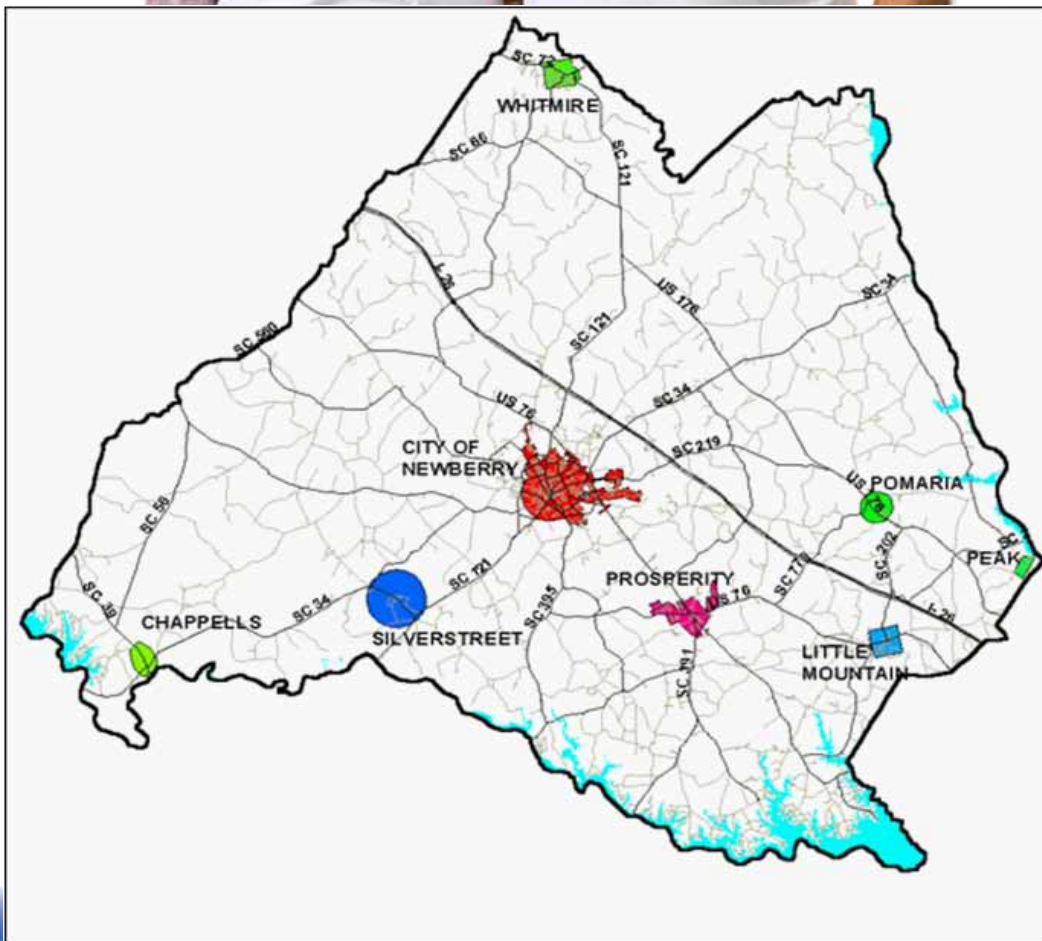


# A Community Assessment

Findings from Residents & Leaders  
of Newberry County, South Carolina



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# I. Introduction

In spring of 2009 United Way of the Midlands (UWM), with community partners completed “Facing Facts”, a comprehensive community assessment of Richland and Lexington counties. UWM uses the information from assessments like this to guide planning and implementation of community activities. Because UWM serves six counties, it is imperative to collect data that reflect the specific and different needs for each county, including Newberry.

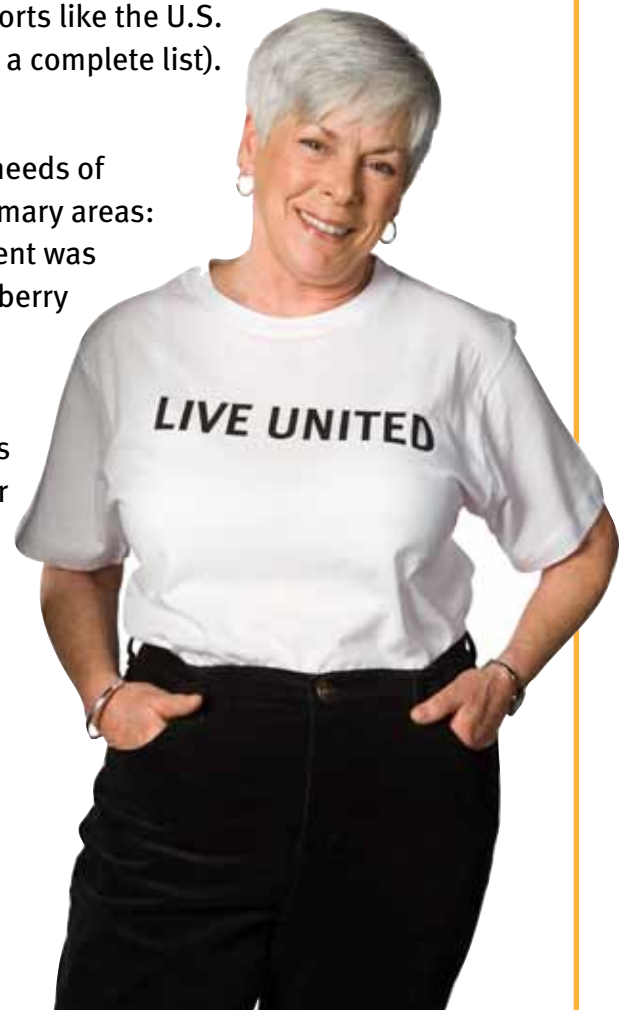
The methodology for this assessment used three sets of data: focus groups, online surveys and already existing reports. Primary data were collected from focus groups of citizens/consumers of services and through online surveys of community leaders. Forty-five community leaders of the 91 who received the survey completed it. Thirty one people participated in three focus groups in Newberry, the county seat, held at:

- Newberry County Council on Aging
- Newberry County First Steps-Learning Center
- Newberry County Housing Authority

Secondary data were collected from already existing reports like the U.S. Census Bureau and the 2008 Kids Count (see Appendix A for a complete list). All information was collected January 2010 to March 2010.

The goal of this assessment is to identify strengths and needs of Newberry County, South Carolina. UWM focuses on three primary areas: education, health care, and financial stability. This assessment was conducted purposefully to address these three areas in Newberry County.

This community assessment is in no way meant to be a complete assessment of needs in the county. There are limits to this assessment. Data were collected from a small number of participants. The hope for this assessment is that it will provide motivation and direction for the community and interested stakeholders to continue a dialogue on the needs and strengths of the community.



## II. Snapshot of the County

Newberry County is located in the Midlands region of South Carolina. Newberry County's population in 2000 was 36,108 and the 2009 estimate is 38,368 (Central Midlands Council of Governments 2009 Estimates, 2009). The population is growing and projected to be 42,310 by 2025 (Central Midlands Council of Governments Demographic Detail Summary Report, 2008). In 2000 the county population was 64.2% Caucasian, 33% African American, .1% Asian, 2.6% other and 4.5% Hispanic. The 2009 projections show the Hispanic population almost doubling. Children are a declining portion of the county's population. The most projected growth is in the 65-74 age range, accounting for an estimated 22.1% change between 2009-2014 (Central Midlands Council of Governments 2009 Estimates, 2009). The next highest age group in terms of percent of change is 25-34 with an estimated 9.3% change over the same years (Central Midlands Council of Governments 2009 Estimates, 2009).

The city of Newberry (population 10,236) is the county seat; other towns in the county include, Little Mountain (population 250), Prosperity (population 1,113) and Whitmire (population 1,607) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Newberry is a rural county within close proximity to major cities; Columbia, SC (41 miles), Greenville, SC (66 miles), Charlotte, NC (95 miles), Charleston, SC (151 miles) and Atlanta, GA (211 miles). Newberry County is the smallest of the four counties in the Midlands region with 630.77 square miles and 57.2 people per square mile, compared to the state of South Carolina which averages 133.2 people per square mile (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

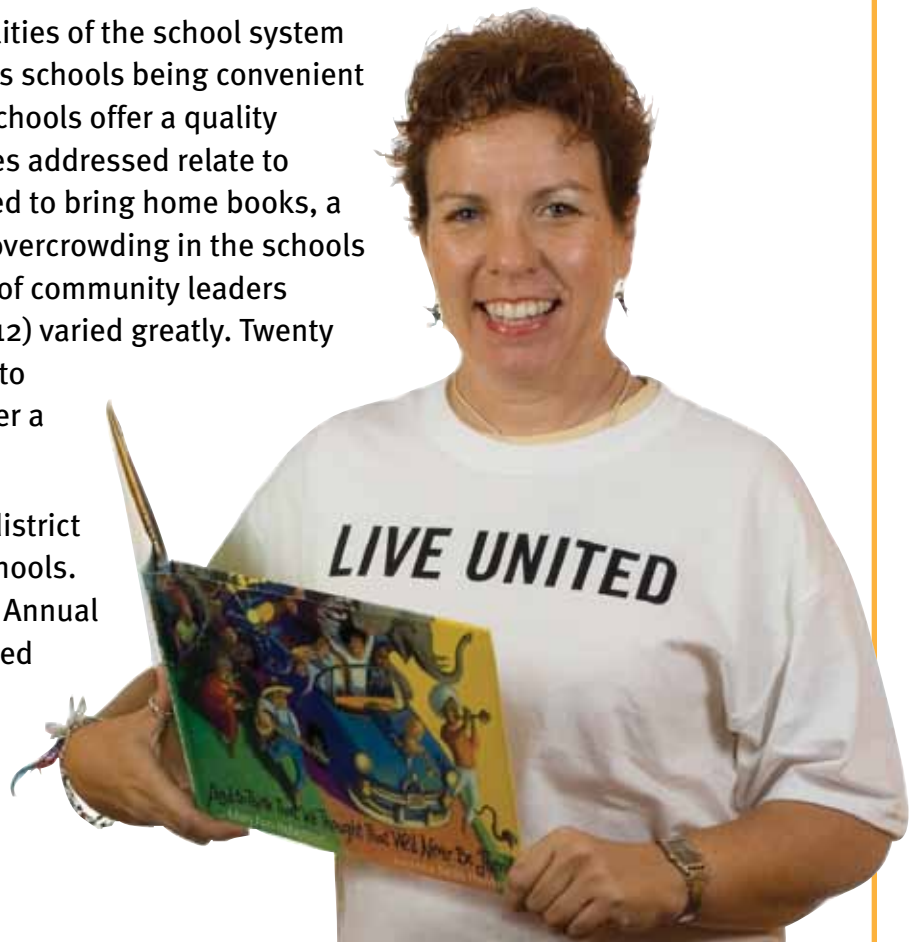


### III. Education

Education is a broad topic and it is important to look at issues that affect the whole child, not limited to academics. Consumers (participants in the focus groups) appeared to be most concerned that there is “nothing here for kids to do”. They reported need in Newberry County for more and better quality after school programs. Participants in the focus groups raised concerns about the lack of recreation opportunities. For example, there are no bowling alleys, skating rinks or movie theatres in Newberry County. There is a need for family oriented, safe places for children to spend time. This was mentioned as a problem across age groups and not just for teenagers. The county does have a recreation center and a YMCA; however, consumers reported the programs for children are not affordable for many families. Community members would like to see the afterschool programs include tutoring and help with homework. Leaders in the community share these concerns, 67.4% (n=31) see afterschool programs as either a medium or big problem. Data from a survey completed by the South Carolina Department of Social Service’s Program Quality Assistance and the University of South Carolina’s Center for Child and Family Studies also support this argument. DSS staff reported that before and after school programs meet only some of the needs in the county and the quality of these programs is only sometimes good (SC DSS Service Array Survey to Human Service Caseworkers, January 2009).

The focus groups report good qualities of the school system for kindergarten to 12th grade, such as schools being convenient to homes, facilities are nice and the schools offer a quality education. Some of the negative issues addressed relate to high school students not being allowed to bring home books, a lack of extra-curricular activities and overcrowding in the schools within the city of Newberry. Opinions of community leaders regarding the quality of education (K-12) varied greatly. Twenty reported quality of education as little to no problem and 22 reported it as either a medium or big problem.

Newberry County has one school district with a total of 5,960 students in 12 schools. According to the 2008 South Carolina Annual School Report Card, the district received an overall rating of “below average-district is in jeopardy of not meeting the standards for progress toward the 2010 SC Performance Goal” (The State of South Carolina Annual



### III. Education *(continued)*

District Report Card, 2008). The districts improvement status for the 2009-2010 school year is “corrective action”, meaning they have missed adequate yearly progress for four years. Newberry County school district is one of the 30 districts in South Carolina with this improvement status (SC Department of Education, 2009). Mid Carolina High received a rating of “good” and Newberry High School received “average” (The State of South Carolina Annual School Report Card, 2008). The on-time graduation rate for the district is 81.6% which is better than the state’s rate of 74.9% (The State of South Carolina Annual District Report Card, 2008). Newberry Middle School received the lowest rating in the district; “at-risk” (The State of South Carolina Annual School Report Card, 2008).

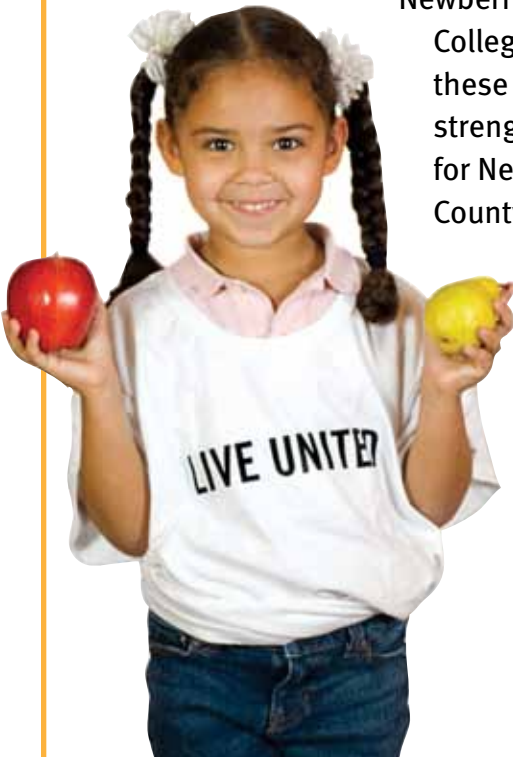
The 2008 Newberry County Kids Count reports 24.3% of students drop out which is comparable to the state at 24.5% (12th grade enrollment compared to 8th grade enrollment four years prior). The table below shows that in Newberry County, of the dropouts they have higher rates of African Americans and lower rates for Whites than in the state.

**Table 1: High School Dropout Rate by Race and Sex**

Race/Sex	Newberry	SC
African American Males	37.8%	34.7%
African American Females	22.3%	20.4%
White Males	21.5%	24.4%
White Females	13.8%	19.2%

*\*Newberry County and South Carolina Kids Count Reports, 2008*

Newberry County is home to Newberry College and Piedmont Technical College. Senior citizens report they can attend courses for free at either of these institutions. Focus group members reported these institutions are strengths for their community and that they do offer affordable education for Newberry residents. In the table below, it is clear that Newberry County is behind the state and the nation in terms of educational attainment. However, a higher percentage of Newberry’s population has a high school diploma or bachelor’s degree than neighboring Fairfield County.



**Table 2: Education Attainment**

	Newberry	Fairfield	SC	National
% high school graduate or higher	69.1%	67%	76.3%	80.4%
% bachelor’s degree or higher	14.8%	11.7%	20.4%	24.4%

*\*U.S. Census Data, QuickFacts, 2000*

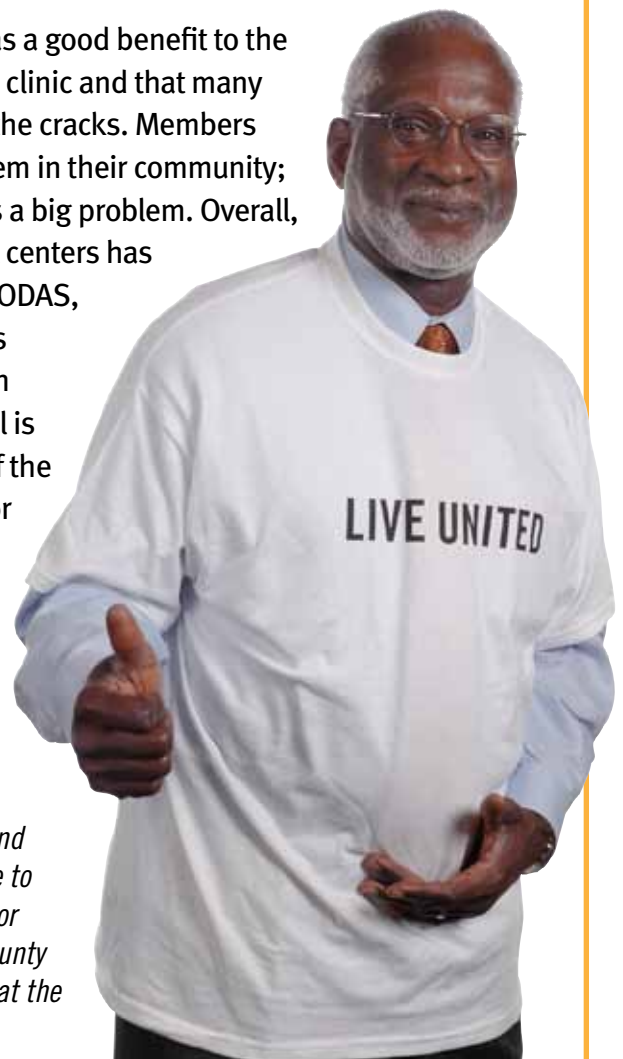
## IV. Health

When asked what makes Newberry County a good place to live, consumers report good health care including: dental care, emergency medical services and the hospital (Newberry County Memorial Hospital). One focus group reported a need for free dental services in the county. Most community leaders agree that the services in the county are effective; however the county could use more of them. Community leaders report, however, the cost of insurance (71.1%) and prescription drugs (46.7%) as a big problem for the county. A higher percentage of the population is uninsured in Newberry County than in surrounding counties and the state. These data are from the U.S. Census Bureau 2006 estimates released in August of 2009.

<b>Geographic Location</b>	<b>% Uninsured</b>
Newberry County	22.7%
Richland County	16.9%
Lexington County	18.1%
Fairfield County	16.8%
State of South Carolina	19.2%
<i>*U.S. Census Bureau, 2009</i>	

Focus group participants listed the free clinic in Newberry as a good benefit to the county, but point out limits including that there is only one free clinic and that many people do not meet the guidelines and end up falling through the cracks. Members of the focus groups only briefly mention drug abuse as a problem in their community; however 54.3% (n=25) of leaders in the community rank this as a big problem. Overall, the number of persons admitted to drug and alcohol treatment centers has declined by 17.6%\* from 2003 to 2008 in Newberry County (DAODAS, 2008). The total number of admittances in 2008 is 328 which is slightly less than 1% of the total population. Alcohol is the main substance causing admission for each year 2003-2008. Alcohol is noted as the primary problem in 140 admissions (about 43% of the total admissions) in 2008 compared to 78 for cocaine and 31 for marijuana (DAODAS, 2008). The most common characteristics of someone being admitted are male, white, age 35-44, abusing alcohol (DAODAS, 2008).

*\* Per conversation with the data manager at Westview Behavioral Health Services in Newberry this decline in admissions could be due to numerous reasons. It was reported that they do not turn away anyone and that the only area budget cuts hit hard was prevention, so they are able to serve the same amount of clients as in previous years. Reasons given for the declining admissions include: unemployment has gone up in the county and this leaves people uninsured so they may not seek services; and that the treatment services are working and fewer people are relapsing.*



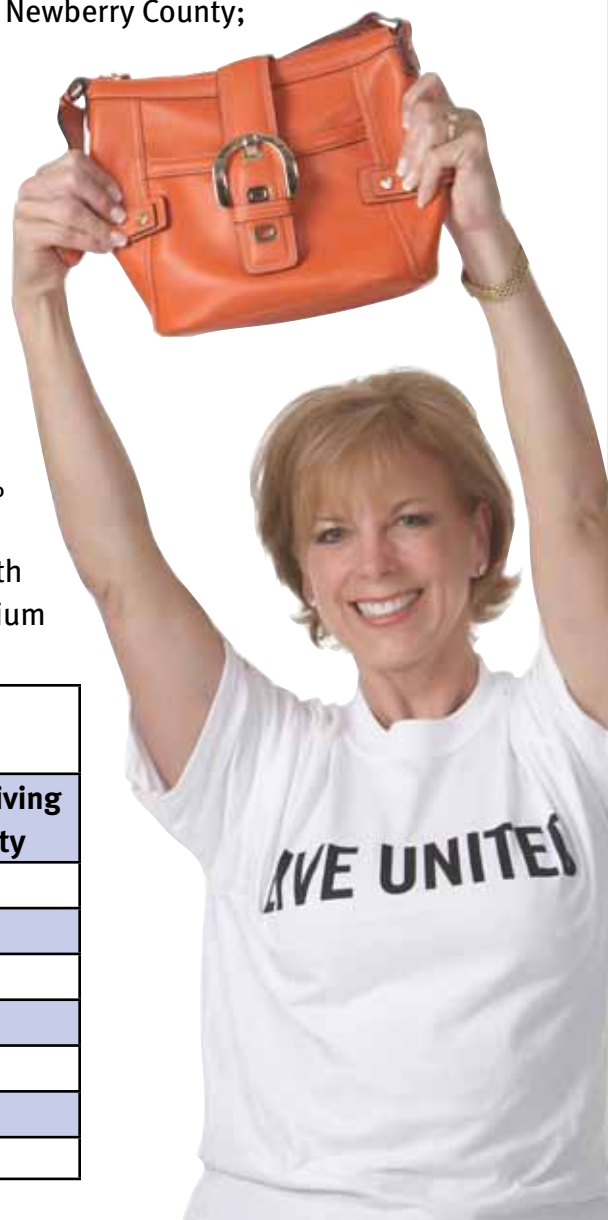
## V. Financial Stability

The number of children in poverty was estimated in 2005 to be 24.8% of all children under age 18 (Newberry County Kids Count Report, 2008). Referring to the table below, Newberry County is slightly better off than Fairfield County in terms of household income and number of people living below the poverty level, but worse relating to the other counties in the Midlands and the state as a whole.

Unemployment was the main issue reported leading to financial instability for residents in Newberry County. The lack of available, well paying jobs was rated as a big problem in Newberry County by 63% (n=29) community leaders. Participants in the focus groups reported persons with higher education levels having to go out of the county to find employment that meets their skill set. The unemployment rate as of December 2009 is 12.2% for Newberry County; compared to 12.5% for the state, 10% for Richland County, 8.7% for Lexington County and 12.9% for Fairfield County (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009).

The data shows a slightly higher percentage of Newberry County residents working outside of the county compared to the percentages for the state and country.

Other reported barriers to employment included high child care costs and no public transportation (only taxis). Public transportation was rated as a big problem by 43.5% (n=20) of community leaders. Affordable child care was seen as less of a problem by leaders in the community, with the highest number of respondents (16) rating it as a medium



**Table 4: Economic Difference between Counties, State and Country in 2007**

	<b>Median Household Income</b>	<b>% of Persons Living Below Poverty</b>
Newberry County	\$39,766	16.7%
Fairfield County	\$34,174	17.8%
Richland County	\$47,787	12.7%
Lexington County	\$51,040	10.9%
South Carolina	\$43,508	15.1%
United States	\$50,740	13.0%

*\* State & County QuickFacts, U.S. Census Bureau, 2007*

## V. Financial Stability *(continued)*

The 2000 U.S. Census data shows that the largest industry in Newberry County is manufacturing with 25.6% of the population employed in this field. The top three major manufacturing employers are: Kraft Foods (1,478), Georgia Pacific Corporation (390), and Jardin Composites (200) (Newberry County Economic Development, 2008). The second largest industry is education, health and social services at 17.8%. A loss of manufacturing plants in the county had a large, negative impact on the economy.

Some recent industries closed or with plans to close include: Renfro (January 2009); Viasystems Group, Inc.; and the Brunswick Corporation plant (July 2008). There have also been lay offs in recent years. In April 2009, Mayor Carroll of Whitmire reported that this is the first time Whitmire has been completely without industry. There are some promising companies moving into the county, including OTR Wheel Engineering, Inc. who announced in January 2010 their plan for locating a facility in Whitmire. The Newberry County Economic Development website ([www.newberrycountysc.gov](http://www.newberrycountysc.gov)) reports news of Dalkotech and Rollcast Energy planning new facilities in Newberry County as well as the opening of a Small Business Development Center in 2009.

Newberry County offers employment training and services at the Newberry County Workforce Center- One Stop and the Center for Advanced Technology Training (CATT). The CATT offers facilitation services between companies that are starting up in South Carolina and training or recruiting employees for these specific companies needs (Newberry County Economic Development, 2006).

**Table 5: Working in County of Residence vs. Outside**

Place of Work	Newberry	Fairfield	SC	US
In county of residence	65.1%	49.6%	72.4%	73.3%
Outside of county of residence	34.1%	47.4%	22.9%	23.1%

\* U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

# VI. Conclusion

Overall there was a sense of satisfaction among the residents living in Newberry County. They identified areas that could be improved, but the outlook was not hopeless. For the most part, focus group participants were happy living in Newberry County and were satisfied with the services offered in the county. This trend is demonstrated by the following table which displays community leaders’ opinions on the county by their indicating if they agree or disagree on seven separate statements. Some responded “do not know”.

While this assessment has mainly focused on the current needs in Newberry County, the strengths and resources should not be forgotten. All focus groups stressed a strong sense of community and 78.2% of community leaders also agree that this is true for Newberry County. The most common assets of Newberry County as described by community leaders included: its people; location (including climate, close to major cities and highway access); natural beauty, recreation opportunities and tourism; safe community with good law enforcement services; good schools and educational opportunities.

As previously stated it is important to remember that this community assessment is not a complete look at the county. The sample was a small, convenience sample. The sample of participants in the focus groups over represents women, older adults and residents of the city of Newberry. This assessment should be used as a starting point to addressing the needs in Newberry County and to begin conversation on what changes are realistic and feasible for the community.

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
There are a sufficient number of health and social services in Fairfield County.	69.5%	26.1%
Newberry County is a good place to raise children.	82.6%	13%
Newberry County is a good place to grow old.	88.8%	8.9%
Newberry County has a strong sense of community.	78.2%	21.7%
Newberry County citizens are motivated and ready to make significant changes to improve the quality of life for all citizens.	52.2%	47.8%
There is economic opportunity in Newberry County.	39.1%	56.6%
Newberry County is a safe place to live.	82.6%	15.2%

# Appendix A: References

The secondary data collected came from the following sources:

- 2008 Kids Count including First Steps to Success and Success by Seventeen in Newberry County
- Central Midlands Council of Governments Region Report 2004 and 2009 Estimates
- South Carolina Community Profiles: Newberry County Profile (uses 2000 US Census data)
- South Carolina Mature Adults Count: 2003 Newberry County Report
- U.S. Census Bureau
- Newberry County Young Adult Report 2002
- South Carolina Department of Education, Office of Federal and State Accountability
- 2008 School Report Cards
- United Way's 2002 Community Assessment for Fairfield and Newberry
- Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services, 2008
- The Newberry Observer, "National news focuses on Whitmire: Interviews mayor, Renfro worker to put a face on 'Main Street' " (April 2009); "Wheel builders roll into Whitmire" (February 2010)
- The State, "Newberry County Plant Closes; 570 Out of Work: Outlook Bleak With S.C. Jobless Rate Still Soaring", January 31, 2009
- 1998 Newberry County Comprehensive Plan
- Newberry County Economic Development, <http://www.newberrycountysc.org/>
- SC DSS Service Array Survey to Human Service Caseworkers, January 2009, for more information and to get a full report of the results please contact Diana M Tester, SC Dept. of Social Services, 1535 Confederate Avenue, Columbia, SC 29202-1520, Telephone:(803) 898-7512, Fax: (803) 898-7793, E-Mail: [Diana.Tester@dss.sc.gov](mailto:Diana.Tester@dss.sc.gov)

# Appendix B: Methodology

## Focus Groups:

Focus groups were held at Newberry County First Steps- The Learning Center, Newberry County Council on Aging and Newberry County Housing Authority. In total, there were 31 people who attended the focus groups and 30 of those filled out demographic information. Of the respondents 100% (n=29) live in Newberry County and the average time lived in the county is 54.9 years. Only one respondent lives in a rural part of the county, outside the city of Newberry. Only 12 people responded to the question about annual household income and highest level of education. Out of those 12, 75% (n=9) have a total annual household income under \$15,000 and 33.3% have an Associates degree or higher. All participants were female and the average age of participants is 65.5 years. African Americans represented 53.3% (n=30) of participants and Caucasians made up the rest at 46.6% (n=14).

Each participant was told the purpose of this assessment and signed a voluntary informed consent. The focus groups were facilitated by UWM staff. The information was collected through a series of opened questions. Questions discussed: What do you like about living in Fairfield County or what are the advantages to living in Fairfield County?, What are disadvantages, problems, needs or barriers in the community?, Out of these problem areas which are most important and can be realistically improved? What kinds of services are most needed in Newberry County and who could provide these?



# Appendix B: Methodology *(continued)*

## Community Leader Online Survey:

Survey Monkey was utilized to create this survey and then the survey was distributed out through email to 91 people considered leaders in the community. These stakeholders or leaders were identified through UWM staff, the Newberry County Multi-Agency Group and government officials. The survey targeted those who are directors of agencies, board members, service providers and members of government. Forty-five surveys were completed. Out of those who completed the survey, 83% (n=39) live in Newberry County and out of those who live in the county, 61.5% (n=24) have lived in Newberry County for over 20 years. Other demographic information about those who took the surveys: 82.2% (n=37) are employed full time, 81.4% (n=35) are married, 68.2% (n=30) are female, 82.2% (n=37) Caucasian and 17.8% (n=8) African American (no other races reported). About Sixty-one percent (n= 26) make \$70,000 or over and 84.4% (n= 38) have obtained a four year college degree (BA/BS) or higher.

The survey included questions about barriers to service, the community's greatest strengths or assets, issues that can feasibly be improved and the statements listed in Table 5. The survey listed 25 issues and had two questions related to these issues. The first question was to rate how big of a problem the issue was using a likert scale of "not a problem at all", "little problem", medium problem", "big problem" or "do not know". For the second question, also using a likert scale, the leader had to select the best answer for each issue from "No services available", "Services are available, but they are not effective", "Effective services exist, but there are not enough available", "Services fully meet the need", "Do not know".

## The 25 issues on the survey are as follows:

- Healthcare
- Access to health insurance
- Cost of health insurance
- Availability of dental care
- Access to dental care (especially for low income individuals)
- Cost of prescription drugs
- Consistent, reliable transportation to work
- Transportation for people with special needs
- Public transportation
- Quality childcare
- Affordable childcare
- Adult literacy
- Afterschool programs
- Quality of education (K-12)
- Family violence
- Parenting programs/ supports
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Mental health services
- Available, well-paying jobs
- Available, educated workforce
- Local media (radio, television, newspaper and internet access)
- Affordable housing
- Homelessness
- Crime
- Coordination among service providers to address community needs

2009-10

# Your Contributions in Action



## What does United Way do?

United Way of the Midlands is a nonprofit, volunteer-driven organization that unites donors, companies, volunteers, partner agencies, and other organizations to improve lives and achieve measurable results that make our community stronger in Calhoun, Fairfield, Lexington, Newberry, Orangeburg and Richland counties.

## United Way achieves this by doing two things:

- 1) Helping people in need right now through ongoing support of dozens of essential local programs
- 2) Working to eliminate future needs by fixing underlying causes that negatively impact student success, homelessness, financial stability and access to health care.

United Way has a unique ability to help us come together as a community to identify and address the issues that take everyone to solve. Those issues, like making sure children are ready to start school, keeping kids in school through high school graduation and beyond, providing dental care and access to primary care for at risk children and families, and helping families become more financially stable, cross lines of race, gender, geography, faith and economic status and therefore require us to work together to ensure positive and systemic change. Your contribution is combined with those made by others to impact our community in ways no single organization or individual can.

## Where does the money go?

United Way of the Midlands works to promote lasting change in the areas of EDUCATION, INCOME and HEALTH. We target issues such as homelessness, student success and access to health care. We recognize that there are basic things we all need for a good life: a quality education that leads to a stable job, income that can support a family through retirement, and good health.

## Community Impact Resources in the Midlands for 2009-10

Education	\$1,372,289
Financial Stability	\$3,589,614
Health	\$995,231
2-1-1, Increasing Volunteerism & Strengthening Community Organizations	\$1,460,860
Designations to Partner Agencies	\$2,789,434

**Total: \$10,107,428**



**WHEN WE REACH OUT A HAND TO ONE WE AFFECT THE CONDITION OF ALL.**

