

Character Means Caring.

Character is Compassionate.

An important feature of a character town is its compassion; its interest in taking care of its people: vagrants, homeless, gangs, immigrants and families needing short-term assistance.

Towns with character take the time to make sure all of its citizens have proper shelter, nutrition, health care and education. Towns with character devote the needed time and attention to helping the weakest of the bunch; the impoverished, impaired, elderly and young. Abuses aren't tolerated, yet addressed as a public health issue, not a crime.

Social Work, an Important Profession.

"In 1915, an invitational lecture at the National Conference of Charities and Corrections (the nation's leading authority on professional education) was presented by Dr. Abraham Flexner, entitled ["Is Social Work a Profession?"](#) He asserted that the field of social work lacked specificity, technical skills and specialized knowledge and therefore could not be considered a profession. Since then, the practice of social work has evolved dramatically and now meets those same criteria as set forth by Dr. Flexner."

<http://info.staffingplus.com/bid/189254/4-Critical-Industry-Trends-for-Social-Workers>

Here in the first fifth of the 21st Century, social work, like the other professions, is transitioning to a tech-dominated field of service. Federal, state and county health and human service agencies are becoming technologically savvy in running their agencies and providing client services.

Purpose.

The purpose of this section is to explore the growing number of client social services provided with technological tools and processes. The opportunities to use the new technologies to ease pain, improve health, raise living standards, reduce abuses and elevate the quality of life for everyone is immense.

Character Towns as Social Servants.

Cities with character address the three realms of humanity: physical, economic and social – and the purpose of government is to see that the three realms are protected and enhanced in an equitable manner for all of the city's society.

Typically, cities rely on federal, state, regional and county governments to provide social services to city residents. When these third parties provide the range and level of services required by city residents, problem solved. When city residents have issues or needs not met by these third party agencies, cities have a responsibility to act.

The table on the next page lists the range of services provided by the Orange County FL Department of Families, Health and Social Services. This is probably not an exhaustive list of all services provided by the federal, state and regional agencies, but it provides an indication of the breadth of situations being addressed.

Character towns care about their residents receiving the services they need to lead productive, safe and healthy lives. The illustrative list that follows gives the scope of the issues and services required.



Families, Health & Social Services

A helping hand in a time of need

LINK: <http://www.orangecountyfl.net/familieshealthsocialsvcs.aspx#.XIFZPMA3mcx>

[After School/Summer Programs](#)

(A safe and fun environment for your child...)

[Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

(ADA coordination and information...)

[At-Risk Youth Programs](#)

(Families in crisis...)

[Centralized Eligibility](#)

(New Eligibility questionnaire...)

[Community Action Division](#)

(Helping individuals and families...)

[Consumer Fraud](#)

(Don't be a victim of fraud...)

[Citizens' Review Panel](#)

(Fund Distribution Process...)

[Crisis Assistance Program](#)

(Emergency help, Rent, Mortgage, Utilities...)

[Drug Free Coalition](#)

(Our community against drug abuse...)

[Early Education & Pre-School](#)

(Building solid foundations...)

[Energy Bill Assistance](#)

(Help paying your electric bill...)

[Employment Assistance](#)

(Referrals, Training, Labs...)

[Family Resource Program](#)

(Learn to budget...)

[Family Support Services](#)

(Family counseling, Children's immunizations...)

[Heroes Against Heroin](#)

(Get drug prevention help and resources...)

[Heroin Task Force](#)

(Heroin and drug prevention recommendations...)

[HIPAA Privacy Officer](#)

(Health, Education, Life Protection...)

[Holiday Heroes Toy Drive](#)

(Toy drive and distribution...)

[Homelessness Services and Initiatives](#)

(Effort to end homelessness...)

[Let's Read](#)

(Improve literacy at the library...)

[Living With HIV/AIDS](#)

(How to get help, What to expect...)

[Medical Examiner](#)

(District 9 Medical Examiner's Office...)

[Mental Health](#)

(Substance abuse, Homelessness...)

[Mosquito Safety](#)

(Methods of control and protection...)

[OCFL LEADS Program](#)

(Youth employment program...)

[Prescription Drug Task Force](#)

(Mayor Teresa Jacobs' initiative...)

[Ryan White Planning Council](#)

(Get involved with your community...)

[Secondary Care Medical Services](#)

(See a doctor, Even if uninsured...)

[Senior Services](#)

(Join lunch programs and more...)

[Veterans Services](#)

(How to file claims...)

Social Service Apps.

High-tech hardware, software and processes are being employed to solve specific problems.

To list only a few:

- **Manchester NH** – “The city set up a program, known as Safe Stations, whereby anyone struggling with drug addiction can walk into a fire station seeking help. About 200 people come every month. ‘People trust firemen,’ says Daniel Goonan, the station’s chief. ‘We don’t ask for insurance or anything – there’s no stigma.’ It is an innovative strategy dealing with the American opioid epidemic in one of its centers.” [The Economist, February 23rd, 2019, page 21]
- **Columbus OH** – Prenatal Trip Assistance. In November, Columbus voted to fund a ride-share app [developed pro bono in 2016 by Sidewalk Labs] for low-income mothers. The pilot program, collaboration between CelebrateOne and Smart Columbus, will help pregnant women reach pre-natal appointments, supporting access to health care throughout pregnancy and following birth. The pilot targets women in eight Columbus neighborhoods where the infant mortality rate is highest.” [Planning Magazine, March 2019, page 20]
- **Capella University’s** Faculty Chair of Social Work, Brian Christenson, shares his thoughts about applications of technology to social issues:
 - Case planning, assessments and treatment plans can all be done digitally and remotely.
 - Case management with schedules, prescriptions and follow-up services can be improved with technological tools.

- **Related Ideas**

- Video cameras and conferencing can be used for everything from follow-up visits to finalizing adoptions by video in court.
 - Counseling related to social media bullying and people’s emotional reactions to things found on-line require social workers to stay current on social media programs and apps.
 - Compliance with HIPAA requirements is facilitated by technology.
 - Voice activated lights, music, climate control thermostats and communication devices are tech advances.
 - Mobility assistance has been enhanced by recent technology.
 - Tools for the visually, hearing and voice impaired populations have benefitted from recent technologies.
 - Educational programs for people in remote areas, people with disabilities, people with physical access issues.
- **Technology has impacted and changed social work** just as it has on every other profession as discussed in the article [Information and Communication Technologies in Social Work](#).
 - **Areas of assistance using technology:**
 - Disease control and prevention,
 - Substance Abuse Centers,
 - Case worker in a Hospital,
 - Children's and Veterans' Services,
 - Domestic Violence Organizations,
 - Women's Shelters, Elder Care,
 - Anti-Bullying,
 - LGBT Organizations and
 - Research.

Conclusions: Character Main Streets Care.

1. The social component of a city's sustainability plan includes plans and programs that deal with the human element, namely the city's:
 - a. Civility and sociability,
 - b. Care for the disadvantaged and
 - c. Health, education, welfare and safety of the citizenry.
2. The many services listed above reflect the range of social services provided by typical communities; the city's responsibility is to make sure these services are available to all city residents.
3. Federal, state, regional and county programs are reliable partners when they work to provide the full range of social services needed by the city's residents and employees.
4. Supplemental city programs to fill gaps in the offerings of other agencies may be required in order to provide citizens with the full range of required services.
5. Technology can improve service coverages and outcomes while reducing costs when thoughtfully employed.
6. Leveraging assets is the approach of choice; use the assets you have to get additional resources you need.
7. The city is in the pivotal position to encourage and enforce collaborations and cooperations that use available resources to reach beyond the primary benefits offered and to create multiple benefits by:
 - a. Using recreation and school facilities to provide meals, shelter and health care to those going without.
 - b. Using the city's economic base to provide employment and job training to those willing.
 - c. Using the city's financial institutions to reduce poverty, student debt and abusive payday loan situations.
 - d. Using the city's financial institutions with support from the city and its agencies to provide responsible financial resources to new and struggling businesses.
 - e. Using the city's intellectual, regulatory and financing resources to continue to address the affordable housing needs of the community.
 - f. Using the city's medical and health institutions to prevent disease and injury, to improve nutrition and to team with social service agencies regarding teen pregnancies, drug abuse, child and spouse abuse, human trafficking and other social issues.
 - g. Using the resources of the city in conjunction with the electrical power provider to ensure that cold weather does not injure any city resident.
 - h. Providing directly or through contract, high-speed broadband internet service to every neighborhood and employment center in the city to deliver public health, education and safety services.
8. Character is about caring and compassion; character towns choose to be thoughtful and active in using all their resources to improve the quality of life for all of the city's people.