



## Mapping Delawarean's Basic Needs: *Asset Mapping Shows Need and Opportunity for Streamlined Service Provision*

### INTRODUCTION

This brief is the culmination of the Institute for Public Administration's work with the Delaware Manufacturing Extension Partnership. Prepared for the Delaware Division of Libraries (DDL), this brief begins by describing the current process to accessing social services in Delaware, the barriers for accessing services, and recommendations to streamline service provision. This work was completed through the lens of Delaware librarians, who serve as liaisons between the general public and the social services they seek. The brief is meant to update partner organizations on the current work of Delaware Libraries and seek out partners' engagement moving forward.

Delaware is a small state with a high degree of connectivity between people; yet, many Delawareans struggle to find the services they need. Delaware public libraries are on the front lines of this struggle every day. In addition to providing books and Internet access, Delaware's library system is also the social infrastructure that connects customers to applications for unemployment, jobs, housing, and more. Seeing the difficulty Delawareans face when trying to find and request services, the Delaware Division of Libraries seeks to connect all of the current, statewide efforts to streamline the access to services.

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## CONNECTING TO SERVICES

A team of DDL Social Innovators and AmeriCorps VISTAs worked with Delaware public libraries to develop connections and services for people in need. Over a decade, stories of those that they served were collected. After analyzing these stories, specific needs and patterns were identified and sorted based on prevalence. These basic-needs categories focus on the lower levels of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, such as food and shelter, and social determinants of health, which include aspects of an individual’s social, physical, and built environments, as well as their access to health services. The initial analysis confirmed that there is a sequence to addressing needs and providing a stable foundation for people to move forward.

Using their professional information management expertise, DDL created a taxonomy to organize the resources available to meet these basic needs. In partnership with the University of Delaware’s Institute for Public Administration (IPA) and the Delaware

Manufacturing Extension Partnership, DDL mapped the needs of those experiencing a crisis, current providers, and services in place to address the crises.

## MAPPING COMMUNITY ASSETS

Mapping is a tool that relies on a core belief in asset-based community development. Communities offer needed services—assets—that should be highlighted and encouraged. An asset map is created by identifying available community resources, which can be physical, financial, human, or organizational. Overall, asset mapping provides better insights into the location and distribution of services in present time.

An asset map can take a variety of forms. It can be an actual map, which shows the location, services, programs, and other assets. It also can be a list of programs delineated by category. Furthermore, a map can be based on the need or desire of the community and/or stakeholder group.

### Basic Needs Chart Developed by the Delaware Division of Libraries

	 Food/Nutrition	 Shelter/Housing	 Clothing/Hygiene	 Health/Mental Health	 Technology
State Service Provider	Delaware Health and Social Services (DHSS), Department of Education (DOE)	Delaware State Housing Authority	Delaware Health and Social Services (DHSS)	Delaware Health and Social Services (DHSS)	
NEEDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to healthy food</li> <li>Financial assistance for food purchase</li> <li>Meals for self and children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heating assistance</li> <li>Rent assistance</li> <li>Shelter</li> <li>Storage (physical items or documents)</li> <li>Transitional, temporary, or substandard housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coats</li> <li>Clothing</li> <li>Hair cut</li> <li>Laundry</li> <li>Shoes</li> <li>Showers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to doctors, clinics</li> <li>Dental and optical coverage</li> <li>Insurance</li> <li>Medicaid</li> <li>Specialist appointment</li> <li>Counseling (for mental health, substance abuse, trauma)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cellphone</li> <li>Credit/Debit Card</li> <li>Stable email account</li> <li>State and social security ID cards</li> </ul>

Mapping assets is a crucial communications tool. The mapping process:

- Educates the public on existing services in their community
- Identifies the gap areas where services are needed
- Highlights high-density areas, where duplication or oversaturation of services might occur
- Informs State decisions for distributing fiscal resources and diverse programs
- Supports interagency cooperation in meeting community needs

## DELAWARE'S CURRENT ASSETS

Utilizing DDL's network, IPA mapped known assets by putting together a list of services, providers, and access points.

Through interviews and combining existing databases, IPA found that:

1. Despite hundreds of service providers in Delaware, the services are not always accessible to the populations that need them most. For example:
  - In western Sussex County, childcare facilities are too far away for families in need to access.
  - Homeless shelters are specific to sex, age, or veteran status. Thus, many men with children struggle to find available beds.
2. On average, Delawareans must visit three different places to access a single service. For example:
  - Someone looking for childcare must first get doctor's records for their child, then search for facilities in their area, then see if there is space available at the centers they find. Caregivers also need to reach out to see if they qualify for Purchase of Care benefits and daycare facilitates that accept the benefit.

 <b>Training/Education Literacy</b>	 <b>Childcare</b>	 <b>Transportation</b>	 <b>Legal</b>	 <b>Employment/ Income</b>
<b>Department of Education (DOE), Higher Ed</b>	<b>Department of Education (DOE), Office of Early Childhood</b>	<b>Delaware Department of Transportation (DELDOT)</b>	<b>Courts</b>	<b>Department of Labor</b>
<b>Computer skills</b> <b>GED</b> <b>English language skills</b> <b>Literacy</b> <b>Study skills</b> <b>Workplace skills</b>	<b>Access to childcare</b> <b>Affordable childcare</b> <b>Purchase of Care</b>	<b>Access to transportation, public or private</b> <b>Bike share</b> <b>DART bus tickets</b> <b>Funds for gas or bus tickets</b> <b>License, insurance</b>	<b>Immigration</b> <b>Outstanding tickets or warrants</b> <b>Probation/parole</b> <b>Record expungement</b>	<b>Adequate pay</b> <b>Assistance to complete/submit application online</b> <b>Benefits</b> <b>Interview</b> <b>Wardrobe</b> <b>Job and income, financial literacy and management</b>

Based on the Basic Needs Chart, the comprehensive map includes 10 categories of needs:

1. Food & Nutrition
2. Shelter & Housing
3. Clothing & Hygiene
4. Health & Mental Health
5. Technology
6. Training & Education
7. Childcare
8. Transportation
9. Legal
10. Employment & Income

Since various entities and providers have their own databases of services that address these needs, IPA compiled a list of the most prominent and robust databases, such as DHSS, Delaware211, Food Bank of Delaware, UnitedWay, Christiana Care, and Unite Delaware. All of these databases are housed separately and may have different target audiences. Some are meant for consumers to use independently; others are meant to be used by providers themselves, or even to be used by social workers. All differ in their level of comprehensiveness, and all struggle to continuously keep their platforms up-to-date with programs, contact information, availability, and specialty populations. **DDL has now linked to these resources on LibGuide.**

## LiBGuide for Delaware Service Providers, from the Delaware Division of Libraries

The screenshot shows the LibGuides interface for 'Delaware Partners: Food/Nutrition'. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'DelawareLibraries.org' and a search box. Below the navigation bar, the page title is 'Delaware Partners: Food/Nutrition'. A search box is also present on the right side of the page. The main content area is titled 'Food & Nutrition' and contains a paragraph stating: 'In Delaware, 117, 320 people are struggling with hunger; 34,750 of them are children. <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/delaware>'. Below this paragraph, there are two bullet points: 'Food Bank of Delaware' and 'Delaware 211'. To the left of the main content area, there is a sidebar with a 'Hunger' section. The 'Hunger' section includes a definition: 'Need food for their pantry. Lack of access to food due to financial constraint, food deserts, etc.' It also lists 'Programs/Resources' such as 'Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)', 'Catholic Charities', 'University of Delaware Cooperative Extension', and 'SNAP Outreach (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)'. Under 'Free Meals for Children', it lists 'Summer Food Service Program'. The 'Food Pantries' section lists 'Food Bank of Delaware', 'Hope Dining Room', and 'Sunday Breakfast Mission'. It also mentions 'Also, St. John the Beloved Parish Communities/Churches' and 'School Food Pantries'. To the right of the main content area, there is a sidebar with a 'Nutrition' section. The 'Nutrition' section includes a definition: 'Lack of nutritious foods. Lack of nutrition awareness and/or education or experience with cooking/accessing nutritious food.' It also lists 'Programs/Resources' such as 'Camp FRESH (ChristianaCare)', 'First State Community Action Agency', and 'University of Delaware Cooperative Extension'. It also mentions 'Also, Healthy Food Access (no Delaware agencies)', 'Cooking Classes', and 'Financing nutritious food shopping'.

# IDEAL STATE

With multiple databases available to find services, it can be very overwhelming for a person in crisis to navigate. Thus, people often seek assistance in gaining necessary services. However, if someone needs several services, they may need to see multiple people to gain just one service. This map illustrates the flow of seeking assistance from the customer's perspective in an ideal

experience. The ideal state focuses on streamlining the process in which the service(s) are provided to the customer. This will improve the customer experience and ensure the customer receives the appropriate service when needed with minimal hand-offs to different providers. Ideally, one provider would be able to access information on all areas of need, regardless of the provider's specialization.

## Future State Map: Libraries, High Level Map of Services & Resources to Meet Basic Needs



### Standard Consistent Triage Protocol

- People connector: Librarian/Social Innovator/Partner

### Standardized Assessment Protocol

- Professional development in listening, coaching, and problem solving skills

### Standard Approach Using Basic Needs Chart

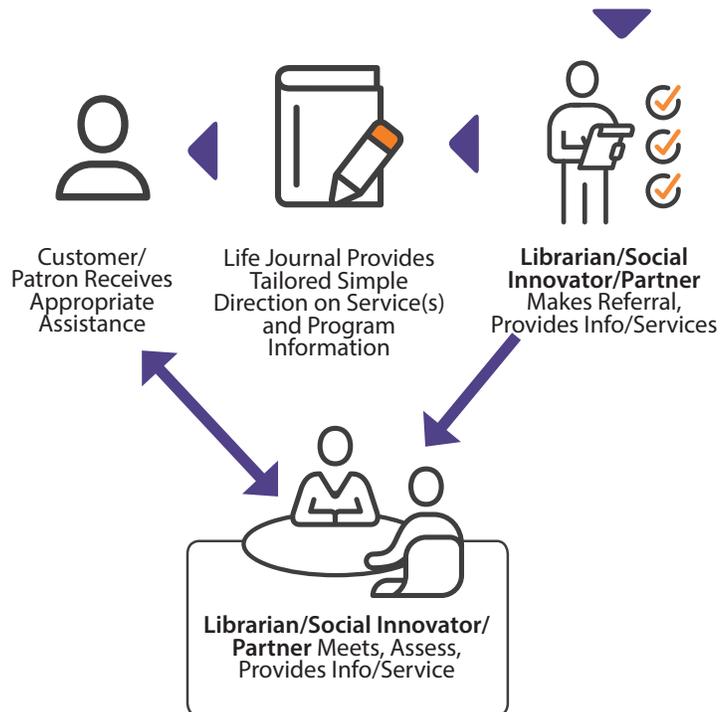
- Identifies available resources. Co-location of resources at public libraries (DHSS, DOL, etc.)

### Data Collection on Impact

- Data collected to measure impact and improve process to provide assistance/ services

### Life Journal

- Program information included in the life journal. Customers return seeking additional help.



## COUNTERMEASURES & NEXT STEPS

Equipped with their maps, DDL invited librarians and partners to a town hall meeting in December 2019. Partners were asked to discuss the maps and gaps they experienced. Over 160 librarians and partners participated and noted that they already have an established resource guide for sharing this information, but struggle to identify services available in real time (i.e., hard to know when shelters are full). Furthermore, there is not a streamlined database of services designed for providers who are responsible for service delivery. At DDL's town hall, providers expressed interest in an inward facing database, which would allow providers to communicate directly with one another in real time regarding new program updates, availability or at-capacity status, and updated contact information.

## CALL TO ACTION

In order to address the need for a single, up-to-date, inward and outward facing streamlined database and platform of services, Delaware services providers must

better integrate partnerships and database platforms. This means working toward a single, streamlined database of services with both an outward and inward facing mechanism.

When partners begin working on this streamlining, it is important to keep the Basic Needs Chart taxonomy at the forefront. Without this common language and organization, any platform will struggle to be user-friendly, complete, and effective.

Ultimately, creating a streamlined, public-facing platform, grounded in an organized taxonomy, will allow service providers to effectively address and meet Delawareans' basic needs. By participating in a shared platform, service providers will be equipped to address community needs and make progress. DDL looks forward to collaborating with all partners to make this vision a reality.

For more information, please see the LibGuide or contact the State Librarian, Annie Norman at [annie.norman@delaware.gov](mailto:annie.norman@delaware.gov).



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