

Focus on the Inner City Report on a Community Survey Fact Sheet

September 2010



FACTS & FINDINGS

- The number of people living in poverty in Hamilton's downtown core is 40% greater than those living in other neighborhoods or areas in Hamilton
- 94% of the women responding to the survey who were worried that their food would run out before they have money to buy more reported having responsibility for one or more dependents; 90% of those had to access food banks in the past year
- Almost 40% of survey respondents did not know their rights as a tenant
- 47% of survey respondents report not working in a safe environment or not knowing if their workplace is safe

Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre is an inner agency providing health and health related services and programs to individuals, families, groups and communities.

Hamilton Urban Core reaches out to individuals, families, groups and communities who are marginalized, and often excluded, and who experience tremendous barriers to accessing the services and information they need to maintain good health and actively participate in the life of the community.

The quality of services provided by the Centre is as important as the range and relevance of services. Quality service is also directly linked to learning about and understanding the needs of the community and responding effectively. For this reason Hamilton Urban Core decided to conduct a community survey as one way in which to hear about the experiences and concerns of individuals, community groups, service providing agencies and organizations.

The community survey focused primarily on the area defined by Hamilton Wards 2, 3 and 4. This particular area was chosen because it is consistent with Hamilton Urban Core's primary service area and aligned with the Centre's commitment to outreaching to the most marginalized individuals and communities.

GENDER IDENTIFIED BY SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Female	Male
61%	39%

POPULATION BY CITY WARDS

City Wards	Population Size
Ward 2	37,815
Ward 3	39,910
Ward 4	35,635

Surveys were distributed to the general public across Wards 2, 3, and 4 and 200 surveys were completed and returned. Twenty-seven community agencies and organizations responded to an online survey, 6 focus groups were held and two key informant interviews conducted with a focus on the specific issues related to immigrants and refugees.

The community survey focused on six areas:

Employment Housing
Mental Health Racism
Food Security Transportation

FOOD SECURITY

Poverty is the Greatest Health Risk We Face

53% of survey respondents reported being worried every month or most months that there was not enough money to buy food for the entire month.

IN THE PAST YEAR HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU BEEN WORRIED THAT FOOD WOULD RUN OUT BEFORE YOU HAD ENOUGH MONEY TO BUY MORE FOOD?

Almost Every Month	Some Months	1 or 2 months	Never	No Response
34.5%	19%	14.5%	29.5%	2.5%

“While medical care can prolong survival and improve prognosis after some serious diseases, more important for the health of the population as a whole are the social and economic conditions that make people ill and in need of medical care in the first place.” (WHO)

“I have worked all of my life; now I have to go on welfare just to get medication...it’s ridiculous.”

- Focus Group Participant

“Poverty is a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services.”

Indicators of Poverty & Hunger

For a copy of the full report : “Focus in the Inner City: Report on a Community Survey” or for information please call 905-522-3233 or send an email to:

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“Good health involves reducing levels of education failure, reducing insecurity and unemployment and improving housing standards. Societies that enable citizens to play a full and useful role in the social, economic and cultural life of their society will be healthier than those where people face insecurity, exclusion and deprivation.”

World Health Organization

HOUSING

The Public Health Agency of Canada defines “affordable housing” as those who only pay 30% of their income on housing.

HOW MUCH OF YOUR INCOME IS SPENT ON RENT OR MORTGAGE?

Less than Half	Half	More than Half	Almost All	Don’t Know	No Response
8.5%	16%	39%	20.5%	12%	4%

GAPS IN SERVICES, SUPPORTS OR INFORMATION IDENTIFIED BY PARTICIPANTS

- Community education regarding food donations
- Availability of fresh fruits and vegetables
- Programs that provide options for affordable food
- Safe affordable housing
- Jobs that pay a living wage
- Alternative education options
- Adequate, timely, affordable, reliable public transportation
- Accessible process for recognition and evaluation of skills, education and experience related immigrants and refugees
- Health practitioners who are culturally competent to provide holistic, client-centered health care

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation refers to the various ways in which people are able to move around the city. 72% of the survey participants identified the bus as their primary mode of transportation.

An adult bus pass in Hamilton is \$87 per month.

35% of the participants indicated that they cannot afford to take the bus when they need to.

EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Income and employment were identified by participants as stressors. Racism, language barriers and discrimination registered very high as causing stress for respondents.

41% of respondent indicated a need to speak to a health professional about their stress; 49% indicated they did not need to do so.

However, when asked if they did in fact speak to a health professional about their stress 66% responded that they did not.