

Press Release

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Essex County Community Foundation Launches Impact Essex County, a Community Indicators Website

CGR-Created Website Will Track Data, Analyze Trends

Danvers, MA (November 10, 2016) – A new community indicators project for Essex County, MA will help show where the county shines and where it struggles.

Sponsored by the Essex County Community Foundation and developed by CGR, Impact Essex County will analyze and track about 100 data points on topics including the economy, health, and education. This “state of the community” website presents key trends on important issues that affect the region, monitors the direction of each measure over time, and makes raw data available for download and use by anyone.

“The [Impact Essex County](#) website is aimed at creating a holistic picture of Essex County to deepen knowledge and understanding of our community and its local areas,” said Julie Bishop, Vice President for Philanthropy for the Essex County Community Foundation, who oversees the project. “The metrics tracked will inform not only ECCF but also all community stakeholders to facilitate collaboration within Essex County and monitor the impact of collective efforts.”

The Community Foundation will launch countywide projects to make positive change on 1-3 key issues, with progress over time measured by the data provided on the website.

“Data Stories,” a new feature developed by CGR, helps to highlight potential focus areas by making connections across indicators and topics in areas that deserve additional attention. The shortage of affordable housing in Essex County, impact of the opioid crisis, and shortcomings of the transportation system are current highlights in the section of the website.

Indicators on the website are grouped into seven topic areas that affect the health and progress of the region: Children and Youth, Community Life, Demographics, Economy and Workforce, Education, Financial Self-Sufficiency and Health. For each, the site presents a dashboard of leading indicators and summary of recent trends, while individual indicator pages analyze the measure in context and provide data in interactive charts showing trends over time.

The site's indicators were chosen by considering available data points and conferring with local leaders in the public and nonprofit sectors to decide which ones would best highlight important trends and issues affecting Essex County. Selected indicators range from economic data like unemployment and housing to local areas of interest such as beach quality and arts and culture participation.

In addition to data for Essex County, data is included for the counties of Middlesex, MA, Westchester, NY and Lake, IL - counties identified by the Essex County Community Foundation and CGR as having shared characteristics and providing a good point of reference Essex County. The site also provides information on current efforts to advance the region and links to community resources in each of the topic areas.

The Impact Essex County project stemmed from a need to enhance and consolidate community performance data for use by the many organizations and individuals that would like to better understand regional trends and strategically identify challenges and opportunities. While other stand-alone organizations may collect data separately on different aspects of a community's health, workforce, education, and more, these data usually aren't available in one place or updated as new data becomes available. "We want users of the site to feel confident in their decision-making when taking on new efforts or analyzing existing programs," said Bishop. "The Impact Essex County site provides that confidence for all users by providing the most recent data available in an easy to understand format."

To view the Impact Essex County Community Indicators website, go to ImpactEssexCounty.org.

About CGR

Founded in 1915, Center for Governmental Research is an independent, nonprofit management consulting organization delivering expertise in government and education, economics and public finance, health and human services, and nonprofits and communities. CGR has created community indicators projects for communities across the county. To learn more, visit www.cgr.org. To learn more about CGR's community indicators offerings, visit www.communityprofiles.org.

About Essex County Community Foundation

The Essex County Community Foundation promotes philanthropy in Essex County by managing charitable funds for donors, providing grants and services to nonprofit organizations and engaging in community leadership initiatives. Our ultimate goal is to improve the quality of life in our thirty-four towns and cities.