

DELAWARE COUNTY



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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Commissioner

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To: Greg Waldron  
From: William Moon  
RE: Comparative Demographics  
Date: 9/29/08 (Revised)

On occasion it is helpful to take an evaluative look at how Social Services programs compare with the distribution of County population. I first did this in the early 1980s and have found that when there are changes they are slow to manifest themselves. The data reported in this vignette is quite similar to data reported several years ago. This document was originally prepared on 9/22/08 but has been revised by adding further information about the impact that housing has on the distribution of our County's economically disadvantaged individuals and families.

In this update to how programs and services are concentrated I have analyzed four of our leading income based programs and used the Town-wide data for Sidney and Walton as a comparative model.

Base information: The Town of Sidney has a population of 6,109 representing 12.7% of the County's total population. The Town of Walton has a population of 5,607 or 11.7% of the County's total population. We looked at these four programs: Public Assistance; Medicaid; Food Stamps; HEAP. Note for comparative purposes that each of these programs has an income based eligibility scale. Public Assistance is cash assistance available to persons without income at all or such a small amount that they earn 50% of the federal poverty level or less (\$330 per month for a household of one). Food Stamps has eligibility up to more than 130% of poverty or a maximum of \$1,127 per month for a household of one person. Medicaid eligibility covers 20 different categories with levels up to \$673 per month for a household of one to \$1,702. The highest eligibility levels are found in the HEAP program is with an upper eligibility level of \$1,963 per month for a household of one.

Data base: As of September 1, 2008 Delaware County had 149 cases of Public Assistance or a total of 247 individuals; 4,295 cases of Medicaid or a total of 6,529 individuals; 1,777 cases of Food Stamps or 3,268 individuals and 2,051 cases of HEAP or 4,466 individuals. I

will note here for statistical purposes that the size of the Public Assistance caseload is so small that we should consider its incidence in either Walton or Sidney as skewed.

<u>PROGRAM</u>	<u>SIDNEY-cases/%</u>		<u>WALTON – cases/%</u>	
Public Assistance	40	27%*	61	40%*
Medicaid	583	14%	903	21%
Food Stamps	269	15%	371	21%
HEAP	215	11%	349	17%

\*Conclusions: As noted above, there is a bunching of Public Assistance cases in both Walton and Sidney which is characteristic of the fact that these two towns contain the most affordable housing alternatives. In fact, as discussed further below, housing and both its availability as well as its condition is a key factor in the distribution of where the economically disadvantaged reside. Also there is an underlying characteristic that is not displayed by this data.

In our Public Assistance caseload there are 64 cases of children-only. These cases mean that a child is on Public Assistance with NO adults or parents. Typically in these 64 cases the children are residing with a grandparent or a single parent that is disabled and being supported by that disability program; i.e. SSI, SSD or possibly worker compensation. Please note that because of these child type cases the actual number of traditional Public Assistance cases is 85. Also, more than 50% of the child only cases reside in either Sidney or Walton.

Walton's population tends to be, in the aggregate, a more disabled and lower income producing when compared with the other 18 towns either individually or County-wide. This statistic has remained roughly consistent and at the same level between 2000 and today. The elevated availability of housing in Walton is a major factor for this disproportionate representation. Walton has many units, due to their condition, which command low market rates. In addition, there is a large number of units eligible for subsidy under one or more of the HUD housing programs. Sidney has a slightly elevated representation when compared with towns other than Walton on an individual or County-wide basis. If we go back to 1980 we will find the overall pattern of a more disabled and lower income producing population still evident in Walton although Walton's level of representation then was not as high as it is today. Sidney's past representation is fairly consistent with its present status but a community-wide long term housing improvement program did eliminate some of its very substandard housing producing moderate upgrades.