

NEO CANDO

In Practice

DOCUMENTING HUNGER TRENDS IN GREATER CLEVELAND

Hunger, the uneasy or painful sensation caused by involuntary lack of food, has been shown to correlate with conditions of poverty.

Lacking the means to secure an adequate amount of food to maintain the physical health of a family, many individuals rely on food stamps and food pantries to supplement the food they are able to purchase.

In 2006, Terry Lenahan, a Policy and Planning Associate with the Cleveland-based Center for Community Solutions, set out to track hunger in Cuyahoga County and predict where services would be needed in the coming years.

Terry's measure of hunger included two primary data sources: the number of food stamp recipients and the number of calls to the United Way's First Call For Help hotline. Food stamp recipient data was obtained through the social and economic indicators section of NEO CANDO.

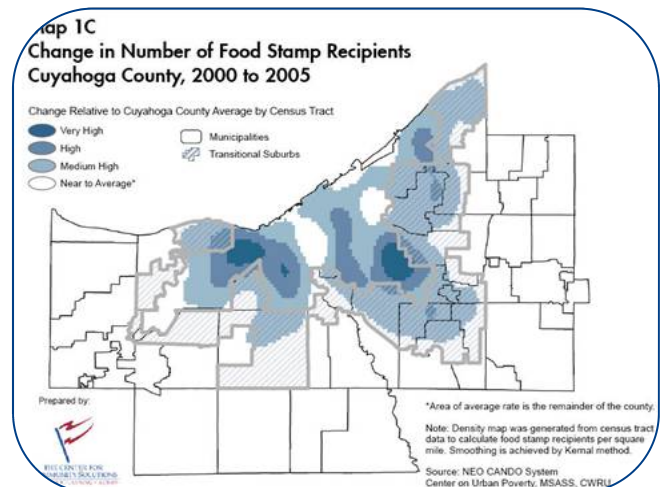
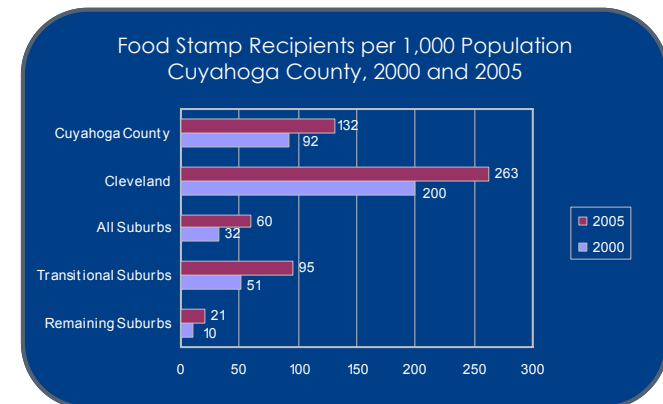
Using NEO CANDO, Terry was able to obtain the number of individuals receiving food stamp assistance in all thirty-six of Cleveland's Statistical Planning Areas, as well as the fifty-eight suburban communities surrounding the City of Cleveland for the years 2000 and 2005. Based on this data, Terry was able to determine the rate of food stamp recipients per 1,000 population for both years, and then to chart the percentage increases in the number of food stamp recipients between 2000 and 2005.

Terry discovered that the total number of food stamp recipients was increasing in Cuyahoga County, the City of Cleveland, and within the Cleveland suburbs. In addition, she found the percentage increase was higher in the suburbs (88.6 percent increase) than in the city (28.7 percent increase). The data suggested that while the total number of people receiving food stamps remained much greater in the City of Cleveland, the rate of increase was higher in suburbs.

A similar trend existed in Terry's analysis of the calls for food assistance placed to First Call for Help. The rate per 1000 population was highest within Cleveland, but the percentage increase was higher in the suburbs.

The final piece of analysis compared the number of food assistance sites in Cuyahoga County to the number of food assistance calls. Terry found that people living within Cleveland accounted for 61 percent of food assistance calls, and that 75 percent of food assistance sites were located in Cleveland. In comparison, the suburbs had only 25 percent of the food assistance sites in the county, yet accounted for 39 percent of food assistance calls.

Based on her findings, policy makers and service delivery organizations, such as food banks and food pantries, are able to anticipate the growing problem of hunger in Cuyahoga County, and begin planning to provide increased service in areas of the county that show an increasing trend of need. Terry feels that NEO CANDO makes it easy to find the specific data she needs to address the social and economic conditions of individuals living in Cuyahoga County. NEO CANDO, in her opinion, makes her job easier, by providing accessible data solutions to address the specific needs of her analysis of social indicators in the area.



Terry's report can be seen at www.CommunitySolutions.com