

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY SUBCOMMITTEE



### PURPOSE

Assuring access to affordable utility resources for Kent County's most vulnerable residents while promoting a culture of energy efficiency for all.

### FACTS

- In the United States, the residential building sector accounts for about 20% of greenhouse gas emissions (EPA 2010) and about 20% of energy consumption (EIA 2008). Meeting broad goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by more than 80% by 2050 will require a concentrated effort to reduce the energy use of our existing building stock.
- GVSU Seidman Business School reports in the 2010 *ENTF Utility/Conservation Assistance Report* that 34% more households were helped between 2009 and 2010 (18,814/2009 – 25,144/2010).
- In 2010, emergency payments continued to rise to \$346 per case, exceeding 2009's record level by 7%.

### 2010-2011 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Used the Energy Efficiency brand to strongly move into conservation education and weatherization development.
- Worked with DTE Energy to run a Saturday-long, community resource day at DeVos Place for residents with utility needs.
- Launched system redesign initiatives that:
  - Expanded utility provider coordination; energy conservation education with Kent Intermediate School District and expanded weatherization service coordination.
  - Created a system based emergency payment process including common application and funding management.
- Published the MSU Urban Planning School's *Kent County Energy Study* resulting in:
  - Distributing a catalogue of Kent County energy efficiency services providers and resources.
  - With Home Repair Services of Kent County, running a Senior Volunteer Winter Prep service day.

### 2011-2012 AGENDA

- Continue refining Energy Efficiency Subcommittee operations and management.
- Continue developing utility assistance systems.
- Continue building on energy efficiency successes expanding education, weatherization coordination, advocacy and coordination with affordable, permanent housing development.

## TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE



### PURPOSE

Working to ensure economical, easily available transportation to meet basic needs.

### FACTS

- In 2010, The Rapid provided over 9.7 million rides. By early FY 2011 (October to January), ridership grew another 7.9%.
- *RideLink*, the single access system, met seniors' transportation needs within Kent County providers' capacity constraints.
- Michigan's fiscal crisis caused reduced state support for public transportation operational and capital needs.

### 2010-2011 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- *RideLink* continued to develop with leadership from staff of the Kent County Senior Millage program, The Rapid and the providers. The Rapid filled state budget cut funding gaps.
- ENTF members worked on The Rapid's Transit Master Plan, (<http://www.rapidtmp.org>) and Friends of Transit, (<http://www.rapidyes.org>) millage vote, successfully gaining first phase Plan enhancement funding.
- Placed an updated version of the *Kent County Healthcare Transportation Resource Directory*; first published in 2004, at ([http://www.accesskent.com/Health/pdfs/Transportation\\_Resources\\_Directory.pdf](http://www.accesskent.com/Health/pdfs/Transportation_Resources_Directory.pdf)).
- Members worked on the Kent County Public Transit Needs Assessment and Metro Council's Sustainable Communities Initiative grant submission.

### 2011-2012 AGENDA

- Continue to work on the priorities within the *Getting There Together (GTT)* strategic plan, especially engaging ENTF members and the wider community on the recommendations of the Kent County Public Transit Needs Assessment to be released May 2011.
- Continue working to develop and expand *RideLink* especially focusing on non-senior medical trips.
- Advocate with the new, Trans4M, state level coalition (Transportation for Michigan), for adequate state operating support and capital match funding.

## ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE



### PURPOSE

Insure access to opportunities, community resources and education/training supporting individuals achieving full potential and economic self-sufficiency.

### FACTS

- Michigan lost 100,000 auto-related jobs between 2006 and 2010 (*A Cycle of Change: A Brief Profile of the Automotive Industry in West Michigan, 2007-2010*).
- West Michigan is anticipating an increase of 6,500 in total employment after losing 10,400 net jobs last year. (*Business Outlook for West Michigan – March 2011*).
- Unemployment is still high at 9.6% but lower than last year, although more than half have been out of work for 15 weeks or longer.

### 2010-2011 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Developed plans for increasing local and state connections around economic and workforce issues into 2012, anticipating changes in local and national funding.
- Developed an Economic Development and Workforce Assessment survey mapping education, employment and economic development resources in Kent County.
- Started Subcommittee member training and education activities to build community economic and workforce development awareness and understanding.

### 2011-2012 AGENDA

- Host or co-host a locally focused, community or regional economic and workforce development symposium.
- Continue expanding community awareness of E&WD Subcommittee work with a wider audience to bring resources to the table and expand membership.
- Create funding strategies to provide an ongoing support structure for the E&WD Subcommittee's work.
- Develop best practice tested effective collaboration models and strategies that will enhance E&WD outcome achievement.

## Kent County Essential Needs Task Force 2011 UPDATE



The Kent County ENTF, with hundreds of non-profits, governmental agencies, faith-based organizations, funders and concerned volunteers has been working since 1982 to help Kent County's most vulnerable citizens obtain the basics needed to be self-sufficient. As it approaches 30 years of coordinated systems change collaboration, the Task Force is moving its focus to developing community structures that will result in eliminating poverty's symptoms and causes even more effectively. The ENTF will support Kent County in responding to sea changes in relations with state and federal government as we work to help those in need remain self sufficient.

For more information, visit the ENTF Web site at [www.accesskent.com/ENTF](http://www.accesskent.com/ENTF)

For further assistance on this report:  
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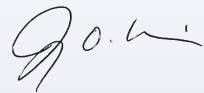
Heart of West Michigan  
United Way

## LETTER FROM CHAIR OF DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

July 2011

This 2011 Annual Update Report describes the successes hundreds of Kent County human service organizations and individuals have achieved during the last year. The Essential Needs Task Force (ENTF) is responding to a changed world with its systemic approach in working to expand opportunities for the community. As traditional essential needs response systems change in uncertain times, the ENTF will provide a stable base that supports Kent County quality of life. Take a moment to read this report and add your support. The work being done by the ENTF is helping to keep Kent County a good place in which to live. Your support is key to this work's continuing success.

Sincerely,



Jerry Kooiman, Chair  
Kent County Board of Social Services

## COORDINATING COMMITTEE



### PURPOSE

*Assessment of community needs, overall publicity and long-range planning.*

The Coordinating Committee, providing ENTFF oversight from government, human service and faith-based sectors, met June 1, 2011 to review accomplishments and basic needs demands and to approve proposals for action that helps Kent County's most vulnerable build toward self-sufficiency.

The Committee endorsed ENTFF 2011 – 2012 work agendas and made the following recommendations:

- The ENTFF should complete, by June 2012, a reorganization plan assuring an adequately sustained organization with sufficient, formal recognition to continue effective work.
- The ENTFF Food Subcommittee should proceed with rebranding to support its role as the community's food and nutrition security forum.
- The Energy Efficiency Subcommittee should immediately request Coordinating Committee and community support as any utility assistance payment crisis is identified.

## LEADERSHIP SUBCOMMITTEE



### PURPOSE

*Providing day-to-day management support to ENTFF direct service subcommittees.*

### FACTS

The Leadership Subcommittee, composed of ENTFF chairs and key support organization members, addresses ongoing Task Force operations issues. The Leadership group assures effective collaboration, management and advocacy.

### 2010-2011 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Continued building a more integrated Task Force response to poverty and encouraged Subcommittees to establish initiatives that increase asset development through access to available government benefits and other no- or low-cost resources.
- Set a stronger agenda for advocacy and education to expand Subcommittee resource and community participation opportunities.
- Expanded systems change connections working with the Kent County Human Services Committee and Michigan Voices for Action, adding increased support to Subcommittees' poverty reduction outcome achievement.
- Began a major assessment of ENTFF organization and sustainability to keep pace with changing environment, economy and government resources that will result in a structure responsive to 21<sup>st</sup> century essential needs service delivery.

### 2011-2012 AGENDA

- Complete work on, publish plans and obtain community endorsement for a reorganized, more strongly sustained and established Essential Needs Task Force.
- Expand ENTFF support for essential services by increasing advocacy and education initiatives.
- Expand systems change connections by continuing work with the Kent County Human Services Committee and Michigan Voices for Action to enhance ENTFF Subcommittee poverty reduction outcomes.
- Continue providing a solid community base for essential service systems work as ENTFF completes its reorganization.

## FOOD SUBCOMMITTEE



### PURPOSE

*To ensure that all people of Kent County have access to safe, affordable and nutritious food.*

### FACTS

- The Kent County Department of Human Services Food Assistance Program (FAP or "food stamp") ended 2010 with 55,803 cases, up 19% from 2009.
- The Access Pantry Network provided 80,488 food services to 16,904 households in Kent County in 2010, down 11.9% from 2009. This is the first decrease in demand for pantry food services in over a decade.
- Over 9.4 million pounds of food were distributed in Kent County, 7.7 million through Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank and 1.7 million in commodities from ACSET.

### 2010-2011 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Completed a new strategic plan, outlining priorities and goals for the next three to five years.
- Instituted annual agency survey and planned for a community food "report card."
- Provided food safety, sanitation, and security training for food pantry staff and volunteers.
- Worked with local agencies and funders to better coordinate FAP outreach and expand low-income households' access to fresh produce.
- Continued to engage in local and state-wide conversations on food security, nutrition, and other food system issues, while expanding connections with the public to increase awareness.

### 2011-2012 AGENDA

- Further develop tools to assess food insecurity and community response; improve quality and quantity of food available, as needed.
- Coordinate with other projects and agencies to identify gaps in existing data, address "food deserts," and further expand FAP use and fresh food access.
- Create a "toolbox" of food assistance and other supportive services information for community use.
- Empower all Kent County households with coordinated nutrition education offerings.
- Continue to strengthen Food Subcommittee membership, ties with policy organizations and communication to the public; secure funding for ongoing staff support to advance these goals.

## COALITION TO END HOMELESSNESS/HOUSING SUBCOMMITTEE



### PURPOSE

*Working to end homelessness in the Greater Grand Rapids area by increasing homeless prevention, coordinating support services and ensuring access to affordable, quality, permanent housing.*

### FACTS

- Affordable Housing Data:
  - In Kent County, 44% of renters can't afford a two bedroom unit at Fair Market Rent (\$746/mo).
  - Housing plus transportation costs force 84,000 households in eight West Michigan counties to live in unaffordable areas.
  - A two-bedroom unit at Fair Market Rent takes a \$14.40 per hour wage in Kent County forcing minimum wage earners to work 1.9 full-time jobs (78 hours per week).
- Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) 2010 data shows:
  - 4,911 people experienced homelessness
  - 45% of these people were homeless for the first time
  - 59% were single individuals; 41% were in families
  - 20% of those served were children

### 2010-2011 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The central intake, Housing Assessment Program, referred 3,127 households for homeless prevention, re-housing or one-time rent assistance services.
- Allocated more than \$5 million to the local homeless/housing crisis response system.
- Expanded data coverage in HMIS to 18 agencies and 44 programs.
- Launched the Roofs to Roots Campaign linking affordable housing and homelessness to increase community awareness, impact policy and expand resources.

### 2011-2012 AGENDA

- Launch an outcome indicator framework to impact service coordination across the homeless system.
- Develop a housing policy platform presenting priority goals to local and state decision makers.
- Increase funding for homeless prevention, rapid re-housing and rent assistance.
- Develop a consolidated funding allocation process.
- Start work on at least 40 new Permanent Supportive Housing units for chronically homeless people.