

Blue Ribbon and Red Flag Themes

As discussed in the first *Community Focus* report, the goal of this project is to assess the overall conditions that deserve recognition and attention in Springfield and Greene County. During the construction of this report, several areas repeatedly emerged representing consistent strengths (blue ribbons) as well as challenges (red flags) facing our community.

As you read this year's report, you will notice reoccurring themes within the twelve sections. Overall, the following topics emerged as the blue ribbon and red flag themes of the 2011 *Community Focus* report.

BLUE RIBBON THEMES

Collaboration

- Entities worked together to maximize resources and reduce duplication efforts
- New partnerships built to work consistently to improve the common good
- Individuals and groups organized to address a single problem together
- Spirit of collaboration used to address big community challenges

Willingness to Address Issues

- Public policy changed to address common problems
- Various faith-based, education, and philanthropic sectors provided support to address issues
- Community issues continued to be tracked through the *Community Focus* Report

Innovation

- Springfield-Greene County participated in new community endeavors
- IDEA Commons supported innovative progress
- Innovative arts and educational collaborative programs/partnerships formed to improve quality of life and attract people to our community
- Social capital integrated into community planning
- Private sector resources committed to improve public issues through innovative endeavors

Looking Towards the Future

- Future initiatives planned and developed to continue to improve our community
- Profit and non-profit organizations collaborated to actively gather community information and reports
- Future community programs driven through citizen efforts

RED FLAG THEMES

Insufficient Public Funding

- Recession negatively impacted public funding
- Tax base did not support public infrastructure needs
- Collaboration efforts impacted by federal, state, and local budget reductions
- Need increased as public funding decreased

Poverty

- All facets of community impacted by poverty
- Growing concern of poverty levels in Springfield and Greene County
- Difficulty impacting increasing cycles of generational poverty versus situational poverty
- Definition of poverty changed with higher levels of working poor than in past
- Unequal access to resources for those in poverty
- Increased concern for acute impact of poverty on children
- Less citizen participation as poverty levels increased

Economic Uncertainty

- Investment and economic development needed to address issues hindered by economic uncertainty
- Trickle-down effect of national economic uncertainty on our community more than in the past
- Unemployment and reluctance to hire directly impacted by economic uncertainty

Child Abuse and Neglect

- Despite attention in the past, child abuse and neglect rates continued to increase
- Greene County had the second highest rate of child abuse and neglect in the state
- Progress to address child abuse and neglect slow due to efforts that addressed other red flags facing our community
- Significant impact of child abuse and neglect on personal and community well-being such as education, unemployment, homelessness, and health