Preschool Preparedness
- 2) Youth Development
- 3) Support for Families and parents

### **Fostering Financial Stability Leading to Independence**

- 1) Job Development
- 2) Affordable, Adequate Housing
- 3) Literacy
- 4) Money Management

### **Building a Safe and Healthy Community**

- 1) Family Violence and Abuse
- 2) Safety
- 3) Affordable and Accessible Health Care

### **Caring for Neighbors in Crisis**

- Caring for Neighbors in Crisis does not lend itself to this model of change and outcome measurement as readily as other Focus Areas. Ensuring a viable system of services in the community to meet basic needs is critical. While the Community Action Plan goals and measures are not defined in this document, community partners who were involved in the Plan development are committed to continued support of these much needed services in Pitt County.

## *Outcomes and Indicators*

The Community Action Plan defines vision statements that, if achieved, will create long-term positive change in the community and identifies desirable and measurable community-level outcomes as indicators for success. These indicators are measurable ways to determine progress, results and areas for improvement.

Indicators were selected on the basis of availability of data, consistency of measurement tools, reliability and integrity of data sources and ability to link data sources as a viable indicator for the visions established. In some cases, a consistent data set has not yet been determined for an issue area. In those cases, the task will be to continue to search for a viable indicator or possibly develop a tool for reliable tracking in the future.

The indicators identified are community-level indicators, which differ from program-level indicators. Community-level indicators are the result of many facets and environmental conditions all working together to influence a community-level condition. It often takes several years and collective action before a significant movement on community-level indicators is seen. No one program or entity can be solely responsible for changing a community-level indicator; it must be through collective action and environmental influence.

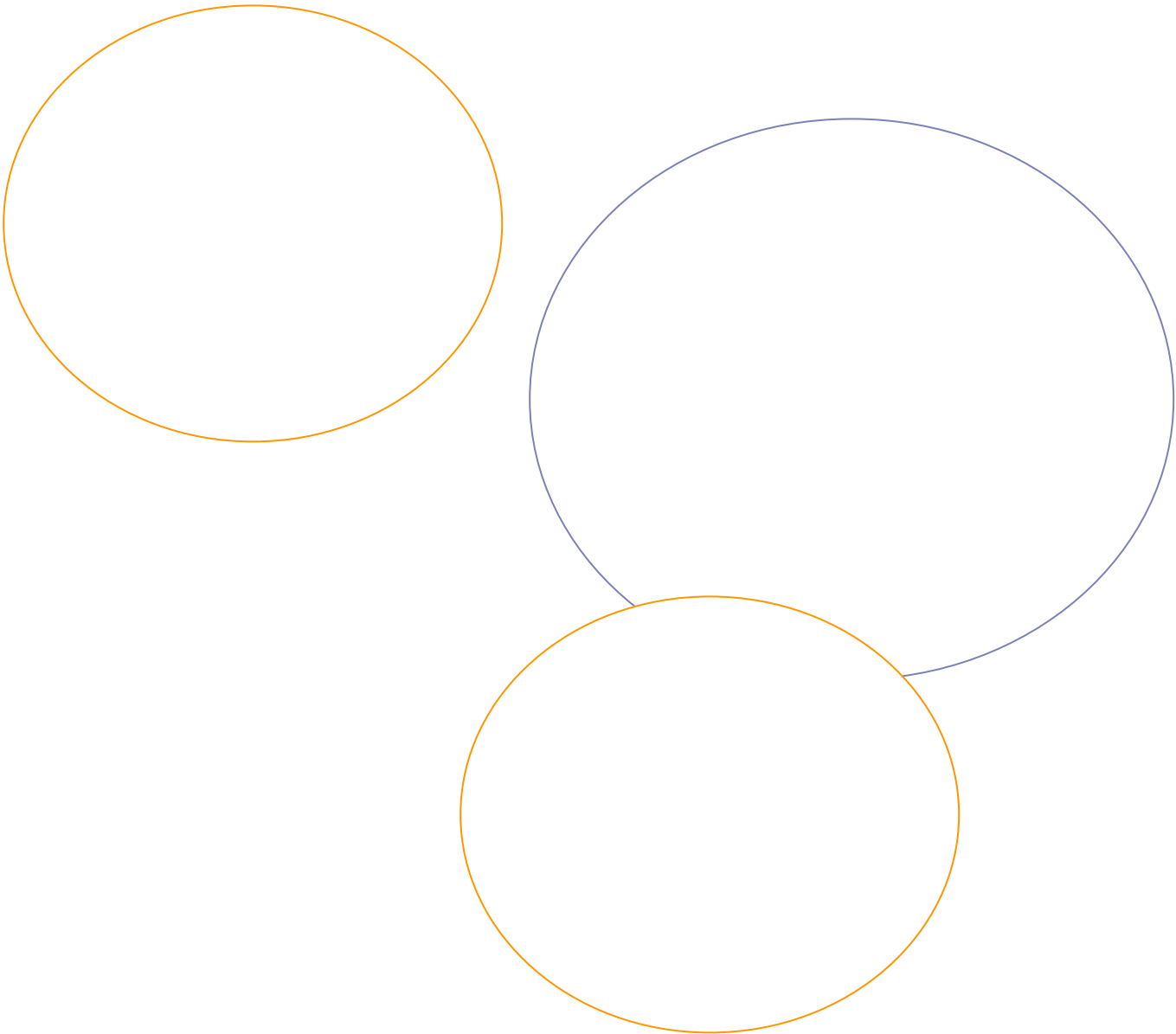
Program-level indicators are those resulting directly from activity of a specific program. Program-level indicators provide information on results, progress and success of a specific program. In theory, combining the positive outcomes and successes of various programs results in collective positive change on a community-level indicator.

## *Next Steps for Achieving Results*

The move to a Community Action Plan is a significant organizational and community change. As the change occurs, UWPC will continue to review and evaluate activity, remain flexible to updating the Plan as necessary and allow for transition time to adjust to new operations, procedures and activities. As the Community Action Plan has set the direction for community improvement and a positive future for Pitt County, the next steps will be critical to ensuring the community works together to achieve positive results. To ensure success, these critical factors must be in place:

- **Community Involvement and Collaboration** – The goals set in the Plan cannot be achieved by one organization alone. Partners must work together, using and leveraging resources in the most efficient and effect way to see positive results.
- **Community-wide Strategies** – A critical next step is to benchmark, develop and implement specific community-wide strategies to guide actions and define tasks for achieving goals.
- **Tracking Progress and Results** – Reviewing data and tracking selected indicators are integral to measuring progress and results. This process will help the community focus on Community Action Plan issues and help the community identify what is working well and what needs improvement.
- **Dedication** –Community-level change takes time. Community partners must be dedicated to continuing to focus and work on achieving results even though in some cases it may take years to see the community-level change.

*Preparing Children and Youth for Life Success*



# Preparing Children and Youth for Life Success

## VISION

*All youth are emotionally, physically, socially and cognitively prepared to achieve their full potential to lead a productive and successful life.*

## Preschool Preparedness (Birth to Kindergarten)

### Goal

***All children will enter kindergarten ready to learn.***

Early education, care and development opportunities for our young children have great implications for our community's present and future conditions.

Providing a child with solid, quality educational and developmental opportunities sets the foundation for a child's later success in life. Brain development research indicates a child's most important learning takes place during the first few years of life. It is critically important that early care and instruction for young children incorporates appropriate educational and developmental components through the early education system in our schools.

Indicators of positive early education and development of young children can be measured by tracking the progress a child is making in school by the third grade. If a child has a solid educational foundation, he/she is more likely to be successful in the third grade and later on through the educational system.

### Measuring Progress

Indicator	Current Data
Percent of students rated proficient in kindergarten preparedness assessments Source: Pitt County Schools	Baseline data will be collected during the 1 <sup>st</sup> year
Percent of children entering kindergarten from economically disadvantaged homes who attended early education programs Source: Pitt County Schools	Baseline data will be collected during the 1 <sup>st</sup> year

### About the Data

Vision Councils will be working with community partners to develop and conduct surveys to determine students rated proficient in kindergarten assessments and children from disadvantage homes who attended early education programs.

## Youth Development

### Goal

***All children will have the character, confidence, knowledge and skills to make wise choices.***

To get a glimpse of Pitt County's future, look to its youth. To ensure future leadership, success and self-sufficiency, strategies to develop confidence and character among youth are critical to reducing barriers. Mentoring, after-school programs and other learning opportunities offer encouragement, support and skills needed to grow into healthy, responsible adults. Opportunities for learning and development of character and leadership skills will result in the reduction of poor decision-making that lead to negative behaviors and consequences among our youth.

### Measuring Progress

Indicator	Current Data
Percent of students scoring at or above grade level on the End of Grade (EOG) testing ( 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 6 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> grade) Source: Education First NC School Report Cards/Pitt County Schools 2005-06	<u>Grade 3</u> Reading 76.9% Math 57.5% <u>Grade 6</u> Reading 79.6% Math 56% <u>Grade 8</u> Reading 83.2% Math 58.1%
Reduction in the number of out of school suspensions (Average number of Short-term and long-term out of school suspensions and expulsions per 100 students) Source: Education First NC School Report Cards/Pitt County Schools 2005-06	<u>Elementary</u> Short-term 21 Long-term 0 Expulsions 0 <u>Middle</u> Short-term 90 Long-term 1 Expulsions 0 <u>High</u> Short-term 63 Long-term 2 Expulsions 0
Percent of students who report risk behaviors (substance use, gang activity, family violence) Source: Pitt County Substance Abuse Coalition 2005	40% - middle school students and over 60% high school students report trying alcohol. 25% - middle school students and 40 % high school students have

	smoked a cigarette. 18% - middle school students and 40% high school students have tried marijuana.
Number of new petitions filed in Juvenile Court: 2006 Source: Pitt County Department of Social Services	117
Percent of repeat offenders in Juvenile Court Source: Information not immediately accessible	N/A
Percent of students who respond in their senior year that they plan to attend a two to four year post secondary or who are joining the service Source: Data to be collected via survey	N/A
Number of post secondary scholarships received (if received while in high school) Source: Data to be collected via survey	N/A
Graduation Rate Pitt County Source: 2006 First Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate	64.9% of first time ninth graders graduated in 4 years or less

### About the Data

Data was obtained from Education First NC School Report Cards, 2005-06 school year. In most instances, data in the school report cards are reported at the school, district and state levels. A detailed listing of the grade ranges included in each category is available from the NC Department of Public Instruction. [www.ncreportcards.org](http://www.ncreportcards.org)

Vision Councils will be working with community partners to develop and conduct surveys to determine students who respond that they plan to attend post secondary school and who receive scholarships.

## Parenting and Family Dynamics

### Goal

***Families will provide a nurturing, stable environment to support the emotional, physical, social and cognitive development in all youth.***

With more and more children in the United States being raised and cared for by people other than their biological parents, the concept of "family" is constantly evolving and expanding. In addition, many families today—regardless of household arrangement—find themselves faced with special circumstances.

This issue area focuses on family relationships that influence the development of children from birth through the transition to adulthood and on the affects that these relationships have on a child's well-being.

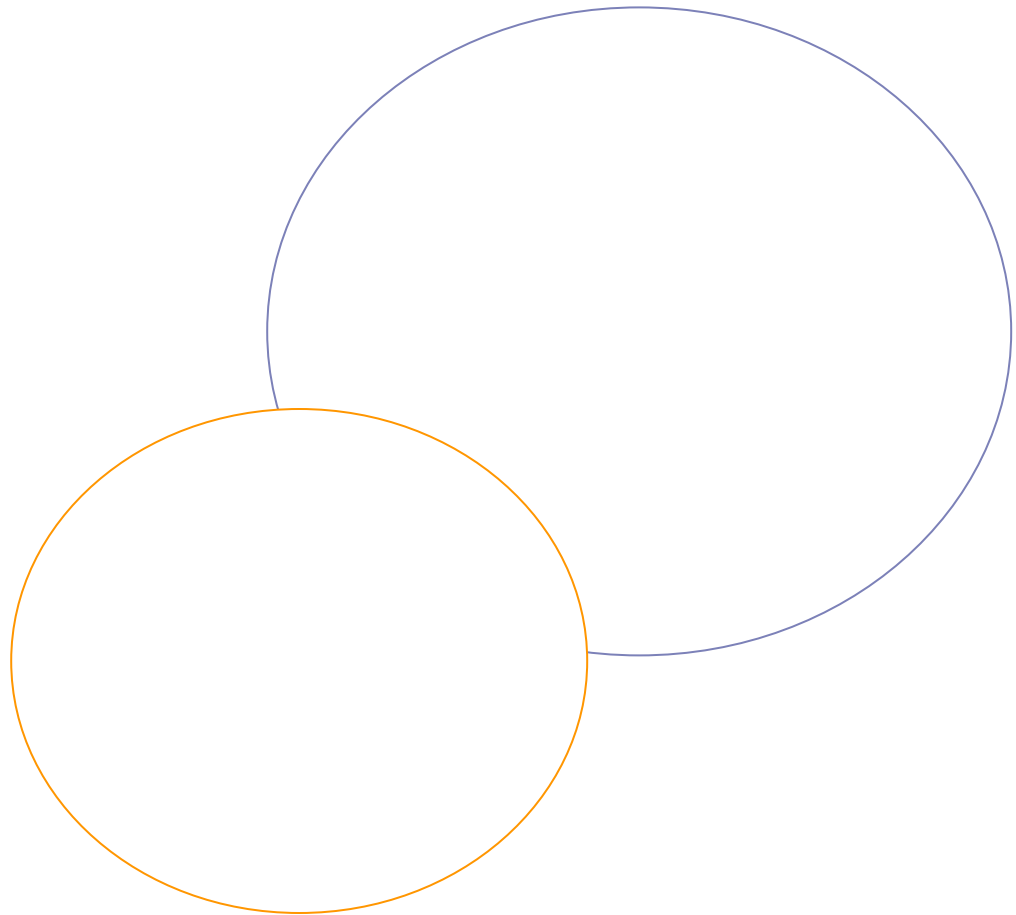
### Measuring Progress

Indicator	Current Data
The child protective services reports accepted for investigation or family assessment in 2006	1,200
Increase parent volunteerism (Boys and Girls Club, schools, etc.) Source: Data to be collected via survey.	N/A
Increase in positive perception of the school environment by parents Source: Data to be collected via survey.	N/A

### About the Data

Vision Councils will be working with community partners to develop and conduct surveys addressing the issues stated.

# *Fostering Financial Stability Leading to Independence*



# Fostering Financial Stability Leading To Independence

## VISION

*Community residents are able to be self-reliant and live independently, achieving their maximum potential through opportunities for education, employment and affordable housing.*

## Employment Skills Development

### Goal

***Increase the number of individuals and families that have opportunities and skills to secure and maintain meaningful, living wage employment in Pitt County.***

Formal post-secondary education, vocational education and job training programs are all important in preparing the people of Pitt County for work. Today's marketplace environment is all about shifting industries, job availability and required skill-sets. In order to compete in this environment, an individual must be able to identify a need in the marketplace and develop the job-skills necessary to succeed in that job. The ability for an individual or family to obtain and maintain employment at a livable wage is critical to self-sufficiency.

### Measuring Progress

Indicator	Current Data
Publicizing the number of educational opportunities that match with regional job opportunities. Source: Information not immediately accessible.	N/A
The number of training modules/programs to aid in preparing individuals for employment beyond entry level and fast food jobs Source: Information not immediately accessible.	N/A

### About the Data

Vision Councils will be working with community partners to assess available programs in the community.

# Literacy

## Goal

### ***Increase adult comprehension and literacy levels in Pitt County.***

Literacy means more than the ability to read and write. The National Institutes on Literacy defines literacy as the “ability to read, write and speak English proficiently, to compute and solve problems and to use technology in order to become a life-long learner and be effective in the family, workplace and community.” This level of functional literacy is critical to success in today’s work and economic environment, as well as for achieving overall self-sufficiency.

A national literacy assessment tool rates literacy skills on five levels, with a Level 1 being the lowest skill set. A number of national and state organizations in the United States, including the National Governor's Association, have identified Level 3 proficiency as a minimum standard for success in today's labor market. Findings from the assessment indicate only half of the United States adult population, 16-65 years of age, reached Level 3. Insufficient literacy skills continue to be a significant problem.

## Measuring Progress

Indicator	Current Data
Number of participants reading at EOG 8 <sup>th</sup> grade level Source: Data to be collected	Literacy Volunteers PCC, et al
Number of accessible ESL classes Source: Data to be collected	Literacy Volunteers, et al

## About the Data

Vision Councils will be working with community partners to assess available programs in the community.

## Affordable Housing

### Goal

***Increase viable home ownership and access to affordable, safe and quality rental housing in Pitt County.***

Homeownership is an indicator of economic self-sufficiency. According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, a household should spend no more than 30 percent of its income on housing in order to have enough income for food, clothing and other basics. Residents who continually struggle to find and maintain affordable housing and who are spending greater than 30 percent of their income on housing experience more barriers to economic security, educational attainment and overall health and well-being. Renters shoulder significantly more burden of housing cost and little income remains for education, child care, food and basic expenses, including health care. Even so, almost one in five homeowners also potentially struggle with this issue.

While an increased homeownership rate may be a desirable goal, it should not result in an increase in foreclosures. Strategies to decrease foreclosures should be considered for any effort to increase homeownership.

### Measuring Progress

Indicator	Current Data
Number of Affordable Housing Programs (Habitat Homes, Solid Ground, etc.)	N/A
Number of Transitional Housing Programs Source: Data to be collected via agency	N/A

### About the Data

Vision Councils will be working with community partners to assess available programs in the community.

# Money Management

## Goal

***Provide people in Pitt County with the education and skills required to maintain lifelong economic independence.***

Money management is the key to an individual's financial stability. Community programs are available to educate adults on issues related to savings, budgeting and predatory lending. These programs should be accessible to the people they would benefit. Teaching high school students about personal finance and budgeting would help prepare them for their future as independent adults.

## Measuring Progress

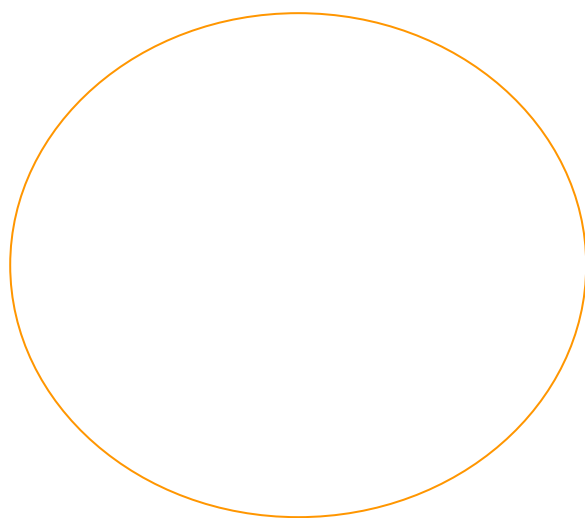
Indicator	Current Data
Number of training modules (8-12) for high school students and community-based	N/A

## About the Data

Vision Councils will be working with community partners to assess available programs in the community.



# *Building a Safe and Healthy Community*



# Building a Safe and Healthy Community

## VISION

*All people in Pitt County feel safe in their environment and have access to appropriate mental, physical and social health care, promoting positive life choices.*

## Family Violence and Abuse

### Goal

***Family members are safe from physical and emotional harm in their environment.***

Family violence is a pattern of abusive behavior occurring between family members or intimate partners. It takes many forms and can happen once in a while or all the time. It does not discriminate and may take the form of threats, physical attacks, rapes or sexual assaults directed at the victim, the victim's children, family members or property. It crosses ethnic, racial, age, national origin, religious and socioeconomic lines.

Since most family violence is not reported, the true rate of occurrence of family disruption is more widespread than even the large number of reported cases indicates. Abuse and interpersonal violence must be addressed in Pitt County to ensure safe environments where our residents live.

### Measuring Progress

Indicator	Current Data
Number of deaths due to family violence (Source: Family Violence Program, Inc. of Pitt County)	4 (2006)
Number of protective orders (Source: Family Violence Program, Inc. of Pitt County)	527 (2006)
Number of crisis calls (Source: Family Violence Program, Inc. of Pitt County)	408 (2006)
Number of clients sheltered at Safe House (Source: Family Violence Program, Inc. of Pitt County)	185 (2006)

### About the Data

The Family Violence Program, Inc. of Pitt County is a nonprofit organization whose goal is to “break the cycle of domestic violence and promote healthy family relationships.” They collect data related to the number of crisis calls received, number of clients sheltered and number of clients served on a quarterly basis. In addition, they track the number of domestic violence protective orders filed with the assistance of advocates from the Family Violence Program, Greenville Police Department and Pitt County Sheriff’s Office.

## Safety

### Goal

***All citizens of Pitt County will enjoy a safe and accessible community.***

Safety and security affects all aspects of neighborhood and community life. A feeling of safety leads to positive relationships with neighbors, a sense of connectedness and promotes civic involvement. Neighborhoods with a high rate of drug abuse, crime and vandalism struggle to maintain a sense of safety. To create positive change in neighborhoods and in the community, it is essential to develop focused strategies to address various crime and safety issues.

### Measuring Progress

Indicator	Current Data
Number of residents feeling very safe in their neighborhoods (Source: Data to be collected by survey)	N/A
Index Crime Rate for Pitt County (Source: NC Department of Justice, State Bureau of Investigation)	5,429 per 100,000 (2005)
Number of elderly and disabled populations that feel their neighborhoods provide for ease of mobility (Source: Data to be collected by survey)	N/A

### About the Data

County crime rates per 100,000 are provided by the NC Department of Justice and the State Bureau of Investigation in their Annual Summary Report of 2005 Uniform Crime Reporting Data. The Crime Index includes the total number of murders, rapes, robberies, aggravated assaults, burglaries, larcenies and motor vehicle thefts in Pitt County in 2005. Of the 5,429 crimes per 100,000 for 2005, 11 percent were violent crimes (murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault) and 89 percent were property crimes (burglary, larceny and motor vehicle thefts). Vision Councils will be working with community partners to develop and conduct surveys to determine residents' attitudes regarding neighborhood safety and accessibility.

## Accessible, Affordable Health Care

### Goal

***All citizens adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles and have access to appropriate and needed health services.***

Good health is critical to a good quality of life. Healthy lifestyles including being physically active, eating well and maintaining a mental balance are important components in preventing illness and disease. Programs, policies and environments that support healthy lifestyles must be available in communities to prevent premature death and disease. Access to a primary care doctor for preventative care and early detection of illness also support good health. Specialty care services are in increased demand as more residents are diagnosed with chronic disease. Access to these services must also be available so residents can manage their health and maintain their best possible quality of life.

### Measuring Progress

Indicator	Current Data
Percent of population reporting not getting needed medical care because of cost (Source: Pitt County Community Health Assessment)	6.5% (2003)
Percent of population that lacks health care coverage (insurance or government plan) (Source: Pitt County Community Health Assessment)	18% (2003)
Percent of population reporting not getting medications due to cost (Source: Pitt County Voices)	15.6% (2003) (Represents National percent)
Number of mental health calls to REAL Crisis Center (Source: REAL Crisis Center)	1,113 (2006)

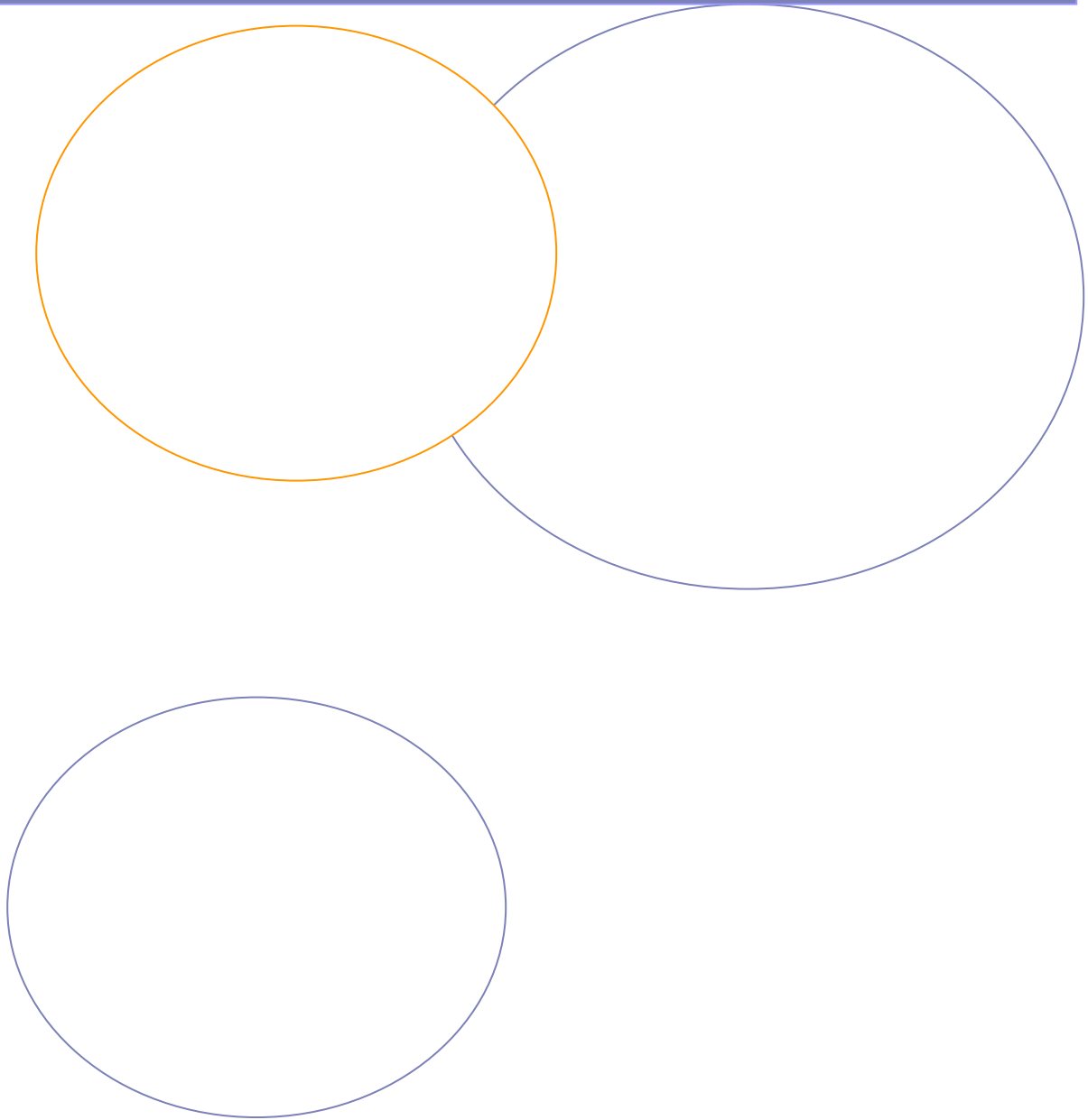
### About the Data

Every four years, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services requires local health departments to assess the community health needs of its citizens. In 2003, the Pitt County Health Department and Pitt Partners for Health, a volunteer group of organizations and community members, engaged the community in a review of public health priorities for Pitt County, which resulted in the Pitt County Community Health Assessment.

The percentage of Pitt County residents not getting medications due to cost is unavailable, but could be gathered through a survey. The current number of individuals not getting medications due to cost is 15.6 percent or 45 million Americans.

REAL Crisis Center provides crisis services 24-hours a day for citizens in Pitt County. REAL Crisis Center tracks the number of crisis calls, then categorizes them by problem area. Mental health calls range from resident who are unable to access the mental health system to residents who just need to talk through an issue related to family, work, etc.

## *Caring for Neighbors in Crisis*



# Caring for Neighbors in Crisis

## VISION

*Pitt County has systems in place to meet community residents' basic needs (food, shelter, clothing, etc.) in times of personal crisis or emergency situations.*

## Goal

***Individuals, families or organizations can more effectively use the human services network and access services that respond to their basic needs.***

Helping people in times of personal need and crisis to meet basic life necessities such as food, clothing, safe shelter, medications and economic support is a basic cornerstone of our community's commitment to caring. Safety-net services are important for a community to be able to respond to residents' basic needs in times of emergency and crisis. Success in meeting goals set in other areas of the Community Action Plan (i.e. Fostering Financial Stability) should result in a decreased need for safety-net services. The need for safety-net services will never completely go away; therefore, support for safety-net services has been incorporated as part of the Community Action Plan. The community recognizes the importance of such services and the need for the community to be able to respond in personal emergency and crisis events for families and individuals.

Through collaboration with Pitt Resource Connection, an information and referral organization, individuals, families and organizations will be able to more effectively use the human services network and access services that respond to their basic needs.

## Measuring Progress

Indicator	Current Data
Number of requests fulfilled through Pitt Resource Connection (Source: Pitt Resource Connection)	138 (2006)
Percent increase in Pitt Resource Connection membership (Source: Pitt Resource Connection)	167 individuals (2006) 102 agencies (2006)

## About the Data

Pitt Resource Connection is an information and referral organization that links community resources to those in need. Through a vast electronic network, requests for individuals, families or organizations are met in as few as a couple of hours. In 2006, 138 requests were fulfilled through Pitt Resource Connection. A membership of approximately 102 agencies assisted in fulfilling those requests. Since multiple representatives may attend from an agency, the total Pitt Resource Connection membership is comprised of approximately 167 individuals. As individuals, families and organizations are more aware of the services Pitt Resource Connection provides, the number of requests and the membership are expected to increase.