

Executive Summary

Lack of knowledge regarding the characteristics, perceptions, and indicators of well-being of Lexington households has been an obstacle to informed decision-making. Census information provides facts and figures of population characteristics but does not identify residents' needs. Much of the current data regarding desired and available levels of human services is extrapolated from other data or generally considered to be an educated guess. To overcome the data shortage, a community-wide needs assessment was conducted during late Spring 2002 through telephone and mailed surveys. Randomly selected Lexington residents answered questions regarding their financial needs, income support, needs of the elderly, employment, childcare needs, physical and mental health needs, and characteristics such as ethnicity, last grade of school completed, marital status, and number of people in their household. The purpose of the Lexington-Fayette County Needs Assessment is to discover gaps in public and private human services within the urban county area. There were over 1500 completed interviews with responses to more than 100 questions—residents were eager to respond and share their information and perceptions.*

According to the United States Census Bureau 2000 data, there are 260,512 residents in Lexington-Fayette County. Of the total population, 12.9% individuals and 8.2% families live below the federal poverty level. In order to appropriately define areas in the County that are low-income/high-service, the census tract system, used by the Census Bureau, was implemented. Census tracts are small geographic units created so that statistical comparisons can be made. The Census Bureau uses major roads as boundaries thus making it easier to identify each tract. These tract boundaries are represented on the enclosed map—Fayette County has a total of 61 census tracts. Coordinating data from the 2000 Census and data gathered through the Needs Assessment surveys, the Research Center for Families and Children research team analyzed the income levels and demographic characteristics of each census tract to identify the targeted Assessment Sectors and reaffirm the representativeness of the survey. Contiguous census tracts with similar income levels and demographics were combined to form Assessment Sectors for easy overall comparisons. The map displays the Assessment Sectors that were created and the census tracts that comprise each sector. Please note that census tracts not considered high-need were combined into the Remaining Lexington Community Assessment Sector.

Household characteristics, economic status, perceptions of neighborhoods, financial need, and indicators of well-being have been reported for 1] the Lexington Community as a whole, 2] the *Combined Targeted Assessment Sectors*, 3] the Remaining Lexington Community Assessment Sector—the Lexington Community outside the targeted sectors, and 4] each of the Targeted Assessment Sectors, *individually*. This information is important for the continuation of services provided by government and private entities. To provide information to a variety of interested persons and agencies, information is available in three forms: this tri-fold quick-reference brochure, an in-depth 16-page summary report, and a bank of detailed analyses for each of the geographic options reported in this summary report. All three information forms are available at www.LexLinc.org, the brochure and summary report are also available through a limited printing and the detailed analyses are also available on CD from the Research Center for Families and Children. This knowledge will contribute to a better understanding of the Community and thus lead to more effective policies and assistance. Essentially, the results of the data collected through the Lexington-Fayette County Needs Assessment are a Call to Action.

*The total number of completed surveys is 1561—1,237 telephone surveys and 324 mailed surveys. The margin-of-error is less than $\pm 2.5\%$ at the 95% confidence level. The Lexington-Fayette County Self-Assessment Study was conducted by the Research Center for Families and Children with survey assistance by the Survey Research Center. Both centers are located at the University of Kentucky. The study was funded by LexLinc, a nonprofit organization in Lexington, KY.

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Our Community: An Introduction to the Lexington-Fayette County Self-Assessment



Descriptions of the Assessment Sectors

This tri-fold is an introduction to the Lexington-Fayette County Self-Assessment and Assessment Sectors created for the purposes of this study. The identification of Assessment Sectors is based on the following descriptions: 1] the Lexington Community as a whole, 2] the *Combined* Targeted Assessment Sectors, 3] the Remaining Lexington Community Assessment Sector—the Lexington Community outside the targeted sectors, and 4] each of the *individual* Targeted Assessment Sectors.

The Lexington Community

Within Lexington-Fayette County as a whole, a high percentage of respondents are employed. Perceptions of neighborhood crime and safety vary across the County; however, for the Community as a whole, respondents report safe, drug-free, gang-free, low vandalism neighborhoods. Regarding perceived well-being, residents of the Lexington Community indicate they are better off than a year ago, a low percentage report their financial situation to be in-crisis or at-risk and a low percentage perceive their situation in life to be in-crisis or at-risk. Regarding to whom household members turn when in need, primarily across the Community, the first response is family and friends. Interestingly, the other significant responses regarding to whom individuals and families turn when in need are banks and check-cashing services. A moderate percentage of respondents rate their households' overall physical health as fair or poor. A moderately sizable percentage of respondents report at least one household member suffers from a diagnosed medical problem. A surprisingly high percentage of households report knowing someone who has a drug or substance abuse problem or who has a mental health condition.

Combined Targeted Assessment Sectors

Combining the identified Targeted Assessment Sectors (areas considered high service need/low-income) provides an opportunity to look at characteristics and human service needs of the Targeted Assessment Sectors as a whole and make comparisons with the Remaining Lexington Community Assessment Sector. The Combined Targeted Assessment Sectors are significantly different from the Remaining Lexington Community Assessment Sector on many characteristics of interest including: household size, marital status, race/ethnic origin, number of children in the household, income level, and percentage of residents below the federal poverty level and among the working poor. Likewise, all measures of neighborhood crime and safety; many indicators of economic status such as home ownership, employment, options for financial assistance, and household financial situation; and many measures of perceived well-being such as perceived situation in life, overall physical health, and whether respondent had an urgent need in past 12 months are significantly different between the Combined Targeted Assessment Sectors and the Remaining Lexington Community Assessment Sector.

Remaining Lexington Community Assessment Sector

The Remaining Lexington Community Assessment Sector is generally characteristic of the Lexington Community as a whole because of the large proportion of the Community represented within the portion of the Lexington-Fayette County area external to the identified Targeted Assessment Sectors. There are significant differences when both the *individual* and *Combined* Targeted Assessment Sectors are compared with the Remaining Lexington Community Assessment Sector. Differences are noted on several household characteristics, measures of economic status, indicators of perceived well-being, and perceptions regarding neighborhood crime and safety. Significant differences are identified for household size and marital status. In general, the Remaining Lexington Community Assessment Sector tracks closely with the Lexington Community as a whole and accentuates the contrasts between the Community as a whole and *individual* Targeted Assessment Sectors.

West Assessment Sector

Census tracts 19, 20, and 26 are within the West Assessment Sector. The area is bounded by railroad tracks on the north; S. Forbes Road and Red Mile Road on the northeast to east; S. Broadway Street on the southeast; Lane Allen Road and Alexandria Drive on the southwest; and Versailles Road to W. New Circle Road on the west. The West Assessment Sector lies southwest a couple of miles from downtown Lexington. The West Sector is significantly different from the Remaining Lexington Community Assessment Sector regarding perceived general neighborhood safety, specifically, safety while walking at night. Likewise, thefts, robberies, and drug use are perceived problems that indicate concern. A moderate percentage of households indicate their situation in life and overall household financial situation to be in-crisis or at-risk. A low percentage of households report having a child in childcare or afterschool care. A somewhat high percentage rate the households' overall physical health as fair or poor. Also, there are significant differences between the West Assessment Sector and the Remaining Lexington Community Assessment Sector regarding educational level and household income.

North Assessment Sector

Census tract 38.01 comprises the North Assessment Sector. The area is bounded by Interstates 64 and 75 on the north; Russell Cave Road on the east; W. New Circle Road on the south; and Georgetown Road on the west. The North Assessment Sector lies several miles north of downtown Lexington. The North Assessment Sector is significantly different from the Remaining Lexington Community Assessment Sector regarding average educational level of respondent, average household size, and percentage of respondents who report that at least one household member suffers from a diagnosed medical problem. On many measures, the residents of the North Sector are quite similar to the residents of the Remaining Lexington Community Assessment Sector.

North Central Assessment Sector

Census tracts 2, 11, and 12 create the North Central Assessment Sector. The area is bounded by W. New Circle on the north; Russell Cave Road, W. Loudon Avenue, and N. Limestone Street on the east; W. Third Street and Newtown Pike on the south; and W. Main Street and railroad tracks on the west. This sector lies directly north of downtown Lexington. Characteristics of the North Central Assessment Sector indicate significant differences from the Remaining Lexington Community Assessment Sector regarding several measures. The North Central Sector indicates a low percentage of married person households with approximately half of the households reporting widowed or divorced status. Household perceptions of all neighborhood crime and safety concerns, reported financial situation, and household's overall physical health indicate the North Central Assessment Sector to have greater concerns than the Remaining Lexington Community. Income, employment, and homeownership are low. Percentage of households reporting an urgent need in the past 12 months is moderate. Age of respondent is older than average. Percentages of households in poverty and among the working poor are high.

East Central Assessment Sector

Census tracts 3, 4, 14, and 15 are within the East Central Assessment Sector. The area is bounded by E. New Circle Road on the northeast; Winchester Road on the south; E. Third Street on the southwest; and N. Limestone Street on the northwest. The East Central Assessment Sector lies directly northeast of downtown Lexington. Characteristics of the East Central Sector that are significantly different from the Remaining Lexington Community Assessment Sector include marital status, homeownership, average reported income, age and educational level of respondent, and household perceptions of all neighborhood crime and safety concerns. Consistently, respondents' perceptions regarding whether financially better off than last year, reported financial situation, and perceived situation in life indicate concern as does a high level of fair to poor physical health, and report of a high level of diagnosed medical problems. Generally there are high percentages of households in poverty and within the range of working poor that exceed percentages for the Combined Targeted Assessment Sectors.

UK/Downtown Assessment Sector

Census tracts 1, 7, 8.01, 8.02, and 18 form the University of Kentucky/Downtown Assessment Sector. The area is bounded by W. Third Street and E. Third Street on the northeast; Midland Avenue, E. Main Street, Ransom Avenue, E. High Street, and Bates Creek Road on the east; Cooper Drive and Waller Avenue on the south; and S. Broadway Street, Virginia Avenue, S. Limestone Street, W. Maxwell Street, Cox Street, and Newtown Pike on the west. The UK/Downtown Assessment Sector consists of downtown Lexington and several miles of area directly south. The University of Kentucky and Downtown Sector is significantly different from the Remaining Lexington Community Assessment Sector regarding average household size, percentage of single, never married respondents, homeownership, income level, and overall household financial situation. Household perceptions of neighborhood crime and safety indicate concern regarding general neighborhood safety, especially while walking alone at night, thefts and robberies, and vandalism or graffiti.

Southeast Assessment Sector

Census tract 39.01 is the Southeast Assessment Sector. The area is bounded by Palumbo Drive on the northeast; Man O' War Boulevard on the southeast; Richmond Road on the southwest; and E. New Circle Road on the northwest. The Southeast Assessment Sector is several miles southeast of downtown Lexington. The Southeast Assessment Sector is significantly different from the Remaining Lexington Community Assessment Sector on several indicators. A high percentage report turning to family and friends when in need of financial assistance. A higher percentage of households report fair to poor physical health. Also, significantly different are households' educational level, income, homeownership, overall household financial situation, and perceived situation in life. Household perceptions of neighborhood crime and safety indicate concerns regarding drug use, gangs, thefts and robberies, and general neighborhood safety, especially while walking alone at night. The percentage of households below the federal poverty level is low, but percentage of working poor residents is high.

South Assessment Sector

Census tracts 34.04, 34.05, and 40.01 form the South Assessment Sector. The area is bounded by E. New Circle Road and Alumni Drive on the north; Man O' War Boulevard on the east and south; and Bates Creek Road on the west. The South Assessment Sector lies several miles south of downtown Lexington. The South Sector reports a few indicators that are significantly different from the Remaining Lexington Community Sector's characteristics. Reported financial situation in the in-crisis or at-risk range is lower than for most other Assessment Sectors—indicating a relatively higher perceived financial situation. Indications regarding physical health in the poor to fair range are at a moderately higher percentage than for the Remaining Lexington Community Assessment Sector. Total income is moderate, (i.e., at the high end of the Combined Targeted Assessment Sectors and low compared to the Remaining Lexington Community Assessment Sector). The average age range of respondents within the South Assessment Sector indicates a younger population. A high percentage of respondents work either full-time or part-time.

West Central Assessment Sector

Census tracts 9 and 10 create the West Central Assessment Sector. The area is bounded by W. Main Street on the northeast; Cox Street, W. Maxwell Street, and S. Limestone Street on the east; Virginia Avenue on the south; and Red Mile Road and S. Forbes Road on the west. The West Central Assessment Sector is directly southwest of downtown Lexington. This sector has a significantly different marital status than the Remaining Lexington Community Assessment Sector—a higher percentage of single, never married and a lower percentage of married households. Age of respondents is within the younger age ranges. Also, a lower percentage of households own their homes and report being better off financially than a year ago. A higher percentage report their financial situation to be in-crisis or at-risk and indicate the household turns to check-cashing services when in need of financial assistance. Average household income is low. Also, significantly different are educational level, average hours worked per week, and percent of households below the federal poverty level and among the working poor. Perceptions of neighborhood crime and safety indicate concerns regarding drug use and vandalism as problems.

