

Community Wellness Scale

A measurement of how a community is doing by considering the situation of its families and institutions: The 11 categories listed at the top of this chart are elements of life that can be measured to determine if & when families in a community are at risk. Descriptors in the rows are not meant to offer a total picture of families functioning in each stratum of well-being, but are intended to provide general characteristics to show where the community as a whole falls in the 3 strata.

	Condition	Scale	Shelter	Nutrition And Food Security	Health Care (Medical, Dental, Mental)	Alcohol/Drug Use	Employment	Income/Budget	Adult Education	Children's Education (Standards of Learning = SOL)	Parenting (*CPS=Child Protective Services)	Family Relations	Spiritual Relationship
	Thriving A community where families are growing and contributing to its well-being	3	Most families live in housing of choice; spend less than 20% of income for shelter; feel safe and secure in home and neighborhood	Most families can afford a variety of foods; have all appliances and utensils to prepare food in a variety of methods; have and use knowledge of basic nutrition	Most families are established with health care; are covered by comprehensive insurance(public or private); they practice preventative health habits and receive preventative health care	Alcohol and drug use is non-existent or minimal in the community. No known drug dealers or houses; no prosperous liquor stores. Parents help children learn skills needed for healthy abuse-free lifestyle	Most Heads of Households (HOH) are employed in full-time permanent jobs that provide good benefits package; career choices and advancement available	Income of most families is sufficient to allow family choices. They are able to save 10% of income; have established relationship with financial institution; pay bills on time, manage debt load without depriving family	Most HOH have post secondary education or training; positive supportive attitude toward learning; take advantage of opportunities to learn; set and pursue long range career and personal goals	School graduation rates of 84 % +; score > avg. in SOL tests; have little or no absenteeism; few discipline problems; offer a variety of learning experiences; kids supervised when out of school	Most children live with parents or permanent guardians; families have mutually agreed upon rules and expectations; negotiate conflicts easily; children happy, socially well adjusted; children enjoy parents	Most families have a strong supportive network of family and friends; they are active in community; have strong, positive family identities, are nurturing; consistent care for family members	Many families are saved, exhibit faith, trust, and commitment to the Lord; are active members in church; exhibit Christian lifestyle; have family prayer and devotions on a regular basis and reach out to those around them
	Safe A community where families are secure and have the potential to move forward with little external assistance	2	Most families live in affordable housing; spend less than 1/3 of income for shelter; able to secure home; feel safe in neighborhood	Most families can get enough food to satisfy hunger through purchase or food banks; have enough utensils and appliances to prepare food; understand basic nutrition; can eat three meals a day	Most families can get medical care when needed. Insurance covers partial cost of care; families can make arrangements to pay balance; they practice sound, basic health hygiene; seek timely treatment when needed	Drug or alcohol abuse is limited in community. No visible drug dealers/houses. Abusers are encouraged to seek treatment. Parents discuss dangers of drugs/alcohol use with children and model appropriate behavior	HOH have marketable skills; most are employed by a secure company offering some benefits; long-term employment	Income of most families sufficient to meet basic family needs; they plan and stick to monthly budget and save when possible; able to obtain secure debt; pay bills on time, delay purchase to handle debt load	Most HOH have high school diploma (GED); ambivalent attitude toward learning; set and pursue short-term career and personal goals; have working knowledge of English Language	Schools have graduation rates of 65% to 85%; score avg. in SOL tests; have moderate absenteeism; No serious discipline problems; offer children safe learning environment ; kids have safe, supervised options for out of school hours	Most children live with parents & are physically & emotionally safe; families have realistic rules and manageable conflicts; children usually happy and outgoing; little violence or aggression; able to relate to parents	Most families have positive extended family support; they feel a part of the community; Families are cohesive with members physically safe and emotionally secure; they seek to change negative habits	Some families are saved, exhibit faith, trust, and commitment to the Lord; plan to or have joined a local church; exhibit developing Christian lifestyle; plan to or have begun family prayer and devotions
	At Risk A community where families cannot meet basic needs. Without external help, growth potential of these families is minimal	1	Lives in temporary or shared housing; spends over 1/3 of income for shelter; Deterioration of housing conditions; feels afraid in home neighborhood	Families do not have enough food; family members are hungry; they can't prepare food due to lack of utensils, appliances and/or knowledge; little or no nutritional knowledge; eat when food is available	Families can't always get medical care; many have family members who are not covered by insurance. Inadequate income to care properly for self, ignore health problems	Use of illegal drugs/abuse of alcohol or prescription drugs is common & visible. Drug dealers / liquor stores are present. Little or no discussion of drug/alcohol prevention in home; parents exhibit abusive behavior	Most HOH have minimum or entry-level job skills; short-term, temporary or no employment; no benefits, no growth opportunities; lack job seeking skills	Income of most families is insufficient to meet basic needs; they have spontaneous and inappropriate spending; no savings; are unable to obtain credit; have regular unpaid bills, and an overwhelming debt load	Many HOH are school dropouts; have history of academic failure; do not consider learning important; neither set nor pursue systematic career and personal goals	Schools have 35% + drop-out rates; score < avg. in SOL tests; have high absenteeism; many discipline problems; schools poorly equipped or in poor condition; not enough safe supervised options for kids when out of school	*CPS involved w/children in many households; children run away from home; families set unrealistic or nonexistent rules, constant conflict or neglect; children unhappy, withdrawn, violent; fearful	Many families struggle with family relations; they are isolated from one another; no family identity; family make-up changes frequently; many are subjected to physical violence or neglect	Most in the community are not saved; live self-destructive lifestyle; don't believe in God, the Bible, or Christ; have no religious affiliation or practice a faith adversarial to Christianity; express little or no interest in church

Completing the entire matrix will give a good picture of a Community's well-being. It will also help identify areas where intervention is needed in order for families to achieve self-sufficiency and health. (The matrix was created by Jodie Nelson Chiricosta by modifying the Family Wellness Scale, Source: Young, F. Gardner, S., Coley, S., Schorr, L. & Bruner, C. Making a difference: Moving to Outcomes Based Accountability for Comprehensive Service Reforms. Resource Brief 7. National Center of Service Integration, c/o Child and Family Policy Center, 218 6th Ave Suite 2021, Des Moines, IA 50309. Phone 515-280-9027. Used with permission. VA Cooperative Extension. Family and Consumer Sciences. OBT FTWN Staff (Spiritual Input))

