

Central Florida Indicators of Community Health - 2008



POLIS

Angie Winn

Philip Hissom

Amy Lauger

Jennie Hissom

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P O L I S was formed in 2006 as a partnership between CNL Financial Group, Reformed Theological Seminary, and Lifework Leadership to evaluate the needs of Central Florida residents, the resources addressing those needs, and to provide recommendations for action. Our initial research revealed geographic concentration of problems and very few geographically focused efforts to address the problems. Those entities that focused geographically tended to be isolated from outside resources and ineffective. We discovered 3800 non-profits in Central Florida that were established to meet human needs in some way. Most of these efforts were focused on providing immediate relief or developing individual skills and did not collaborate with other groups to provide their services. Most of these entities also lacked the resources to develop their leaders, create and implement a long range plan, or measure the effectiveness of their programs.

In sum, POLIS recommends a concerted effort to increase investment in the distressed neighborhoods of the city and to increase the effectiveness of the service entities in the city. If strategic investment is directed towards neighborhoods and holistic service entities, the city will be strengthened and we will see measurable progress in the Indicators of Community Health discussed in this report. POLIS has developed a model to provide such strategic investment. For more information about the model and our products and services visit www.polisinstitute.org.

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Executive Summary

The current and future conditions of Central Florida have been primary on the minds of many citizens of our region, especially in light of our current economic crisis. Many residents of Central Florida are experiencing tremendous financial hardship due to factors such as rising healthcare and childcare costs, unemployment, and high housing costs. The unemployment rate in the United States steadily declined from 2003 to 2007 but has sharply increased in the past several months. In November 2008, the rate reached a 15-year high of 6.7%, a clear indication of a deepening recession.

Organizations from business, government, and nonprofit sectors are acutely aware of the difficulties facing our region and are involved in numerous efforts to contribute to a positive quality of life in Central Florida. This 2008 Indicators Report is intended to provide readers with a brief understanding of the state of Central Florida and the resources currently working to meet the challenges of our region.

We frame the report through three lenses by which the reader can view our region. We begin with providing a lens of a set of indicators by which to gauge community health or distress, and we compare them across Central Florida neighborhoods and counties, the state of Florida, and the United States. These indicators are interrelated and provide meaningful and timely information about common issues that contribute to the distressed conditions in our neighborhoods.

The second lens by which we view the community is place. Many efforts toward community transformation emphasize the problems or issues without a true understanding of the impacts these issues have on places, as well as the tendency of these impacts to concentrate geographically. When focusing on solving problems, there are both responsibilities and opportunities that present themselves in specific neighborhoods and locations that must not be ignored.

The third section of the report provides a lens of hope and focuses on efforts already in place to help build and rebuild communities. We also present the challenges our region continues to face as efforts tend to focus on relief and individual development at the expense of long-term community development and structural change. Relief efforts are critical to communities but provide a greater impact when the efforts also focus on discovering and nurturing the assets of those they serve.

In conclusion, we offer a specific charge to citizens and leaders alike to collaborate in efforts across sectors, commit to particular neighborhoods, and find dignified committed ways to serve our Central Florida neighbors and strengthen the assets within neighborhoods. We are at a crucial time in these economic conditions and we implore everyone to be more strategic and inclusive in their approaches to meeting the needs of our region. It is time for both giving and receiving, for all of us to see our own needs and assets, and to rely on each other through relationships for material, emotional, and spiritual strength.

Section I: Indicators

Measuring the Health of a Community

Measuring the health of a community is a complex and difficult task. Quantitative variables measured by the Census Bureau and other statistical organizations only tell a piece of the story for a particular neighborhood or region. Although data may reveal much about the demographic and economic detail of a neighborhood, it cannot give the full story of a community. It cannot tell us about a neighborhood's hopes, sense of community, and spiritual vitality.

However, as citizens who are called to understand, know, and love our city, we must have some way of objectively viewing the state of our neighborhoods. This more readily quantifiable information helps us to see disparities, challenges, and potential assets.

To measure community health, we have identified six indicators that show what is happening throughout Central Florida:

- Family
- Income
- Housing
- Education
- Individual Health
- Safety

These indicators are interrelated, and should not be analyzed, reviewed, or communicated in isolation. For instance, if someone were to focus only on the healthcare indicator, they would miss the fact that high housing costs are keeping many families homeless because they have to choose between housing and medical needs.

The indicators we chose are representative rather than exhaustive, and certainly many other factors are worth our consideration. However, the six indicators we chose to study serve as key components for assessing community health.

Throughout this section of the report we will present graphs that show statistical information for United States, Florida, Central Florida, Orange and Seminole Counties, and NH-1 and NH-2, the latter two representing two neighborhoods in Orange County. Both of these neighborhoods are located in the downtown area of Orlando and are only a few miles away from each other. The neighborhood names are not listed in order to respect the confidentiality and dignity of the citizens residing in these neighborhoods. If you would like more information regarding these neighborhoods, please contact us.

We will also present stories of real people residing in Central Florida to give the reader a human picture that represents the challenges people face in the context of the indicator.

Family

The family is the foundation and cornerstone of a community. The breakdown of the family affects all facets of community health on a greater scale than any of the other indicators. The ability for a parent to provide income, housing, educational opportunities, and emotional support becomes a greater challenge when the other parent is absent. The family indicator correlates with all other indicators, in that when there are more single-parent households in a community, the health of the other indicators decline.

Findings

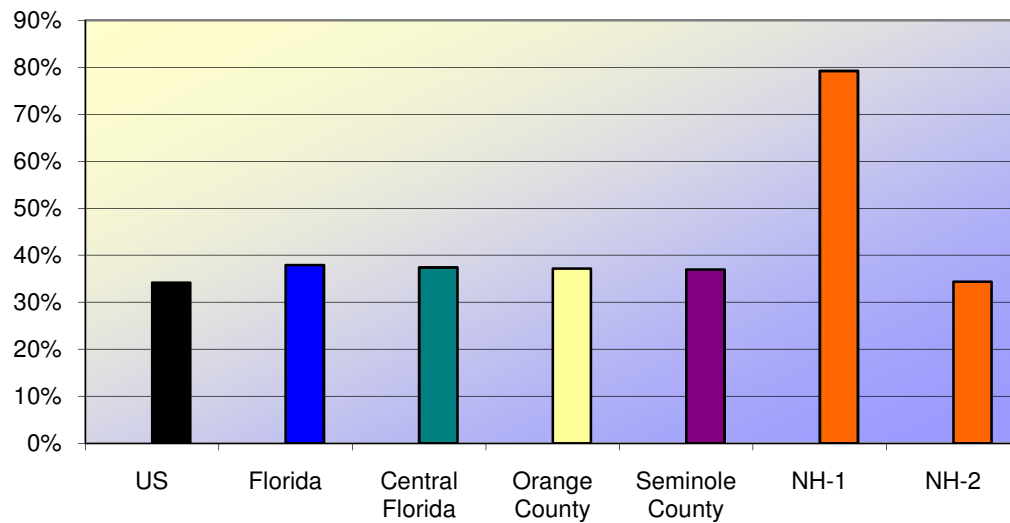
The stability of the family is essential to healthy individuals and communities. According to Princeton Sociologist Dr. Sara McLanahan, growing up in a single-parent home is a stronger predictor for living in persistent poverty than other factors, including education.¹ The inter-generational cycle of poverty is apparent from the probability that children of single parents will be single parents themselves and the high correlation between single-parent households and poverty.

- Children in one-parent families are eleven times more likely to experience persistent poverty than children in two-parent families.²
- ***73% of all children from one-parent families fall into poverty at some point in their childhood versus 20% of children in two-parent families.***³
- Exposure to single motherhood at some point during adolescence increases the risk of a daughter later becoming a single mother by nearly 150%.⁴
- Children who live absent their biological fathers are at least two to three times more likely to be poor, to use drugs, to experience educational, health, emotional and behavioral problems, to be victims of child abuse, and to engage in criminal behavior than their peers who live with their married, biological (or adoptive) parents.⁵

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states that children of single parents make up 63% of youth suicides and 90% of all homeless and runaway children. ***The U.S. Department of Justice states that 70% of juveniles in state-operated institutions come from fatherless homes.***⁶

Picture of Our Community

Figure 1: 2007 Single Parent Families



Source: Mappoint 2009

Rosie is a mother of two from Puerto Rico whose family moved to Orlando so she could be close to her mother. After some time in Orlando, her husband left her and the children without any money or support. Although she had been working since her children were born, her income alone was not enough to support her family, so she worked two jobs while her mother took care of the kids at night. When her mother passed away, she found herself with no support system or network. It became impossible to take care of her children while working night shifts, so she lost her second job. Her primary job's wages were not enough to cover rent, childcare, and other bills, so she quickly found herself homeless with her two children.

Income

Income levels indicate the ability for people to sustain true life. When income levels are low, obtaining housing, transportation, healthcare, and even food becomes a critical challenge for families. Educational background, transportation availability, proximity to work, housing options, and childcare options for families all affect an individual's wages, employment opportunities, and employment levels.

Findings

Procuring and maintaining employment are the main needs for securing income. Central Florida has typically enjoyed a considerably lower unemployment rate than the national average, but as of September 2008 the local rate was a high 6.5%.⁷

Of Central Florida employers surveyed in the State of the Workforce 2008 Report, 71% indicated that it is a major challenge to hire qualified workers. The employers also indicated that available childcare, workforce housing, public transportation, training, and public education are important issues for attracting and retaining our workforce in our region.⁸

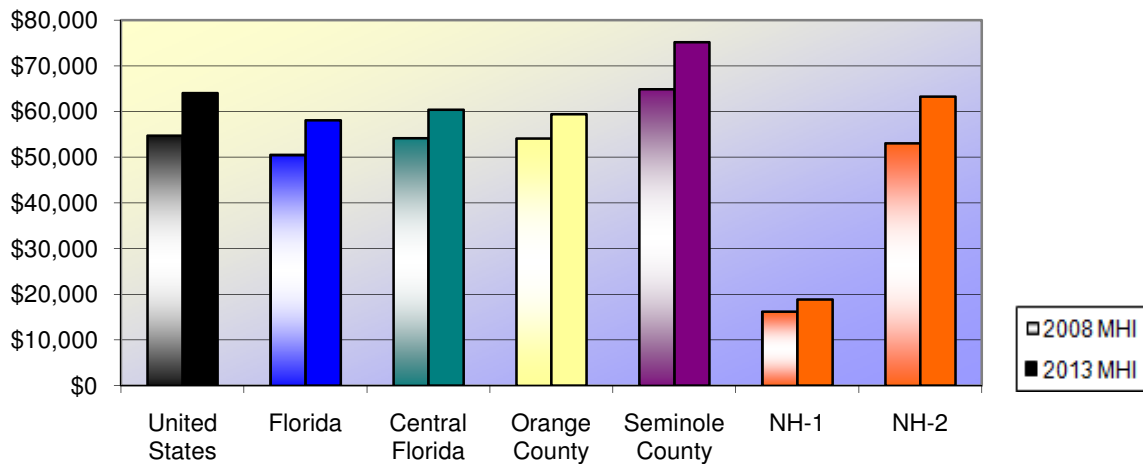
Even when people are employed, they are often challenged with low wages. More than 50% of all jobs in Central Florida are in professional services, education, leisure, and retailing, which pay at or close to minimum wage. The average income for accommodation and food service industry in the United States is \$25,172.⁹ According to federal poverty thresholds, a family with two adults and two children is in poverty if its income is below \$21,200.¹⁰ ***Locally, 22.6% of Central Florida residents and 68% of residents living in NH-1 are in poverty.***¹¹

However, the federal poverty thresholds are widely considered too low, and in reality, much more money is needed to provide for families. Many factors contribute to financial hardship, including the rise of housing, healthcare, and childcare costs. Many researchers have developed the idea of a "living wage," an alternative to the poverty thresholds to indicate better the income needed by a household to sustain itself. ***According to the Economic Policy Institute, a family of four in the Central Florida area needs \$46,398 annually, or \$22.31 an hour at full-time, simply to make ends meet.***¹² These wages are over three times more than Florida's current minimum wage at \$6.67 an hour. The Occupational Employee Statistics and Wages states that the median wage for Central Florida region for 2008 is \$14.09 per hour.¹³

As of 2008, the estimated median household income for the US is estimated to be \$54,749, while in Central Florida it was \$54,195, and in NH-1 it was only \$16,252.¹⁴

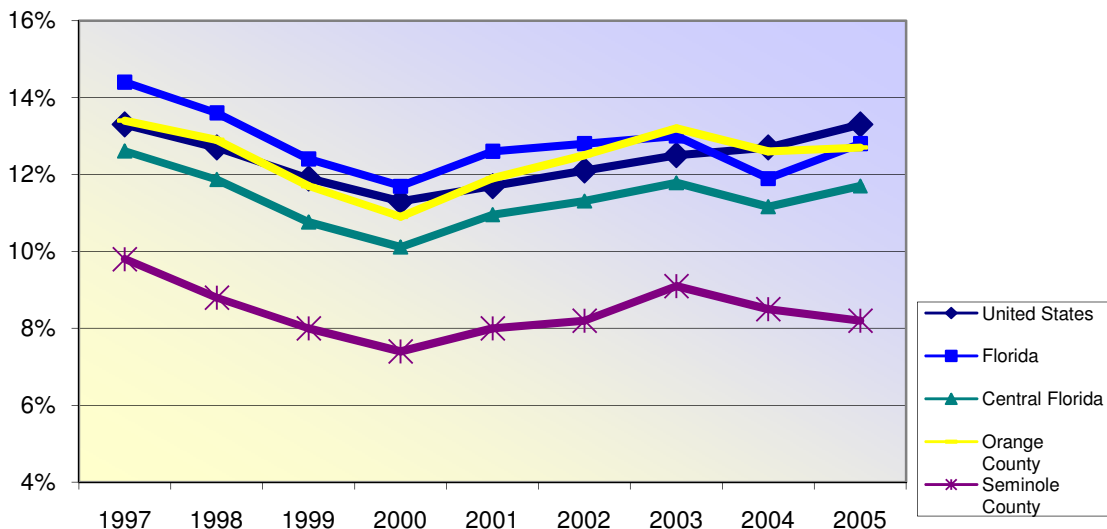
Picture of Our Community

Figure 2: 2008 and 2013 Projected Median Household Income



Source: ESRI

Figure 3: Regional Trends: Poverty Rate



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Jennifer is a 26-year-old single mother with a 2-and-a-half-year-old son and is surviving paycheck to paycheck. She has an associate's degree in film production technology from Valencia Community College and works as a freelance lighting technician. In June, Wilson's gynecologist diagnosed her with a condition that led to costly doctor's office and hospital visits, medications and ultimately a positive test for cancer. As a freelancer, she has no health insurance and found herself in a position where she couldn't get any help. Her earnings are around \$14,000 a year. Additionally, her son's father is supposed to pay \$500 monthly in child support, which she only receives about half the time. On paper the child support increases her annual income by \$6,000, which renders her ineligible for several government assistance programs. Her rent is almost \$11,000 annually – for a house she moved into after Hurricane Charley destroyed her West Orlando residence in 2004. If she misses a utility payment, Department of Children and Families could take her child.¹⁵

Housing

The housing indicator includes many issues including housing affordability, housing availability, the consequences of low homeownership rates on individuals and communities, and the dire situations individuals and families find themselves in when homeless.

Findings

The ability to afford housing, whether rented or owned, has become a prominent concern in many parts of the nation including Central Florida. The lack of affordable housing contributes to homelessness, continual relocation which in turn affects education, and the ability to pay for healthcare and medical issues. Housing is considered affordable if its price is 30% or less of a household's gross income. Those spending more than 50% on housing costs are called "severely burdened." ***In every county in Central Florida, over half of the residents are in the "severely burdened" category for housing costs, while 75,000-80,000 individuals are living on the edge of losing their home.***¹⁶ When more than 30% of income is required for housing, individuals are forced to take portions from their salary needed for other essentials, such as food, healthcare and childcare costs, and apply it to housing.

- The housing wage, or the minimum full-time income needed to afford housing at a fair market rent, is now \$36,600 annually or around \$17.00 per hour. Earning this wage, an individual could afford a two-bedroom unit. An individual working at the current minimum wage would need to work over 100 hours each week in order to afford the same housing.¹⁷
- In 2006, there were over 7,000 homeless individuals per night in Central Florida. Of these, 20% are chronically homeless.¹⁸
- ***45% of homeless individuals are employed every day,¹⁹ yet they still cannot obtain affordable housing.***

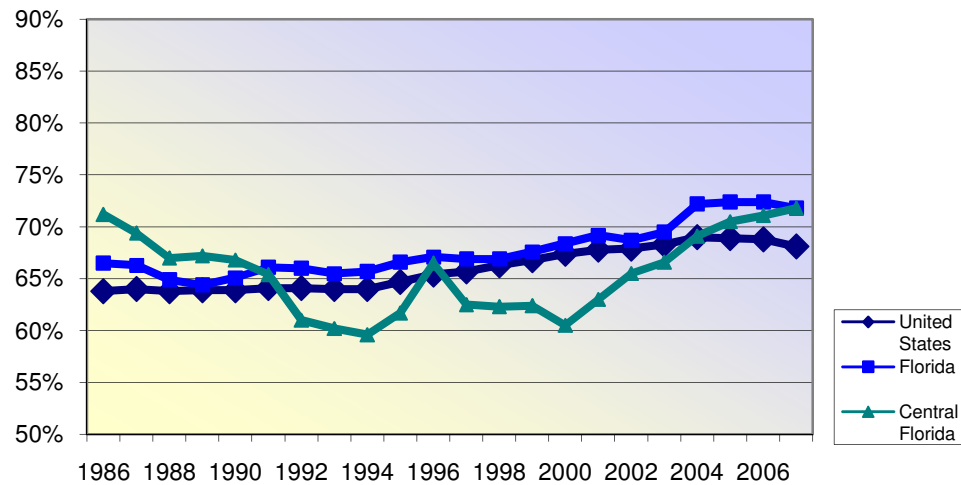
According to the federal document titled "Proposed Fair Market Rents for Fiscal Year 2008 (Schedule B)," someone would need to make \$15.40 per hour in order to rent a one bedroom apartment at the fair market rent rate of \$801 per month in Central Florida."²⁰ An individual working at the current minimum wage of \$6.67 per hour would need to work 92 hours each week in order to afford the same housing.

The Orange County School District estimates that at least 2,000 children are homeless in Orange County.²¹ ***Families with children are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population, with children making up 28% of the homeless population.***²²

In neighborhoods with low homeownership rates, individuals tend to move frequently since many landlords raise their rent unexpectedly, requiring individuals to seek new places to live. Low homeownership rates can also lead to high vacancy rates. Vacant homes are sometimes used for drug sales and other illegal activities, which lessens a neighborhood's ability to thrive.

Picture of Our Community

Figure 4: Regional Trends: Homeownership Rate



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

A gifted artist and working father of four, Dennis MacLaren stated “my father always told me that if I worked hard, then I would always be okay. That just isn’t always true.” He and his wife both found themselves with pay cuts in the country’s post 9/11 economic downturn, and after years of struggling to pay their mortgage, lost their home. They spent months living in friends’ houses, and finally in the car, before they found safe haven at the Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida, where unlike at other shelters, the entire family was able to remain together. Using services provided by the Coalition, the family survived for two years and now have graduated from emergency shelter and transitional housing back into the community.

Education

According to MyRegion.org, education is the “backbone for strategies to increase a region’s quality of life.”²³ Education is a critical indicator because it reflects the future of our workforce. If education quality is low, students will not have access to higher paying jobs that boost the economy and help communities flourish.

Findings

The health and vitality of Central Florida’s schools is of utmost importance for the overall health of region. The state of Florida and the Central Florida region lag behind the rest of the nation in the quality of public education.²⁴ The National Report Card of the National Assessment of Educational Progress reports that while Central Florida’s 4th graders measure up to the national average in the fields of reading and math, by the time they reach 8th grade they have fallen below the national average in both of these subjects.²⁵

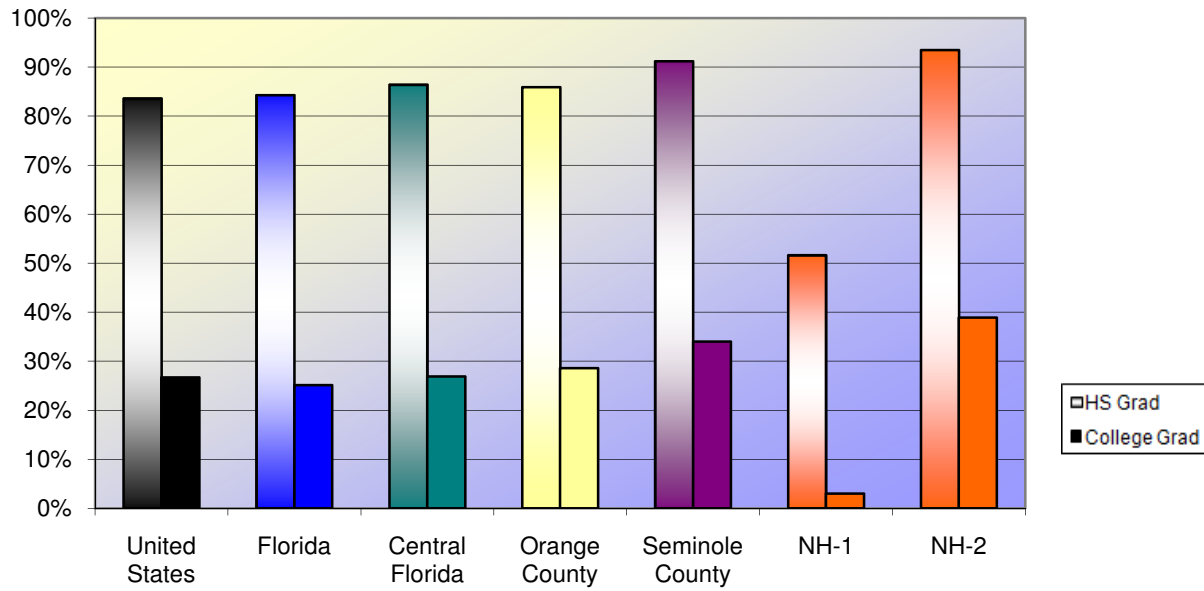
- The American Legislative Exchange Council ranks Florida 37 out of 50 in academic achievement.²⁶
- In 2008, NH-1’s local elementary school received a school grade of “F” and the high school received a grade of “D.” Meanwhile, the elementary school in NH-2 received a “B” and the high school an “A.”²⁷
- The average mobility rate for elementary school students in Orange County is 52%, which contributes to the poor quality of education for students who do not have a stable environment in which to learn.²⁸
- **68% of state prison inmates did not receive a high school diploma.**²⁹

Funding for Central Florida education may contribute to the lower academic achievement shown by these statistics. **Florida ranks 40th in terms of expenditures per pupil and 37th for National Rank of Academic Achievement.**³⁰ Another challenge to the success of Central Florida students is the frequency with which some are moved from school to school due to gentrification, housing costs and family instability.

School performance should be viewed in relation to the other indicators, such as the percentage of the area population living below poverty in order to examine possible correlations. In Orange County, 77 out of 98 schools had 50% of their students eligible for free or reduced lunch in 2007. Of the schools which had more than 90% of the students eligible for free or reduced lunch, 77% of them had a school grade of C or lower.³¹ This shows a clear correlation between academic effectiveness and poverty. A self-perpetuating cycle exists as poor children are more likely to receive a poor education and thus remain in a state of poverty as they become adults.

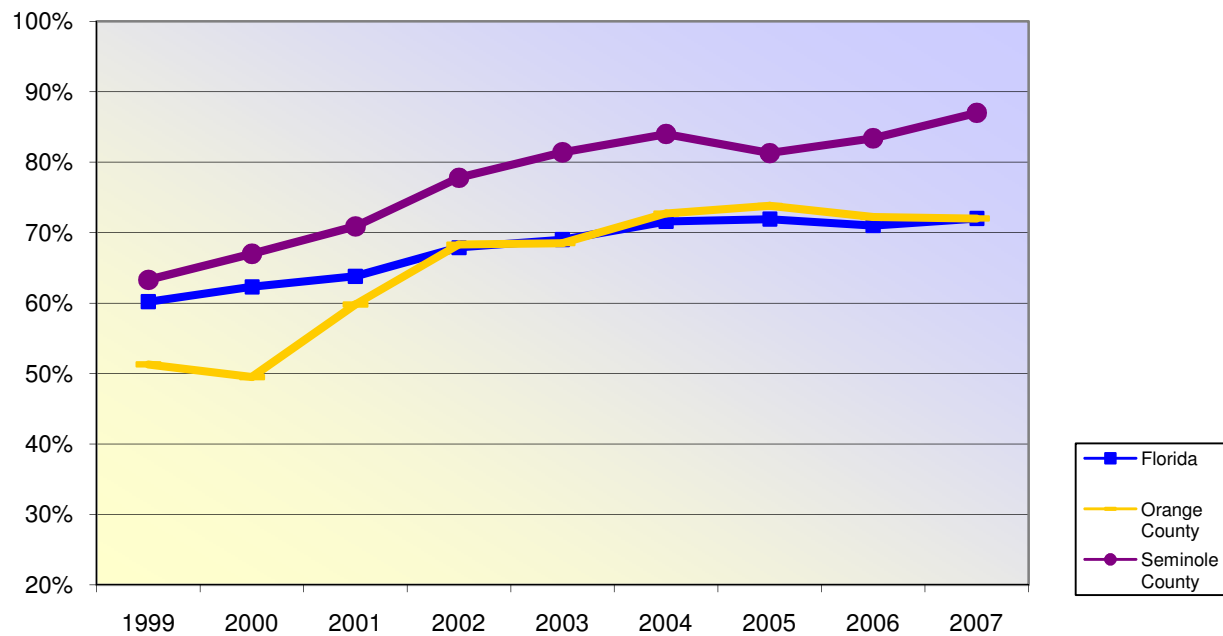
Picture of Our Community

Figure 5: 2008 Adults Who are High School and College Graduates



Source: ESRI

Figure 6: Regional Trends: High School Graduation Rates



Source: Florida Department of Education

Individual Health

The health of individual citizens contributes to the overall health of communities. Many residents of distressed communities suffer from poor health and nutrition. Lack of affordable healthcare is a major concern for both the lower and middle classes. If people are not covered by health insurance, whether individually, through an employer, or through assisted programs, illnesses are often not prevented or left untreated, which can add tremendous stress on families, jeopardize housing, contribute to poor work performance and thus job loss, affect students' ability to learn, and lead people to crime. Many of these families have to choose between medical care and food, clothing or rent.

Findings

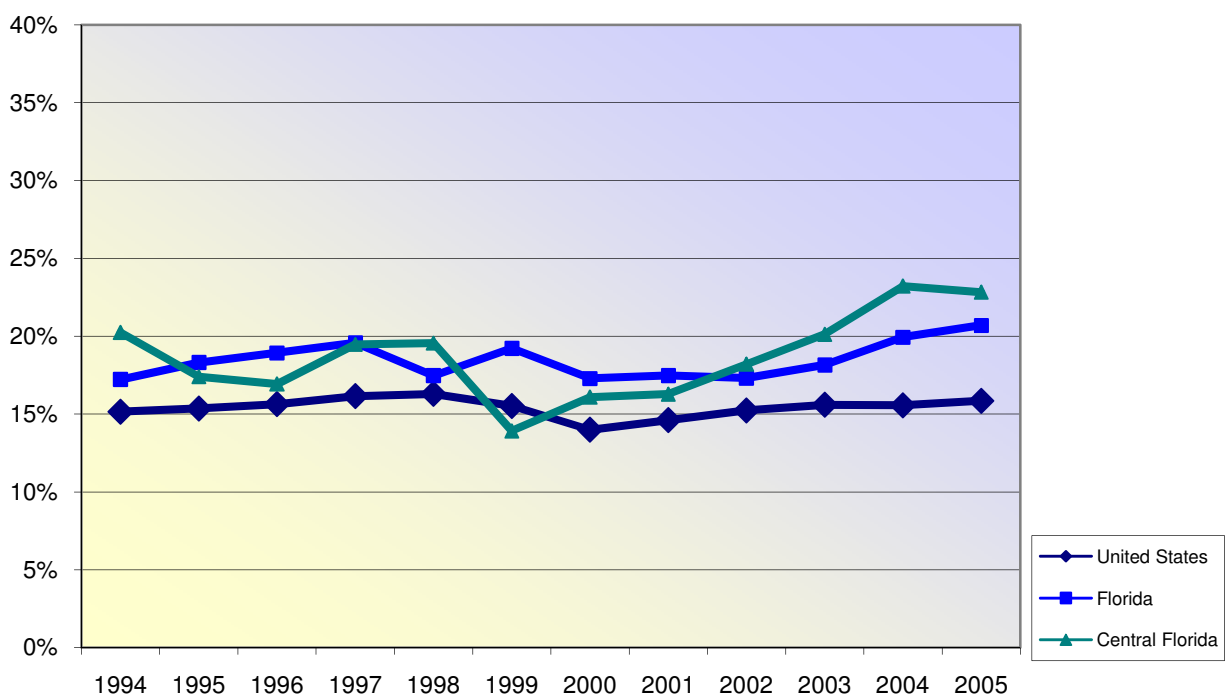
In 2007, 20.7% of Florida residents were uninsured, while the national average was 15%.³² ***Only 25% of the uninsured do not work.***³³ The working poor and minority populations face the fiercest challenges when it comes to affording healthcare. University of Central Florida's Institute for Social and Behavioral Sciences state that 32% of low income families, 10% of middle income families, and less than 4% of upper income families do not have health insurance coverage.³⁴

Many poor individuals are insured through Medicaid, which is state-run and jointly funded by the federal and state governments. Individuals who qualify for Medicaid include pregnant women, the disabled, the medically needy and elderly who have few remaining assets. Though recent changes have expanded Medicaid coverage to include more of the poor, it still covers only half of the population below the poverty line, and this low income group is also in the poorest health.

The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), started in 1997, expanded health insurance coverage to children of families who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but earn too little to pay for private healthcare insurance. Each state receives federal grants but determines its own program, eligibility requirements, benefits, payment levels and operating procedures. The Florida Department of Health has created several healthcare goals for the state, including improved access to basic family healthcare services and access for children with special healthcare needs.³⁵ The state has programs in place to assist uninsured individuals obtain healthcare coverage. ***Using SCHIP funding, Florida KidCare provides services to about 1.4 million children in the state of Florida, but estimates show that an additional 220,000 children who qualify for coverage are not enrolled.*** Cultural and language barriers are cited as major contributing factors for the low number enrolled, as well as difficulties in the enrollment process itself.³⁶

Picture of Our Community

Figure 7: Regional Trends: No Health Insurance



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Sue is in her fifties and she works with children at a daycare. She previously received health insurance through her small company but the coverage was eventually dropped because of rising costs. She had cancer several years ago and had a mastectomy. She had follow up appointments for a year but then had to stop going due to the cost. Since that time she has developed a new chronic pain which she thinks might be a return of the cancer. She went to a family doctor who did a regular exam and some general x-rays but could not provide a diagnosis without more tests and extensive x-rays. Sue could not pay for these tests so she was forced to let her problem go without treatment. She does not qualify for Medicare because she is too young. She does not qualify for Medicaid because her modest income is too high. She went to the health department and was seen but they do not do any cancer tests. She does not have a car so it is not easy for her to get to these places. Furthermore, a visit to the health department can take three to five hours, which requires her to give up a workday. She has visited Shepherds Hope, a nonprofit medical clinic, and is now going to get tested but it involves several trips to offices and more waiting. Once she is finally diagnosed then she will have to figure out how to pay for the treatment.

Safety

Safety is considered a lagging indicator, that when negative, it is usually a result of low or no income options, unstable families, poor individual health, and low education. As one indicator begins to decline, all other indicators quickly follow suit and the result is an increase in crime in that community. Although solving crime is essential to community health, improving the other indicators will proactively improve safety and create long-lasting change.

Findings

The much publicized “City Crime Rankings 2008-2009” lists Orlando as the 18th most dangerous city in the nation. That's an improvement from last year, when The City Beautiful ranked 11th on the list.³⁷ It must be noted, however, that many groups including the Federal Bureau of Investigation have criticized the methodology behind these rankings.

Orlando police spokeswoman Sgt. Barbara Jones has stated that the department does its own crime analysis, which shows the numbers of most violent crimes are down. Through October, sex offenses decreased 22.8% compared with the first 10 months of 2007. Robberies declined 13.5% and aggravated assaults were down 5.6%. Orlando has had three more murders this year than last, an increase of 8.8%.³⁸

Incidents of crime are becoming more brutal and random and are targeting more vulnerable populations, including children.³⁹ Children are not only targets of crime, but are increasingly likely to become perpetrators of crime. An increasing number of children are being born into homes with single mothers, living under conditions classified as poverty and are at risk of being unemployed themselves. All of these are considered risk factors for future criminal activity.⁴⁰

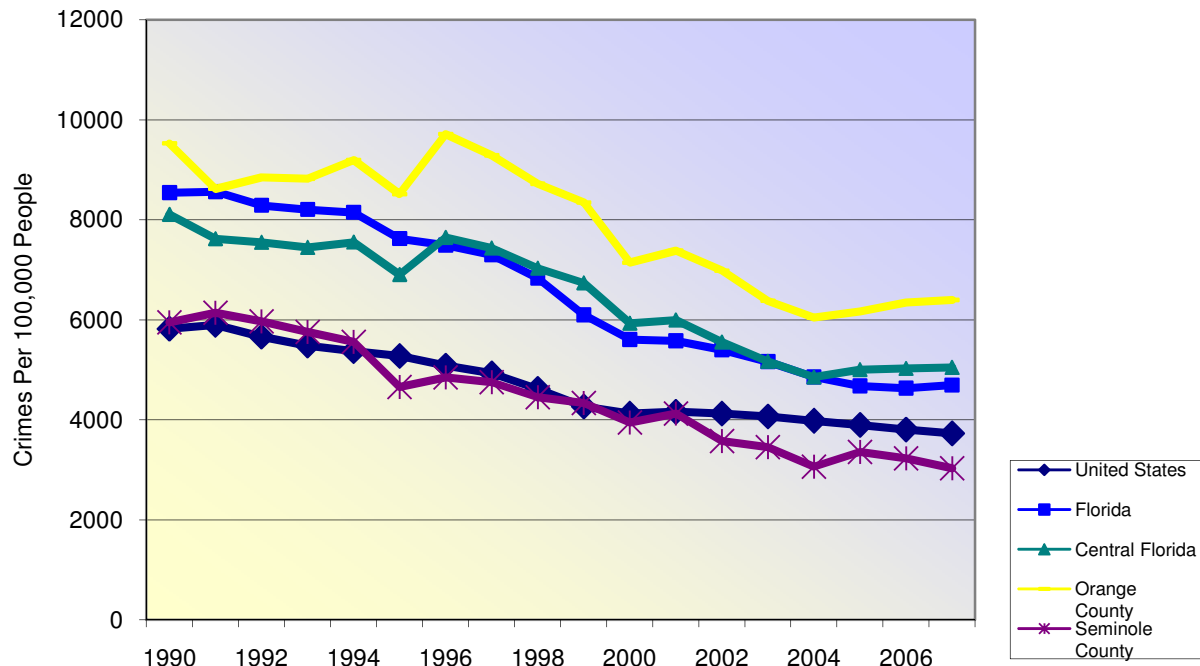
The number of inmates in prison rose 20.1% from 77,316 in June 2003 to 92,844 in June 2007. In the jail and prison population:

- 31% have grown up with a parent or guardian who abused alcohol or drugs. ⁴¹
- About 12% had lived in a foster home or institution.⁴²
- 46% had a family member who had been incarcerated.⁴³
- More than 50% of the women in jail said they had been physically or sexually abused in the past.⁴⁴
- Nearly 20% of mothers in state prison had been homeless in the year prior to admission.⁴⁵
- 68% of state prison inmates did not receive a high school diploma.⁴⁶

Residents dwelling within cities are twice as likely to become victims of crime over those living in rural settings.⁴⁷ Many times, acts of violent crime involve illicit drug use by the perpetrators that can be more prevalent in urban settings. For this reason, public policy has rallied around the relationship of drug use and criminology in order to address this problem. The loss involved with criminal acts is not only fiscal, but also personal in nature with many victims requiring medical, psychological or other restorative intervention.⁴⁸

Picture of Our Community

Figure 8: Regional Trends: Crime Rate



Source: U.S. Department of Justice and Florida Department of Law Enforcement

In 2000, at the age of 22, one young Central Florida resident who grew up in a crime-ridden neighborhood, was convicted of murder and put in prison for 30 years. His sentence was long because this was his fourth conviction over the past six years, the first three being on aggravated assault and drug charges. He had been out of jail for two months when he was back into his neighborhood drug scene, became involved in a drug transaction that went bad, and shot a 23 year old in his car. What was striking in this case is that all of the witnesses called to the stand were convicted felons, mostly juveniles. The neighborhood's way of life was crime, and it had affected every person in that community.

Section II: Place

Many efforts to bring about transformation focus on problems on a regional basis, rather than committing to specific places or neighborhoods. The challenge with a broad geographical approach is that many people outside of the neighborhoods do not fully understand the complex obstacles and challenges some neighborhoods face, and they may impose their outside solution to a perceived problem without a true understanding of how the community will be affected.

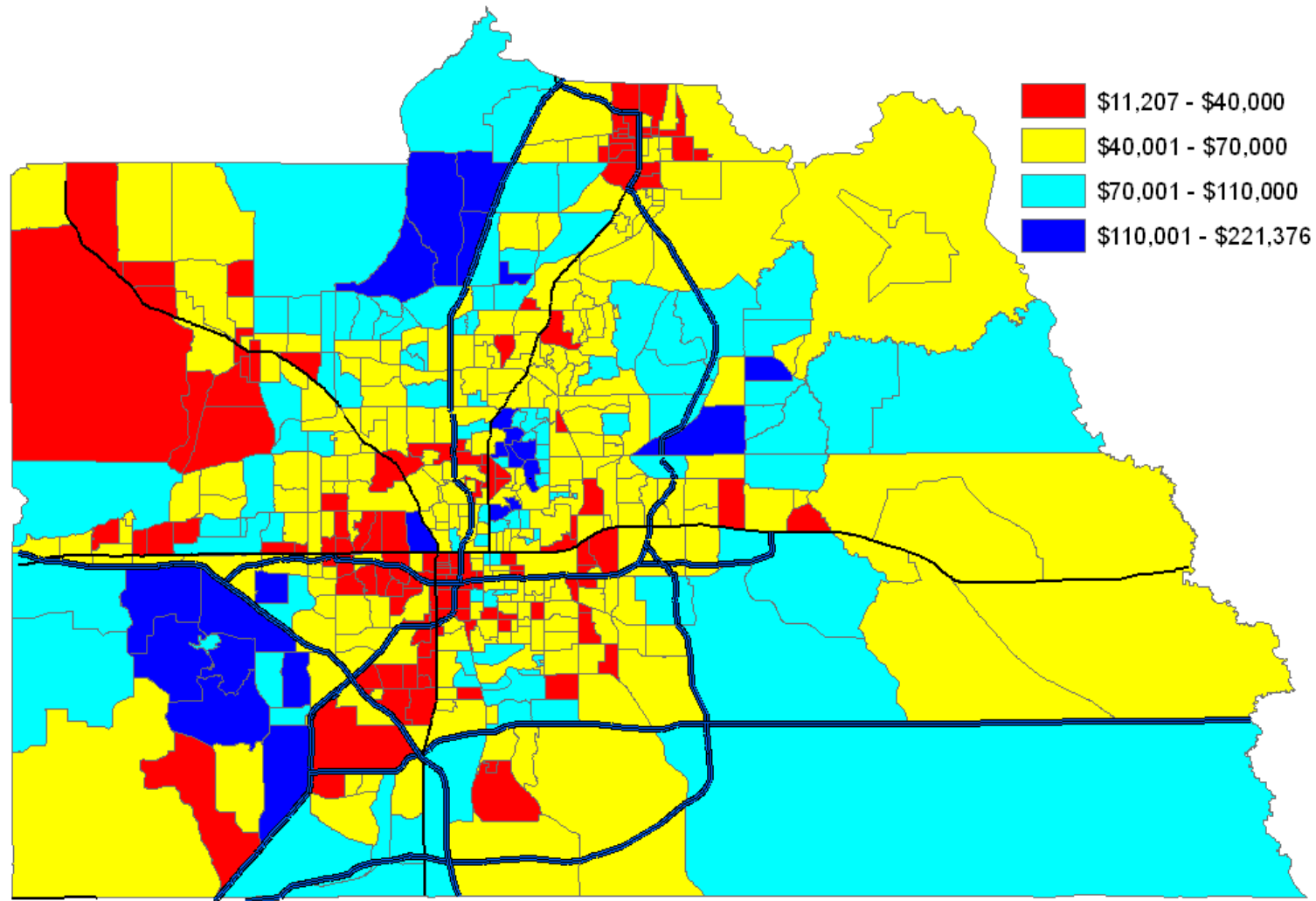
The second lens by which we will view our community is the lens of place. Looking at specific places, or neighborhoods, helps us to understand what is happening at a more in-depth level. If we were only to take a bird's eye view and look at each indicator by county or the Central Florida region as a whole, we would assume that all is well and never see the great disparities between the neighborhoods. Looking at the neighborhood level also shows the interrelatedness of the indicators. In distressed neighborhoods where one indicator is low, all of the other indicators are low.

Another important reason to look at place is to be able to be prepared for future changes in our region. One of these changes is gentrification, which is a phenomenon that is occurring in major cities around the United States. It is "the process of renewal and rebuilding accompanying the influx of middle-class or affluent people into deteriorating areas that often displaces earlier usually poorer residents."⁴⁹ A generation or two ago, well-off Americans left cities in droves to new and bustling suburbs, while the cities were left with mostly poor families. Now, the well-off Americans are moving from the suburbs back into the cities, uprooting the poor to the suburbs.

Many central cities have been revitalized by this process, but devastating effects often accompany the progress. The poorer residents who are displaced are often scattered throughout the suburbs, where they are forced to start over with little sense of belonging to a community and often without the public services they have depended upon in the city. The infrastructure of the central city can be disturbed by this displacement because employees in the service industry can no longer afford to commute to their old jobs.

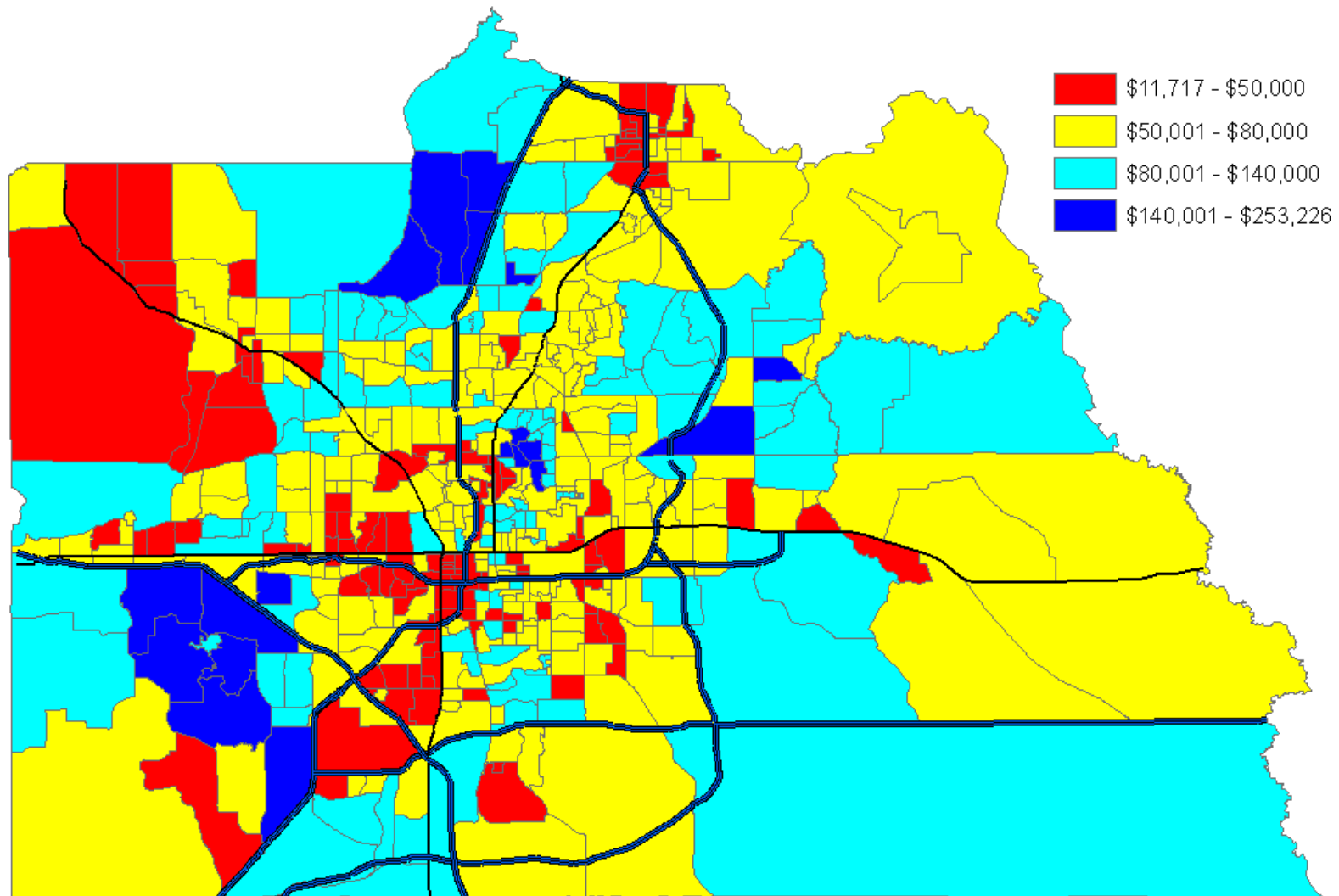
The next few pages contain several maps of Central Florida that highlight four of our indicators. These maps show neighborhood disparities and the interrelatedness of the indicators.

Figure 9: 2008 Median Household Income



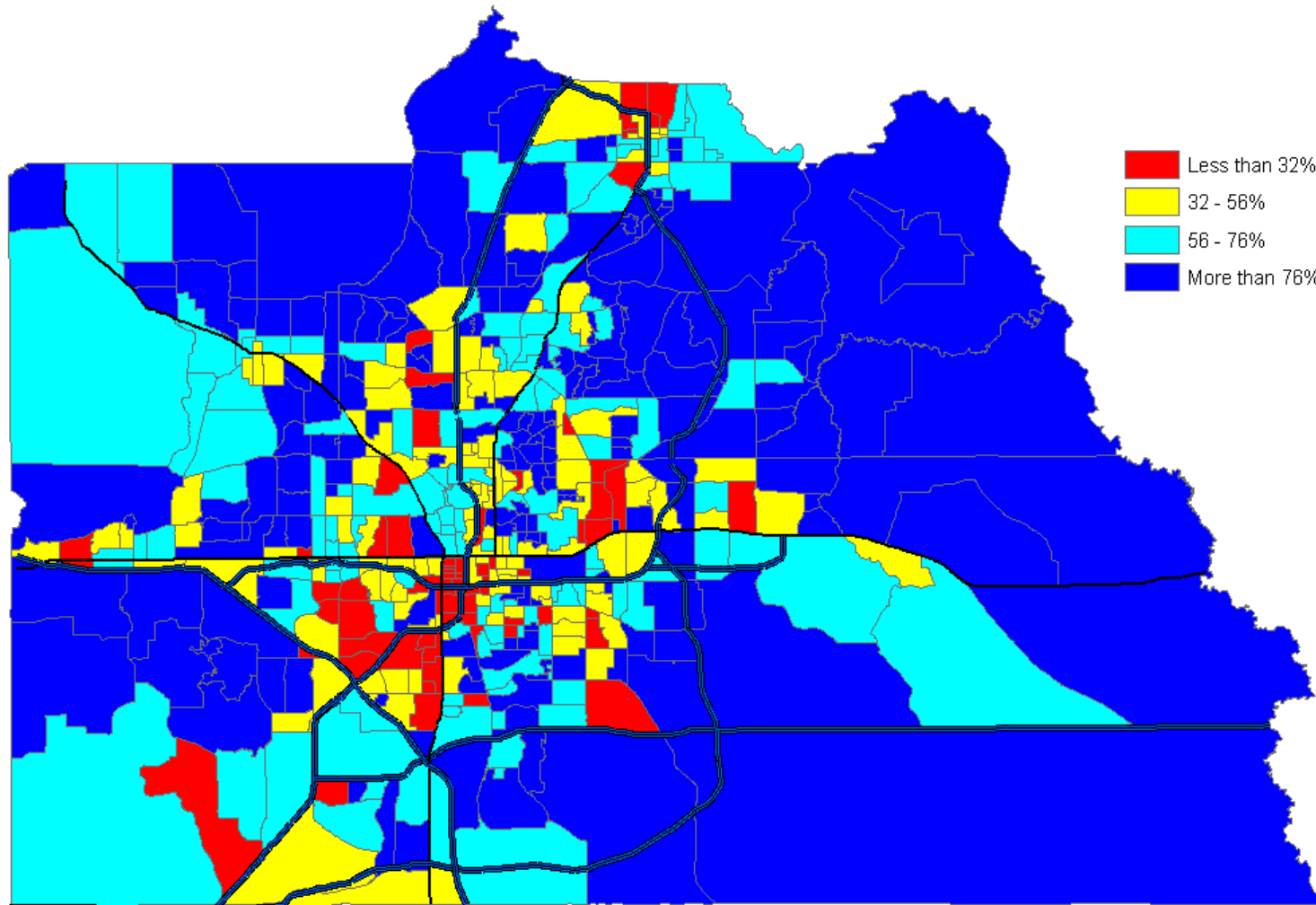
This map shows the estimated 2008 median household income for Orange and Seminole counties.
Source: ESRI

Figure 10: Projected 2013 Median Household Income



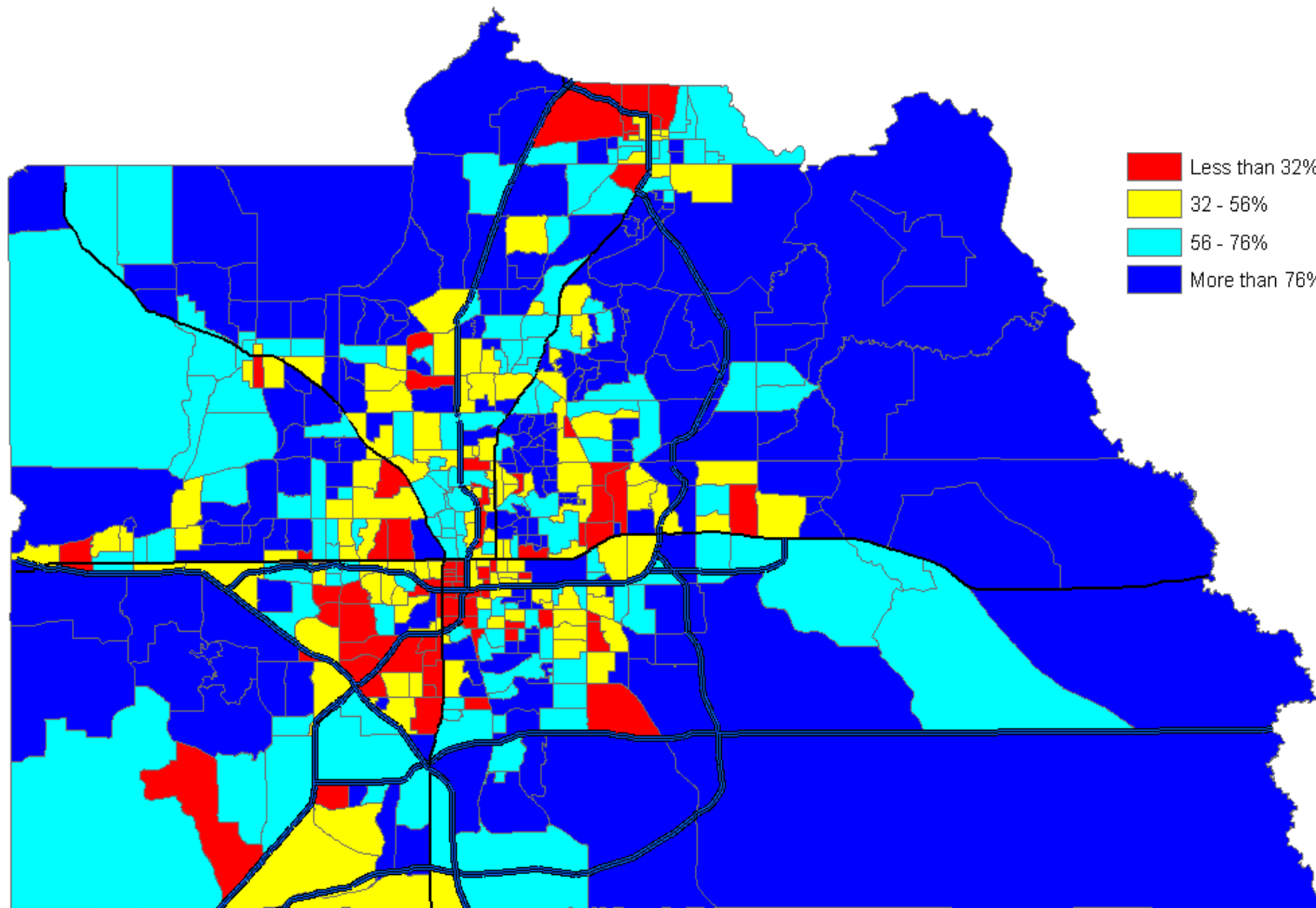
This map shows projected 2013 median household income for Orange and Seminole counties.
Source: ESRI

Figure 11: 2008 Homeownership Rates



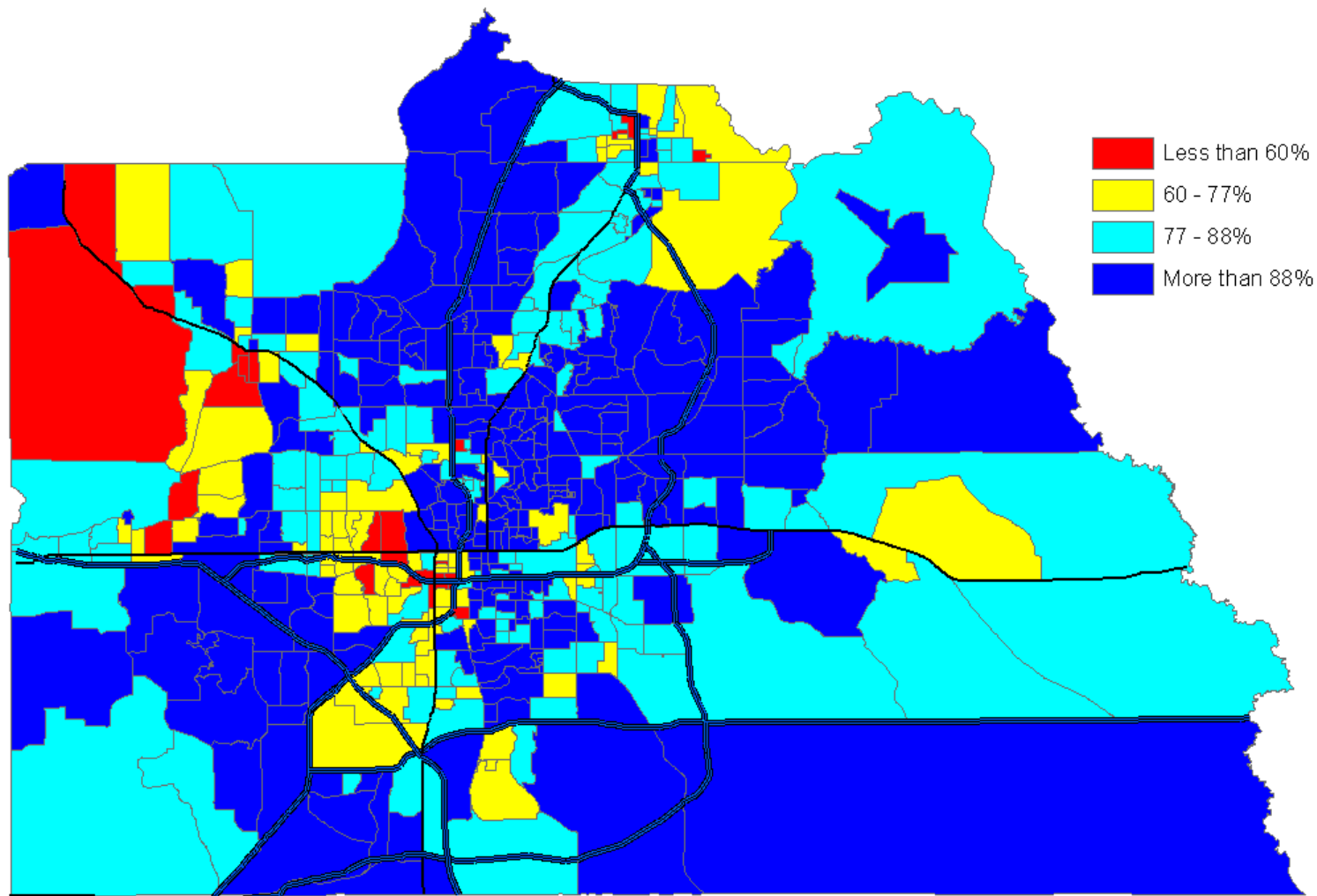
This map shows estimated 2008 homeownership rates for Orange and Seminole counties.
Source: ESRI

Figure 12: Projected 2013 Homeownership Rates



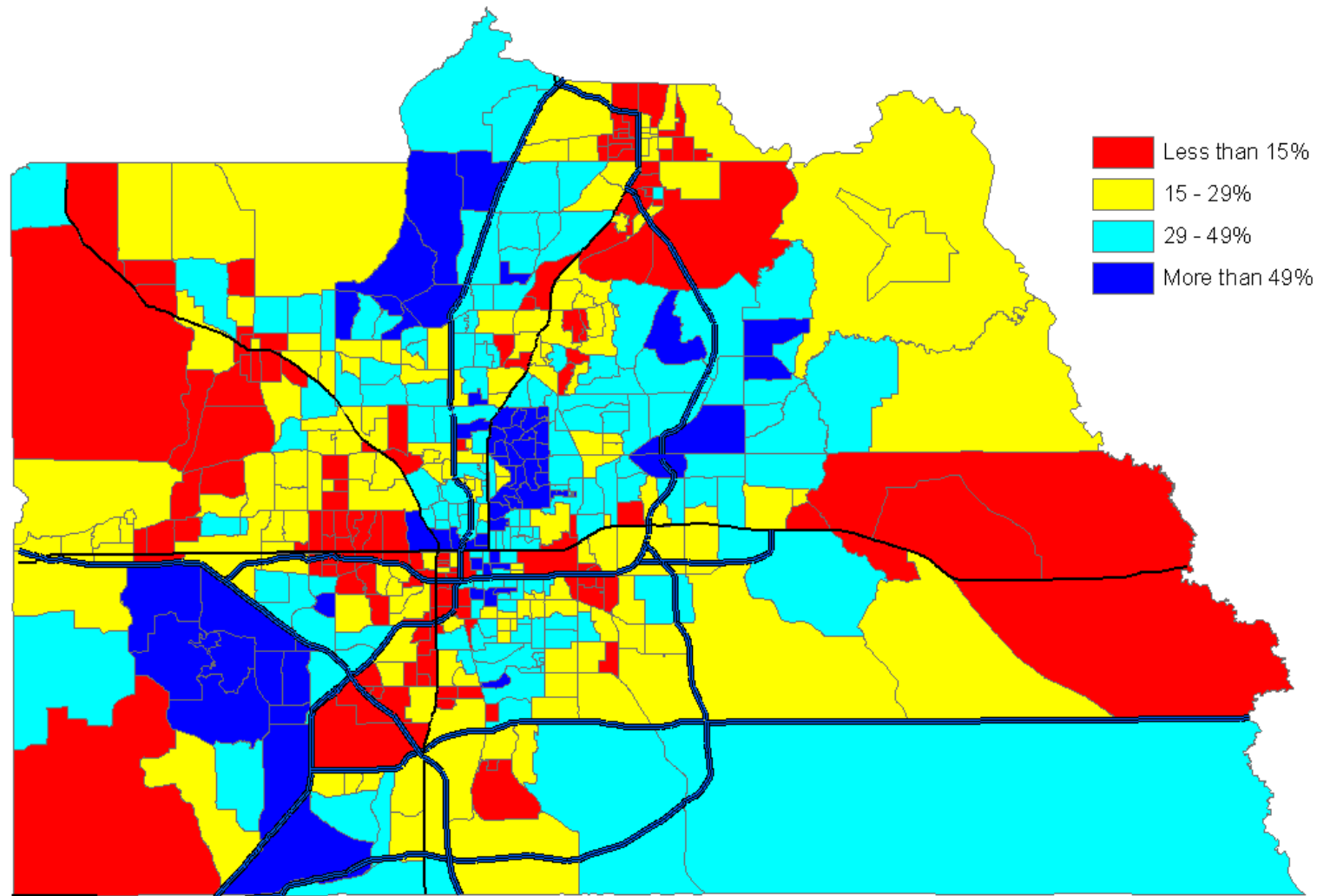
This map shows projected 2013 homeownership rates for Orange and Seminole counties.
Source: ESRI

Figure 13: 2008 Adults with a High School Education



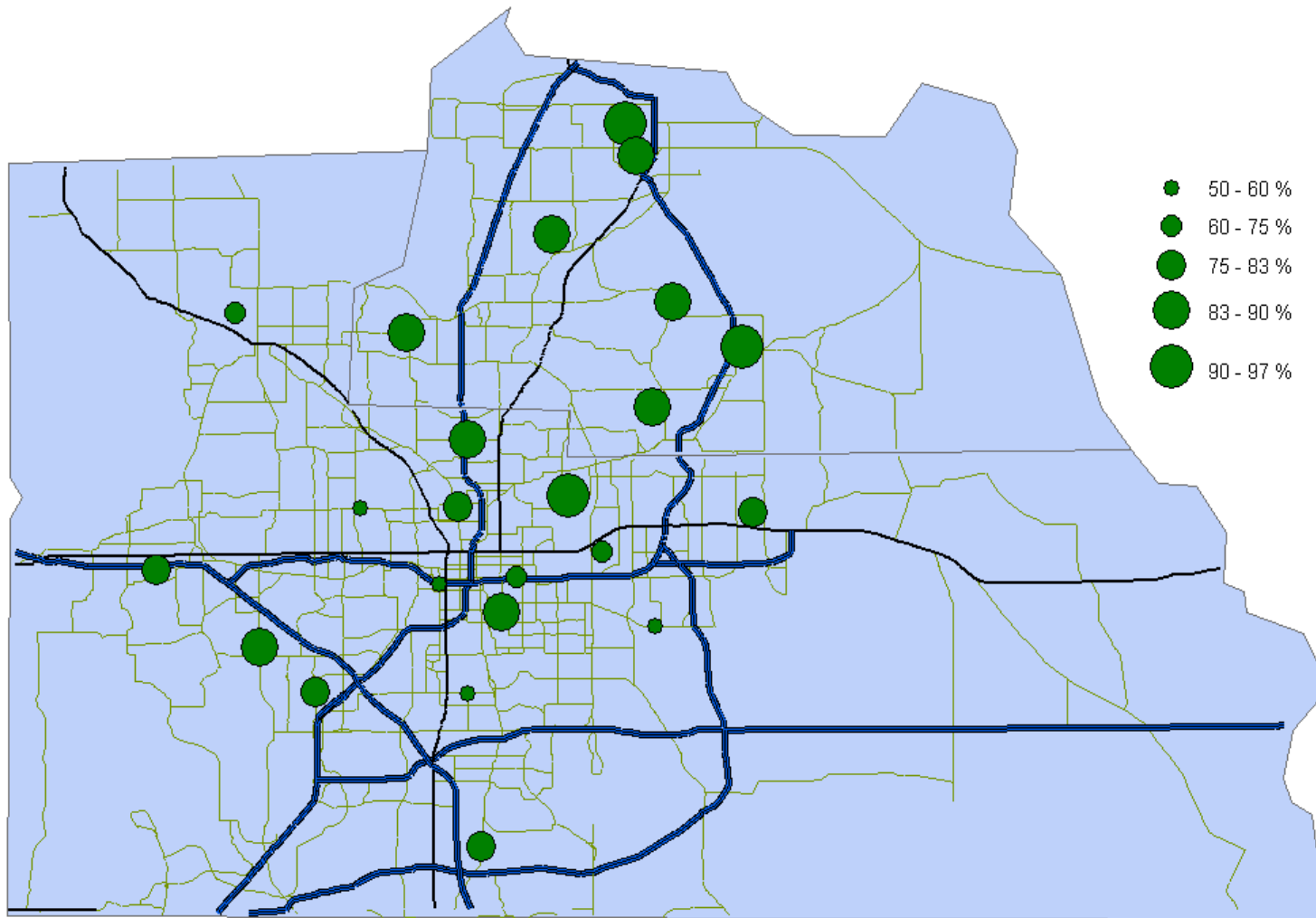
This map shows the estimated percentage of the population 25 years and over in Orange and Seminole counties who have graduated from high school as of 2008.
Source: ESRI

Figure 14: 2008 Adults with a College Education



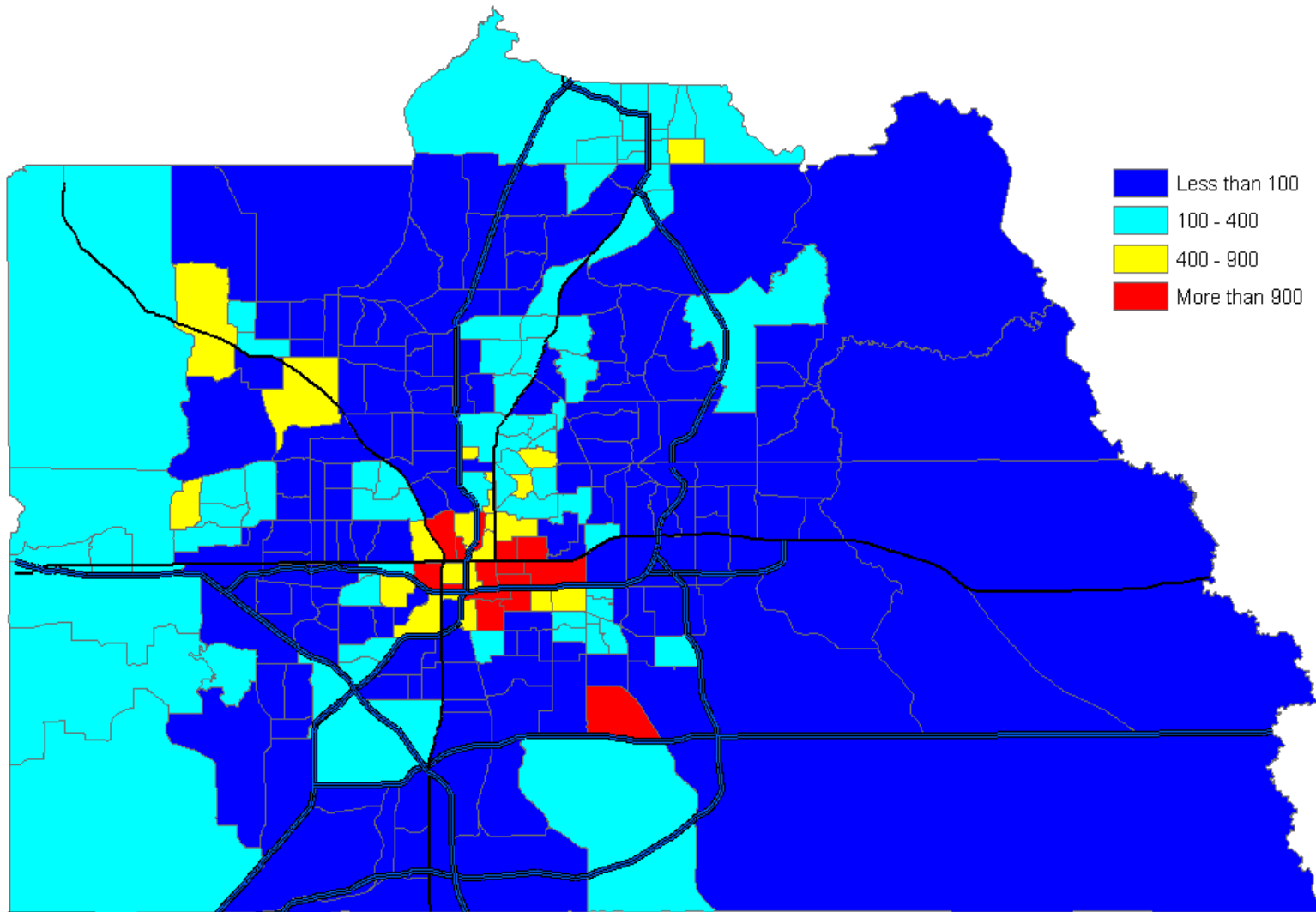
This map shows the estimated percentage of the population 25 years and over in Orange and Seminole counties who have graduated from a four year college as of 2008.
Source: ESRI

Figure 15: 2007 High School Graduation Rates



This map shows the 2007 graduation rates for high schools in Orange and Seminole counties.
Source: Florida Department of Education

Figure 16: 2007 Total Crime Index



This map shows a 2007 total crime index in Orange and Seminole counties.
Source: Applied Geographic Solutions and Mappoint 2009

Section III: Resources

The first two sections of this report offer a perspective on our Central Florida community through the lenses of indicators and place. The third section of the report provides a lens of hope by which to view our community. There are numerous initiatives that exist to improve the lives of Central Florida citizens, and many nonprofit leaders and volunteers who work to meet needs every day.

With over 3,800 nonprofits in the Central Florida area alone, one would think that the work of improving indicators is well underway if not solved. However, many of these organizations are focused on specific problems instead of neighborhoods, and many do not have the resources and strength to move beyond meeting immediate needs to community transformation.

Defining NonProfit Efforts

In order to understand the efforts and resources that are active in our community, we will first classify their efforts as relief, individual development, community development, and structural change. These are relatively standard categories that we have expanded and refined (similar categories are seen in the work of Ronald Sider).

Relief

Programs that are classified as relief efforts provide short-term and sometimes longer-term assistance to meet primarily physical needs. These efforts are often essential in times of crisis, but can be inappropriate when used in non-crisis situations.

Individual development

Programs that focus on education, training and support to enable individuals to do better self-care and better assist others are considered individual development efforts.

Community development

Community development programs provide resources to connect and strengthen those within a geographically defined area with the goal of also strengthening the community itself.

Structural change

Efforts focus on structural change when they alter policies, practices, and perceptions that create injustice, need, and poor health of individuals and communities.

Nonprofit Listings per Indicator

Each indicator has numerous resources working towards its improvement to some degree. The organizations below are representative and do not comprise an exhaustive list. They are intended to provide an understanding of the types of efforts and resources that exist per indicator.

Family

The following nonprofits and government initiatives are a sample of efforts in the Central Florida region focusing on the indicator *family*: care for high-risk babies, abused mothers and children, and single parent families, as well as preventive measures towards strengthening the family unit.

- **Healthy Families Orange:** Represented in Orange and other Central Florida counties, Healthy Families is a subset of Healthy Families America and prevents child abuse and neglect, increases the rate of childhood immunizations, reduces family stress levels and reduces incidence of repeat teen pregnancy in targeted communities of Orange County. Healthy Families Orange staff work with parents from the day their baby is born until the child is five years old, facilitating parent-infant bonding, positive parent-child interaction and child health and development. The staff works to build trust with parents and help them cope with stress. They have also launched a new program called “Healthy Families Orange Plus” that offers relationships skills workshops to qualifying moms and dads with a newborn or baby on the way.

individual development/community development/structural change

<http://www.healthyfamiliesfla.org>

"I was only 16 when I found out I was pregnant. I had no idea what to expect or how much a baby would change my life. I never even babysat. My caseworker from Healthy Families Orange, Terry, has been a Godsend! My son is almost three now, and Terry has been there with us every step of the way - for his doctor appointments, his first steps, potty training ... you name it! She showed me how to do so much ... mostly, how to be a great mom." – Client

- **Beta Center:** The Beta Center provides child-rearing and marriage-strengthening education to parents, their extended families, and the community. They also have a residential facility for pregnant women and teen mothers.

relief/individual development/community development

<http://www.betacenter.org>

- **Children’s Home Society of Florida:** The Children’s Home Society provides residential care for children, and seeks to find them healthy and safe permanent homes. Parent education and counseling is also provided.

relief/individual development

<http://www.chsfl.org/>

- **Harbor House:** Harbor House provides safety, shelter, counseling, education and legal services to families impacted by domestic violence.

relief/individual development

<http://www.harborhousefl.com>

- **Family Preservation and Diversion:** An initiative of Metro Orlando Family Services, this program is designed to help high risk families stay together. If a family is investigated for child abuse and has risk factors that are not great enough to remove a child but is still considered high risk, a “diversion” program can be implemented which will connect the family to services in the community on which they draw support and hopefully keep the children from having to be a part of the child welfare system.”
individual development/community development/structural change
<http://www.fsmetroorlando.org/>

Income

The following nonprofits are a brief list of efforts in the Central Florida region focusing on the indicator income: job training and employment, poverty relief such as food, bill-paying services, and other social services.

- The Jobs Partnership of Florida: Partners with local churches and businesses to find successful employment for those in need. The organization provides training, job placement and mentorship to individuals that are unemployed or underemployed. Jobs Partnership’s unique combination of teaching practical skills as well as spiritual formation was featured on NPR’s morning edition last year. Florida Hospital has hired many Jobs Partnership graduates, and says that 75% of those hired continued to get training and move up from entry level positions. Jobs Partnership is also beginning to work with churches in specific neighborhoods to provide holistic community support for their clients.
individual development/community development
<http://www.jobspartnershipfl.org>
- Christian Help: Provides a job referral service and networking opportunities for the unemployed. They also provide food assistance and referrals for housing and other financial assistance.
relief/individual development
<http://www.christianhelp.org>
- Heart of Florida United Way 211: Provides social services information, referrals and assistance to any who dial 211 for help.
relief
<http://www.hfuw.org/2-1-1.aspx>
- The Sharing Center: Provides material and financial assistance to the impoverished. Also operates a thrift store and boutique to provide low-cost goods.
relief
<http://www.thesharingcenter.org>

Housing

The following nonprofits and government initiatives are a brief list of efforts in the Central Florida region focusing on the indicator housing: housing for homeless and affordable housing.

- The Christian Service Center: The Christian Service Center feeds approximately 325 homeless per day and offers a residential training program to men wanting to put their lives back together. In addition to food and clothing, provides rent and utilities to those in immediate need; gasoline vouchers for transportation to and from a job; travel vouchers for emergency cases; employment counseling and referral; drug and alcohol addiction referrals; phone calls; adult day care programs; after school tutoring; and non-residential mentoring program such as Fresh Start and Mothers Helping Mothers.
relief/individual development
<http://www.christianservicecenter.org>
- Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida: The Coalition provides temporary shelter for the homeless, as well as case management and service referrals with the goal of self-sufficiency. Brent Trotter, CEO of Coalition for the Homeless, reports that 70% of his clients are children, with the median age of those needing shelter being 8 years old.
relief/individual development
<http://www.centralfloridahomeless.org>
- Habitat for Humanity: Habitat builds, rehabs, and sells affordable housing with and for families in need, as well as providing disaster response.
relief/individual development/community development
<http://www.habitat.org>
- Helping Hands: Helping Hands performs housing rehab and restoration in Holden Heights.
individual development/community development
- The Center for Affordable Housing: The Center provides transitional and rental housing, as well as participates in the development of affordable housing for renting and home ownership.
relief/individual development/community development
<http://www.tcfah.org>
- Homes in Partnership: HIP builds, rehabs, and develops affordable housing, and tries to improve the economic conditions of the communities being served.
individual development/community development
<http://www.homesip.org>
- The Central Florida Commission on Homelessness: CFCH continually assesses and addresses the economic and social impact of homelessness on communities within Orange, Seminole and Osceola counties and the City of Orlando in the furtherance of its goal to end homelessness in the region within ten years. Their plan includes solutions that will be centered on a comprehensive outcome-based management model that incorporates components of housing, healthcare, prevention, and self-sufficiency.
relief/individual development/community development
<http://www.orangecountyfl.net/cms/CommissionOnHomelessness>

Education

The following nonprofits are a brief list of efforts in the Central Florida region focusing on the indicator education: educational resources, mentoring, early childhood education, and education advocacy.

- Frontline Outreach, led by Arto Woodley, is Orlando's oldest para-church community ministry. Frontline's award-winning ministry serves 1500 children and families a year, offering early childhood education, after-school programs, and leadership programs. Frontline does an unusually outstanding job of connecting with its surrounding community and city, and is involved in multiple local partnerships and initiatives.
relief/individual development/community development
<http://www.frontlineoutreach.org>

Amber is a 9 year old girl who attends Frontline's after school program and plays on the Frontline basketball team. Her previously negative attitude and low self-esteem have been transformed by her participation in Frontline activities. She is now free with smiles and hugs, sees herself as beautiful and smart, and says her favorite thing to do at Frontline is "to help others."

- A Gift for Teaching: A Gift for Teaching has many programs to enhance the resources of teachers and students in public schools. They provide cash for teaching materials, a free school supply store for teachers, student incentives, student musical instruments, arts education supplies, and inmate-produced school supplies.
relief/individual development
<http://www.agiftforteaching.org>
- Restore Orlando: Restore Orlando provides a variety of programs from a Holden Heights Community Center. The core of their operation is the academic programs available to children and adults.
individual development/community development
<http://www.restoreorlando.com>

Individual Health

The following nonprofits are a brief list of efforts in the Central Florida region focusing on the indicator individual health: health care for the uninsured, health education, nutrition and medical resources for the poor.

- Shepherd's Hope, Inc.: Founded in 1996 by a local pastor, each Shepherd's Hope Center is the result of a partnership between a faith community, school or facility partner, and hospital. The faith community or church is the primary resource for volunteer doctors, nurses and other lay volunteers who through their faith commitment regularly staff a health center, which is typically open several evenings each week. A local school, church or community agency houses the health center by donating clinic space in existing facilities that are available during the evening hours. Area hospitals accept referrals without compensation for routine laboratory and radiology services. In many cases, county health agencies provide follow-up and specialty services for patients who need more advanced care, such as neurological or orthopedic consultation and even surgery. Patients who are eligible for services through Shepherd's Hope have income at or below 200% of the poverty level, are uninsured and not eligible for government assisted health care programs. Utilizing these criteria, Shepherd's Hope has provided over 75,000 free medical visits in the past eleven years. While health care access for the uninsured is a much discussed national priority for many Americans, Shepherd's Hope is offering a faith-based model that can be replicated in local communities across the United States that brings hope and healing to many in need.
relief
<http://www.shepherdshope.org>
- Central Florida Family Health Center: Provides primary health care and patient education to those with any kind of insurance, as well as on a sliding scale to the uninsured.
relief
<http://www.cffhc.org>
- Hebni Nutrition Consultants: Provides extensive nutrition and health education to at-risk populations.
individual development
<http://www.soulfoodpyramid.org>

Safety

The following nonprofits and government initiatives are a brief list of efforts in the Central Florida region focusing on the indicator safety: crime prevention and prison re-entry into society.

- Central Florida Crimeline: Offers a 24 hour hotline for the Central Florida community to call in crime-related tips. They also provide law enforcement agencies with free materials.
community development
<http://www.cfcrimeline.com>
- Horizon Communities in Prison: Provides education, mentoring, and services in correctional institutions to prepare prisoners for reentry into society.
individual development
<http://www.horizoncommunities.org>

- Inmates of the Cross: Focuses on re-entry into society after prison. The mission of the organization is to help those that are incarcerated to find the cross of Christ, to connect and assist former inmates with a new lifestyle in Christ Jesus and to provide aftercare assistance for former inmates and their families. This assistance may include providing job contacts, driver's licenses, and connect them to the social services needed to productively go back into society. The ministry also conducts worship services monthly and teaches a Discipleship course to former inmates.
relief, individual development
<http://prisonministry.net/ioc>
- ATF: VCIT (Violent Crime Impact Team) and FBI: Safe Streets Task Force: U.S. Congresswoman Corinne Brown called 2006 Orlando's deadliest and most violent year. ¹ According to recently released preliminary statistics of the FBI, this is in keeping with a nationwide increase in murder and violent crime.¹ In June of that year, Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez announced plans to send an ATF Violent Crimes Impact Team to Orlando, as well as an FBI Safe Streets Task Force. Both the VCIT and the Safe Streets Task Force plan to work closely with each other and local law enforcement.

Associations Working on Multiple Indicators

Several of the associations in the Central Florida region are working towards approaching multiple indicators. Many of these organizations started out offering one service, but then saw a great need to support other aspects of their clients' lives.

- The Greater Orlando Food Outreach: A subsidiary of the Destiny Foundation of Central Florida, is the largest faith-based, hunger-relief organization in Central Florida, serving over 100,000 families since opening in September 2001. The Food Bank, founded by Scott George, is a sweat equity program where members can purchase quality grocery items for a small suggested contribution. The Food Bank is working to expand its services to include education and health insurance for children and families. The Food Bank strives to preserve and uphold the dignity of its members, and succeeds in this. They have also started a monthly medical clinic for uninsured children, and is providing computers and assistance to enroll in government programs.
relief, individual development
<http://www.battlehunger.org>

Keisha, a mother of 5, was forced to look for assistance from the Food Bank while unemployed due to a high-risk pregnancy. Her fiancé, a landscaper, had his income reduced at the time by the slow business of the fall season. The Food Bank cut her grocery bills in half, sponsored her family at Christmas, and provided her with a van for transportation. She now works part-time as a cashier at the Food Bank, and loves hearing from her customers how thankful they are for the help the Food Bank provides.

- Community Service Center of Central Florida: The Community Service Center of Central Florida is a community responsive nonprofit organization committed to providing neighborhood based programs that promote family preservation and economic self-sufficiency through a focus on financial support services, education and literacy. CSC offers emergency financial assistance, food, and clothing and household goods. They also provide numerous family support programs, including literacy, stabilization, anger management, foster children assistance, and parenting programs. The CSC addresses the indicators of Income, Family, and Education.
relief/individual development
<http://www.cscfl.com>

- Catholic Charities of Central Florida: Their mission is to provide social services to people in need, regardless of their religious, social or economic background and to improve lives of individuals, families and the community. Catholic Charities offers a very broad range of social service programs, including emergency assistance, counseling, job preparation and placement, crime reduction and support programs for at-risk youth and victims. The indicators addressed are Income, Family, Healthcare, Education and Crime.
relief/individual development/community development
<http://www.cflcc.org>
- Resource Point: Resource Point, a Northland Church initiative, is a web-based tool that will allow its networked partners (churches, social service agencies, non-profits, government organizations and other similar providers) to take a holistic approach to meeting the needs of its community. This network of organizations and agencies will essentially work hand in hand in the process of providing for those in need.
relief
<http://blogs.northlandchurch.net/blog/resource-point/>

Association Gaps and Challenges

There are many positive efforts in the Central Florida region that are focused on improving the problems of our community. Many nonprofits are achieving their goals of meeting needs and lessening the stress on citizens.

However, many of the associations are focused on relief and individual development. Until we see efforts begin to put more emphasis on community development and structural change, we will continue to see neighborhoods decline and citizens struggle. Providing relief is essential to the survival of many in crisis situations, but relief does not act as a preventive measure to stop the decline of the distressed neighborhood. Until efforts are put forth that focus geographically on the interrelated nature of the indicators in a neighborhood and begin to alter the policies, perceptions and practices that create injustices, we will see perpetual decline in our neighborhoods.

Section IV: Conclusion

A look at Central Florida from the perspectives of the indicators, geographical place, and resources provides us an opportunity to better understand the complexities of our region. Awareness of the disparities and the interrelatedness of the indicators creates a desire to address systemic issues at the neighborhood level, and close to the source.

Central Florida has many initiatives that strive to help our region flourish. However, as this report shows, relief and individual development are where most of the efforts focus, while efforts toward community development and structural change are much more limited.

A Charge to the Central Florida Community

We believe the present time represents a significant moment in Central Florida. The non-profit, government, business and church sectors all have growing interest in and efforts toward community development and structural change. Through our research, we have seen an awakening in the hearts and minds of many of our citizens toward developing a flourishing region.

But true transformation of our communities requires concentrated and collaborated efforts toward neighborhood development, and strategic action to remedy structural and justice issues. We call upon the leaders of all sectors to become aware of the disparities and challenges facing our neighborhoods, to partner with those on the frontlines in our neighborhoods who have earned both credibility and trust with distressed citizens, and to leverage their positions of power, influence and resources to make structural changes that will bring about justice and revitalization in our neighborhoods. We encourage leaders to:

- *Help Raise Awareness Across Central Florida*
The most important step in helping our cities flourish is to raise awareness and educate citizens and leaders about the health of Central Florida's neighborhoods, the importance of place, and the need for community development and structural change. Many well-intended efforts yield little impact or even cause damage to neighborhoods simply because the participants are misguided or uninformed. Worse, many of our citizens do not understand the depth of challenges our community faces. Engaging, compelling, and educating our citizens is critically important for creating change. Citizens should help to communicate the research provided by many institutions and organizations and raise the awareness of our community through forums, training, and conversations. Awareness is the first and most vital step to transformation.
- *Support Existing Non-Profit Efforts Focused on Community Development and Structural Change*
We implore interested individuals and organizations to work with those associations and initiatives that are focused on specific neighborhoods by serving and supporting the associations' leadership, serving on their boards, identifying opportunities to collaborate with other existing efforts, and helping to maximize their involvement with neighborhood transformation.

- *Respond to Gentrification with Justice*
We have an imperative to pursue gentrification with justice. Businesses and government entities that are encouraging gentrification should be aware of its consequences and should strive to avoid the injustices that too often accompany it. Many businesses have learned that making investments in the community to help the lower-income residents thrive now often pays rich dividends later. Government officials should consider providing tax incentives for businesses to revitalize districts without displacing the lower-income residents.
- *Leverage power, influence, and resources for neighborhoods and justice issues*
All citizens of Central Florida have assets to contribute and positions of influence that should be leveraged to help transform our community. We encourage all citizens to identify their areas of influence, resources, and authority and use them to help provide strategic thought and action towards community development and structural change. We ask that citizens serve and influence existing initiatives, identify opportunities for their business to serve neighborhoods, participate in regional forums and decisions, help determine where their church serves and help it collaborate and strategize for the good of our community, and serve neighbors in their own neighborhood.
- *Reinvest in communities*
Neighborhoods develop their distinctive character over long periods of time. Neighborhoods that are in distress have often seen many years of disinvestment prior to the more visible signs of trouble such as crime and neglected properties. Reinvestment from within the community itself is a significant part of community revitalization. Since problems are best addressed as closely to the source as possible, outside efforts need to engage the community's citizens and to help facilitate their reinvestment within their own community.

A Specific Call to the Church

Many Christians and churches have a deep conviction to serve others and are willing to show up to service events but remain unaware that one-way giving and short-term service can both perpetuate false perceptions of inferiority and superiority and foster unhealthy cycles of dependency. Each distinct area of our city has its own characteristics, with unique stressors and assets. Efforts to address the problems in our community are often focused solely on the problems and are dislocated from the places where these problems occur. As churches recognize that people are more important than problems, commit to advocacy of particular areas of the city, and consistently incorporate principles that champion human dignity and assets, our city will be strengthened.

We encourage the church to evaluate the merits of their service opportunities and to serve people in different socio-economic and cultural situations in ways that foster genuine relationships. We also encourage people to serve those in their immediate environment with renewed commitment.

One crucial step for the church is to become aware of the region's challenges and the resources within the neighborhoods meeting those challenges, and to see the best way to support these resources. Very few new nonprofits or efforts need to develop. Instead, existing efforts and nonprofits should be strengthened and supported whenever possible. Working with people and initiatives already established in the community respects the value of the community and limits the tendency for an outside, well-intended but wrong solution to develop.

The church also should work to engage and encourage the hearts and minds of its members to be true servants, who seek to foster more intimate and long term relationships with those whom they serve. Educating and compelling the heart of Christians will mobilize them into action and refine their way of serving. We seek that end for the good of the church and the prosperity of Central Florida.

Appendix: Endnotes

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