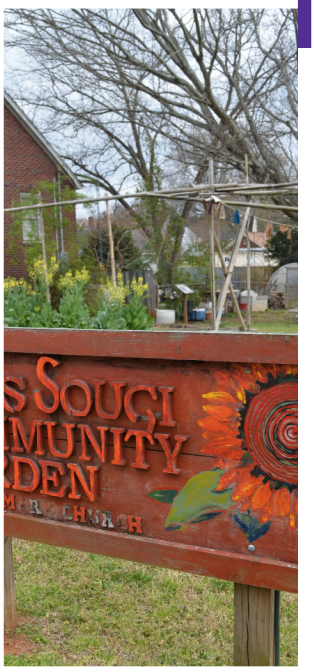
Executive Summary: Focused Needs and Assets Assessment



Prepared by:

FURMAN

Prepared for:

United Way of Greenville County

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Background

The United Way of Greenville County (UWGC) contracted Furman University to conduct research to identify priority communities in Greenville County and analyze these areas' existing needs and assets. This study of ten specific communities facilitates the making of evidence-based decisions to direct initiatives and investments and also plan for future community-based collaborations.

This research connects to UWGC's existing Cycle of Success programming, through which "all children start school prepared to learn and go on to graduate, well-educated graduates find good jobs and create stable homes, and children from stable homes continue the cycle because they start school prepared to learn [1]." Recognizing a relationship between students' experiences at home and in their communities and their performance in school, this report focuses on community development to support ongoing Cycle of Success efforts. As such, it is important to note that this report reflects an in-depth study of neighborhoods, not individual schools or Greenville County's education system.

Framing

Study objectives are met through the application of a framework based on the concept of inclusive well-being, which may be achieved through balanced investments in five capital asset categories: natural capital, human capital, manufactured capital, social capital, and knowledge capital. These assets can be augmented to include additional critical issues including financial stability and employment opportunities, among others [2]. For the purposes of this study, we organize community assets into five categories: natural capital, human capital, manufactured capital, social capital, and financial stability. These assets are explained in Table 1.

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Table 1. Capital asset clusters for inclusive well-being

Capital Asset	Guiding Concepts	Examples for community-scale in Greenville County
Financial Stability	Economic resources and services to meet one's needs	Cost of housing, employment opportunities, health insurance
Human Capital	Human population (size, distribution, health, education, other capabilities)	Community demographic data
Manufactured Capital	Buildings (homes, factories, and their products); Infrastructure (transport, energy, information)	Housing stock; infrastructure including roads, sidewalks, and transit options; physical community centers
Natural Capital	Land, water, biotic, mineral resources, climate and atmosphere, biodiversity, etc.	Open and green spaces, green infrastructure
Social Capital	Laws, norms, rules, customs, Institutions (political, judicial, economic), trust	Neighborhood associations, anchor institutions, relationships within communities

Adapted from: Matson et al. 2016

Objectives

The objectives of this assessment are:

- Identify ten priority communities
- Identify important needs and assets of the study communities based on available Census data
- Identify important needs and assets of the study communities through direct engagement with community members and partners

Methods

We identified 10 neighborhoods in Greenville County for focused needs and asset evaluation. Neighborhoods for analysis were identified based on census tracts with the highest family poverty levels in Greenville County using 2010-14 estimates from the American Community Survey (ACS). The final set of study communities was then adjusted based on reasons articulated in the full report.

We used a mixed methods approach to collect, align, and analyze disparate data sets. Qualitative interviews were used to learn rich detail to better understand each community from resident and partner perspectives. Quantitative data were used to assess conditions in each community through measures clustered around the asset categories (Table 1). Measures were chosen based on a review of the primary and gray literature and with input from UWGC and community stakeholders.

We engaged with 268 stakeholders (Table 2). It is important to note that some respondents had relationships to multiple communities, and as such provided input for more than one location.

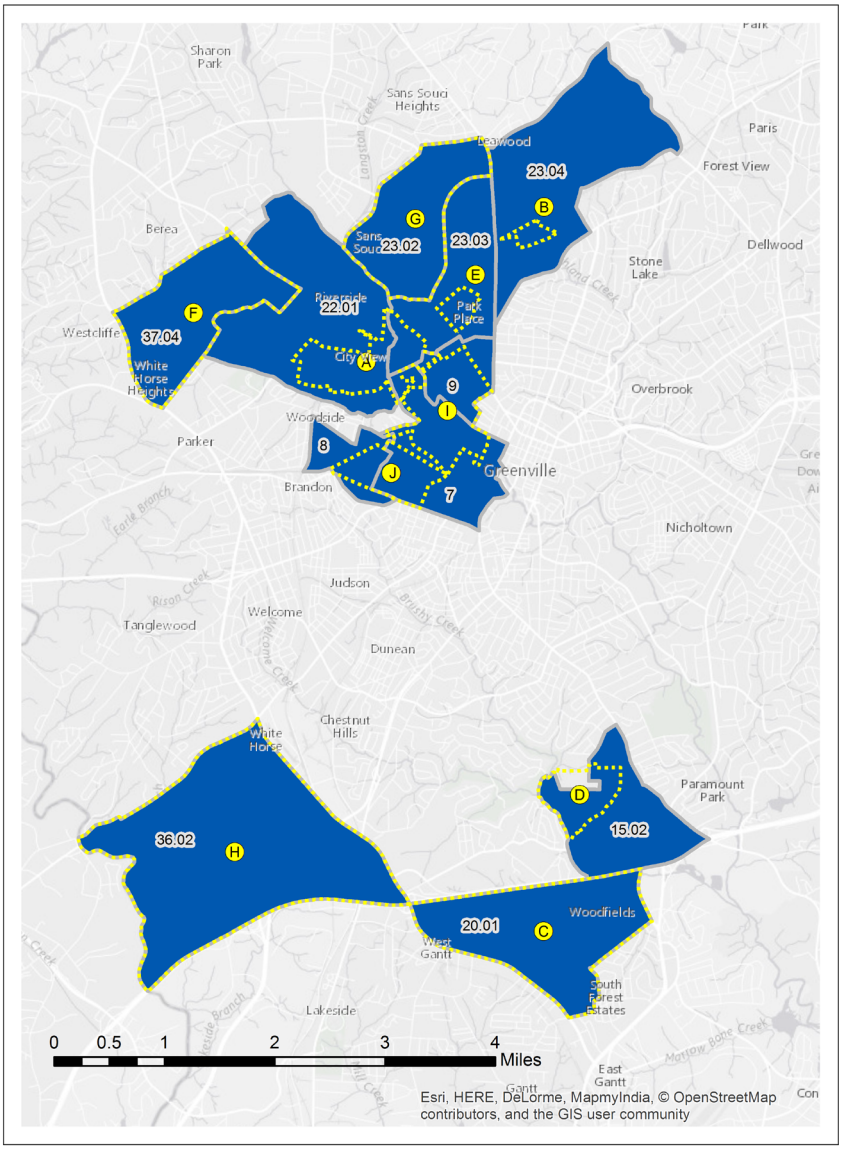


Figure 1: Study neighborhoods are indicated with dashed yellow lines. Census tracts that intersect with study neighborhoods are indicated in blue, along with the census tract number.

Table 2. Number of respondents* by neighborhood

Neighborhood	Neighborhood-Specific Respondents	Total Respondents, including MN**
City View	10	25
New Washington Heights	8	18
North Gantt	7	11
Pleasant Valley	41	45
Poe Mill	4	14
South Berea	41	56
South Sans Souci	38	53
South Welcome	24	28
Southernside	27	43
West Greenville	31	48
Multiple Neighborhoods	37	

The far right column in the table lists the number of stakeholders that contributed information for each community, when accounting for multiple neighborhood respondents.

*Total Respondents=268 **MN denotes multi-neighborhood

Findings: Quantitative Measures of Community Needs

In the full report, we quantify 35 measures for each community. In this summary, we highlight 20 select measures. Table 3 lists and defines each measure, identifies data sources, and provides references that justify their inclusion in the study.

Table 3. Community measures

Measure Name	Measure Definition	Data Source	Citation	Capital Asset Cluster
Homeowner Costs	Percentage of owner-occupied housing units with owner costs exceeding 35% of their household income.	NHGIS	[17]	Financial
Median Household Income	Median household income.	NHGIS	[19-21]	Financial
Poverty Status, Families	Percentage of families reporting income below the poverty level out of total families for whom poverty status is ascertained.	NHGIS	[19-21,23]	Financial
Renter Costs	Percentage of renter-occupied housing units with renter cost exceeding 35% of their household income.	NHGIS	[17]	Financial
Unemployment	Unemployed persons 16 years and over who are in the civilian labor force as a percentage of all persons 16 years and over in the civilian labor force.	NHGIS	[19,23-24]	Financial

Table 3. Community measures table continued on next page.

African American	Percentage of population that identifies as Black or African American.	NHGIS	[17,19,21,25]	Human
Age 0-5	Percent of the total population that is 0-5 years old.	NHGIS	[17,23]	Human
Age 5-17	Percent of the total population that is school age (5-17 years old).	NHGIS	[17]	Human
Educational Attainment	The percentage of the population over 25 years that has less than a high school diploma.	NHGIS	[15,20,23,27]	Human
Female-Headed Households	The percentage of family households with a female housholder and no husband.	NHGIS	[18-21,23-24]	Human
Latino	Percentage of population that identifies as Hispanic or Latino (may also identify with another racial category).	NHGIS	[20-21,25]	Human
Number of Children per 1000	The number of young children (0-5) per thousand women (15-44).	NHGIS	[26]	Human
Preschool Enrollment	Percentage enrolled in preschool out of all children ages 0-5.	NHGIS	[20,28-29]	Human

Table 3. Community measures table continued on next page.

Renter-Occupied	Percentage of occupied housing units that are currently renter-occupied.	NHGIS	[17,30,33]	Manufactured
Vacancy Rate	Percentage of housing units that are vacant/unoccupied.	NHGIS	[17,23]	Manufactured
Natural Land Cover	Percentage of land that is not urbanized.	NLCD	[35]	Natural
Linguistic Isolation	Percentage of households where all individuals aged 14 or older have difficulty speaking English.	NHGIS	[20,36]	Social
Places of Worship	Places of worship (churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, etc.) per 1,000 people.	ESRI (USA Institutions)	[15,18,38-40]	Social
Shift Work	Percentage of employed population 16 and over in the labor force performing alternate shift work.	NHGIS	[41]	Social
Violent Crime	Number of violent crimes reported per 1,000 people from 8/15-8/16.	GCSO	[18,25,37]	Social

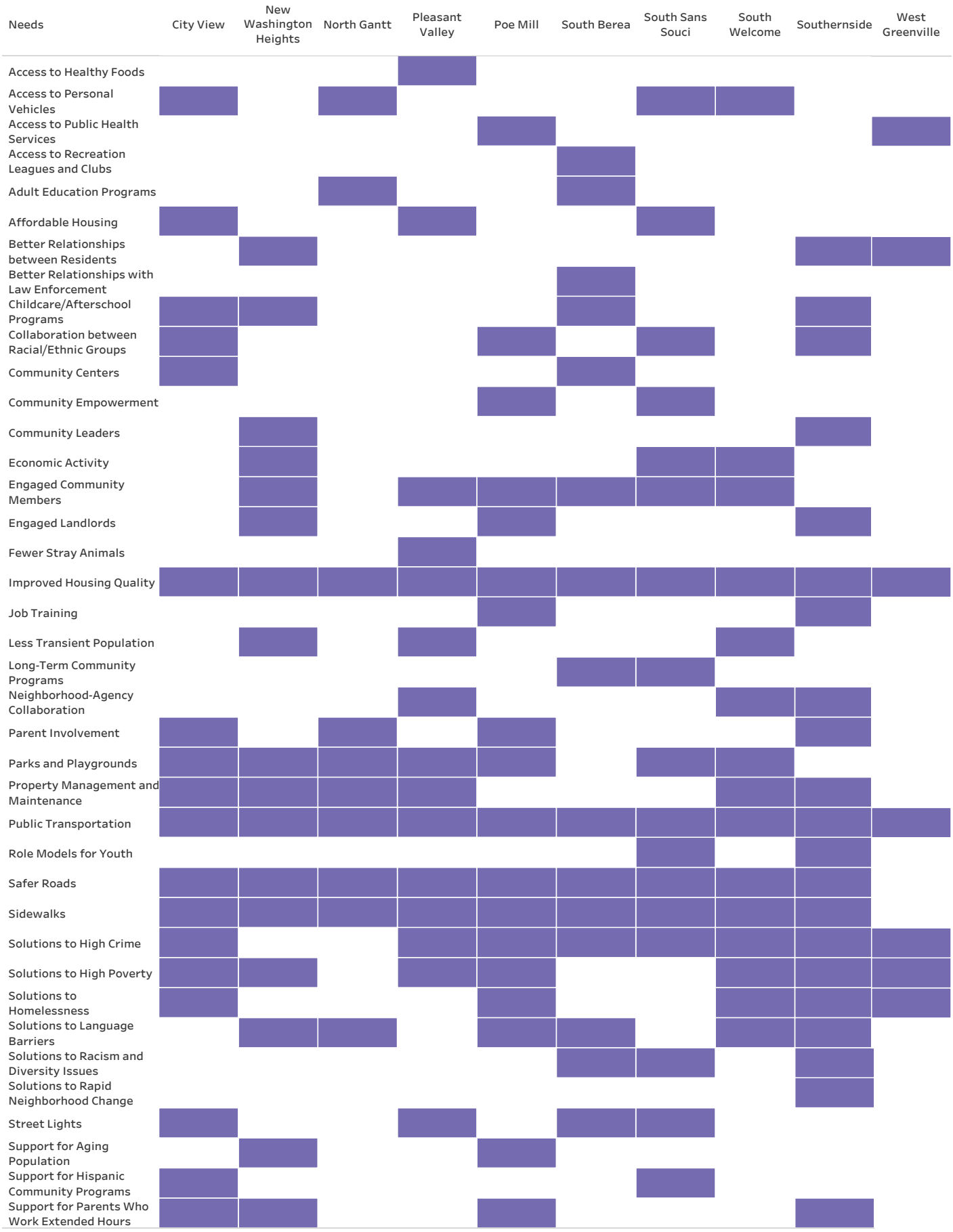
Table 3. Community measures table.

Findings: Community Needs and Assets

Figures 2 and 3 identify both needs and assets for each community as identified by the community stakeholders.
Figures 4-8 compare select measures across communities in the study.

Figure 2: Assets are located on the Y axis and neighborhoods are on the X axis. A purple box indicates that the asset was indentified by community stakeholders.

Figure 3: Needs are located on the Y axis and neighborhoods are on the X axis. A purple box indicates that the need was indentified by community stakeholders.



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	City View (22.01)	City View, Poe Mill (23.03)	New Washington Heights (23.04)	North Gantt (20.01)	Pleasant Valley (15.02)	South Berea (37.04)	South Sans Souci (23.02)	South Welcome (36.02)	Southernside (9.00)	Southernside, West Greenville (7.00)	West Greenville (8.00)
Homeowner Costs	12.39%	13.44%	25.08%	28.38%	31.66%	20.03%	34.47%	12.75%	20.16%	16.09%	16.52%
Median Household Income*	$21,467	$19,950	$17,030	$21,410	$22,792	$24,806	$21,688	$24,914	$16,958	$20,938	$14,491
Poverty Status (Families)	42.33%	49.08%	44.33%	38.10%	36.73%	30.77%	39.17%	38.11%	31.43%	40.31%	49.42%
Renter Costs	47.78%	50.48%	44.77%	37.46%	47.97%	41.95%	49.51%	44.56%	56.94%	53.64%	56.39%
Unemployed	16.27%	13.23%	18.37%	11.96%	16.85%	11.56%	14.01%	14.71%	22.24%	22.08%	17.22%

*=Median Household Income in US dollars.

Figure 4: Financial measures broken down by neighborhood and tract number. Darker green shows higher percentage or dollar amount.

	City View (22.01)	City View, Poe Mill (23.03)	New Washington Heights (23.04)	North Gantt (20.01)	Pleasant Valley (15.02)	South Berea (37.04)	South Sans Souci (23.02)	South Welcome (36.02)	Southernside (9.00)	Southernside, West Greenville (7.00)	West Greenville (8.00)
Renter-Occupied	65.53%	77.04%	68.14%	60.52%	53.03%	52.40%	51.51%	50.10%	74.00%	66.67%	78.30%
Vacancy Rate	16.94%	12.72%	12.98%	10.70%	14.85%	24.10%	13.84%	8.76%	18.32%	9.69%	16.67%

Figure 5: Manufactured measures broken down by neighborhood and tract number. Darker orange shows higher percentage.

	City View (22.01)	City View, Poe Mill (23.03)	New Washington Heights (23.04)	North Gantt (20.01)	Pleasant Valley (15.02)	South Berea (37.04)	South Sans Souci (23.02)	South Welcome (36.02)	Southernside (9.00)	Southernside, West Greenville (7.00)	West Greenville (8.00)
African American	18.39%	35.36%	50.72%	82.54%	81.95%	25.14%	32.80%	53.20%	70.40%	65.93%	80.96%
Age 0-5	9.78%	7.62%	13.96%	10.56%	12.52%	7.03%	7.37%	8.65%	6.37%	3.69%	7.26%
Age 5-17	20.24%	13.94%	15.60%	23.40%	19.66%	28.55%	20.49%	17.57%	16.55%	12.52%	26.83%
Educational Attainment (less than high school)	41.12%	44.80%	27.80%	30.38%	19.92%	36.43%	32.37%	29.83%	29.24%	27.83%	37.68%
Female-Headed Households	29.41%	37.53%	57.17%	61.90%	51.72%	29.11%	39.78%	40.32%	46.53%	43.13%	55.98%
Latino	33.24%	26.10%	16.63%	9.25%	0.00%	31.60%	15.54%	17.80%	2.80%	5.75%	4.74%
Number of Children per 1000*	478.8	300.0	578.2	479.3	588.9	400.3	332.1	387.9	311.8	226.7	308.4
Preschool Enrollment	3.41%	7.19%	18.85%	1.15%	8.84%	10.73%	39.33%	17.83%	12.20%	21.92%	22.11%

*Number of young children (0-5) per 1000 women (15-44).

Figure 6: Human measures broken down by neighborhood and tract number. Darker blue shows higher percentage or higher number per thousand.

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	City View (22.01)	City View, Poe Mill (23.03)	New Washington Heights (23.04)	North Gantt (20.01)	Pleasant Valley (15.02)	South Berea (37.04)	South Sans Souci (23.02)	South Welcome (36.02)	Southernside (9.00)	Southernside, West Greenville (7.00)	West Greenville (8.00)
Linguistic Isolation	18.64%	14.81%	3.37%	3.97%	0.00%	20.88%	5.69%	5.56%	0.00%	0.00%	4.34%
Places of Worship*	1.365	2.490	1.526	1.217	1.908	1.811	2.485	2.634	6.216	10.096	5.352
Shift Work	17.76%	22.75%	27.26%	21.34%	26.04%	20.64%	20.90%	20.52%	22.35%	22.07%	26.97%
Violent Crime**	9.33	17.15	20.11	9.74	8.28	8.91	12.53	7.91	1.73	0.55	2.45

* = Places of worship (churches, synagoges, mosques, temples, etc.) per 1,000 people.
**= Number of violent crimes reported per 1,000 people from August 2015 to August 2016.

Figure 7: Social measures broken down by neighborhood and tract number. Darker purple shows higher percentage or higher number per thousand.

	City View (22.01)	City View, Poe Mill (23.03)	New Washington Heights (23.04)	North Gantt (20.01)	Pleasant Valley (15.02)	South Berea (37.04)	South Sans Souci (23.02)	South Welcome (36.02)	Southernside (9.00)	Southernside, West Greenville (7.00)	West Greenville (8.00)
Natural Land Cover	11.46%	2.75%	26.69%	16.37%	8.60%	13.93%	4.53%	42.19%	1.01%	3.40%	0.00%

Figure 8: Natural measure broken down by neighborhood and tract number. Darker brown shows higher percentage.

Analysis of Community Measures

We compared competing models of explanatory variables (i.e., neighborhood traits) built around the emergent themes from the qualitative data and evidence from the primary literature. The best model (lowest AIC value) included educational attainment, number of places of worship, and shift work. Within the top model, third grade reading scores increased where there were more places of worship per capita and decreased as the percent of alternate shift work and percent of people without a high school degree increased. Other sources of social capital (access to parks, participation in community organizations and recreational sports leagues, etc.), in addition to places of worship, may also play an important role; however, they were too sparsely distributed to be analyzed here. The relationship between shiftwork, educational attainment, and reading scores may speak to the obstacles facing students receiving educational support at home or having responsibilities at home that prevent obstruct studying or prevent them from participating in after-school support programs.

Summary of Findings and Key Takeaways

Data from the study communities illustrate a series of challenges to overcome, yet each of the 10 communities has strong assets to leverage and around which to organize. Furthermore, there are numerous agencies, organizations, and associations with which to partner in community development to drive a Cycle of Success.

Recommendations specific to individual communities can be found at the end of each community profile in the full report. In addition, we discuss in this conclusion the three measures that surfaced through statistical analysis, but Appendixes D-H in the full report provide data on 32 additional measures. These are measures that have been shown to be important either through literature research or through the qualitative research of this study. This data resource can be used by United Way and its partner organizations to further understand the study communities and inform decision making around other issues related to disparate organizational missions.

With qualitative data from 268 interviews and surveys, as well as quantitative data spanning 35 measures, general takeaways can be challenging to elucidate. Here we interpret some of the key results broadly and provide recommendations for conducting future place-based research and programming.

Hypotheses

Use results to formulate hypotheses: The model should be viewed as hypothesis generating, rather than identifying a causal relationship or specific pathway.

Shift work: One hypothetical mechanism might presume that work environments associated with alternate shifts prevent some students from participating in neighborhood after school programming because they need to care for younger siblings while a parent is at work. Another might postulate that this work environment limits the social and educational benefits associated with family dinners (Putnam, 2016). While a third could assume alternate shifts impinge on reading time with children.

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Social cohesion: We treated places of worship as an archetype of social capital. We interpret the results of the analysis as social capital and community cohesion are key elements to building a Cycle of Success.

Educational attainment and the Cycle of Success: The predictive nature of educational attainment in Greenville County provides support for continued investment in the Cycle of Success locally.

Obstacles to success: When interpreting the data, one should not just ask what programs are missing in communities, but also what obstacles may prevent families from taking advantage of services that are or could be offered. Providers can use neighborhood measures to highlight additional obstacles that may prevent students and parents from taking advantage of specific programming and services.

Recommendations for place-based engagement

The need for more interactive forms of data exploration: Static graphs and maps provide useful information for service providers, including characteristics of different neighborhoods. More interactive forms of data exploration could allow for iterative analysis by end-users to address questions on an ongoing basis.

The need for deeper community engagement: Interviews with community residents and leaders showed an interest in having a more direct partnership with the United Way. Representatives from the United Way and other such organizations might consider regularly attending community association meetings and other events.

The need for broader collaboration: Place-based work does not happen in a vacuum, and in reality multiple agencies and organizations focus their resources on overlapping interests. Through identifying areas of concern, organizations should also identify other groups that are investing resources (human and financial) with which to partner.

The need to invest in a new generation of community leaders: Respondents in a number of communities expressed concern that institutional knowledge and community leadership are concentrated amongst older residents. While an aging population may call for obvious needs to support aging in place, an additional and equally as important need is to engage younger people that can carry the torch for the next generation of community residents.

The need for reliable local data: Creating evidence-driven decisions for local contexts requires reliable local data. Access to data at such a fine resolution can be challenging and creates limitations to studies like this. Organizations in Greenville County that are interested in such place-based work should collaborate through data-sharing agreements to help inform each other's decision making. For instance, opportunities exist to work with entities like Greenville County Schools to link data systems and programming. Also, surveys, focus groups, and student/family level analysis could illuminate the role of explanatory variables and mechanisms of influence.

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Researchers

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Angela Halfacre, Co-Principal Investigator
Sofia Kearns
Stephanie Knouse
John Quinn
Mike Winiski

Melanie Brown
Alex Forrest
Rachael Holtsclaw
Miguel Negrete
Michael Robinson
Elisabeth Schatke
Miranda Upton
Katy Waters
Meredith Wettach

Sebastian Barbosa
Sarah Barton
Jennifer-Osorno-Bejarano

Support staff

Hannah Wheeler
Victoria Wornom

Design by: Allie Braun

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