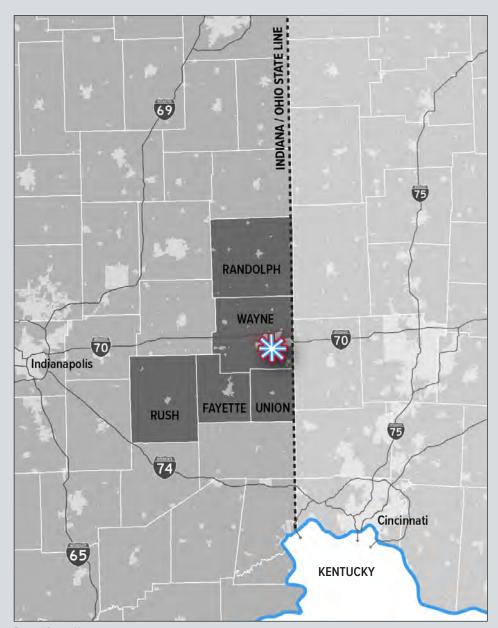# CHALLENGE #6

## Richmond, as the only urban center in East Central Indiana, is the primary provider of social services for a rather large region.

Social services are programs or services offered by either the government or sometimes local organizations for the benefit of the larger community. These programs are intended to aid disadvantaged, distressed, or vulnerable persons or groups. While often a loss for a community's finances, social service programs such as these provide an important safety net to residents. Types of assistance may include, but are not limited to food, housing, education, drug rehabilitation services, transportation, and disability mental health support.

It is a well-researched characteristic of modern urban areas that disadvantaged populations tend to be concentrated in inner city areas. This "vicious cycle" is apparent, where public services locate in central cities in order to be closer to their clients, and new clients move to the central city to access the services that they cannot receive elsewhere; meanwhile, affluent households that have the ability to do so move into further-flung neighborhoods to avoid contact with disadvantaged populations and the disinvestment that can result. This cycle represents a double-setback for the inner city hosting these services – a lowered ability to raise revenues from a declining tax base, combined with increased outlays resulting from rising social service demand.

The City of Richmond, as the only urban center in east Central Indiana, is the primary provider of social services for a rather large region. If we define a rough "market area' for these services as a circle 15 miles around the City (the central areas for Muncie, IN, Dayton, OH, and Indianapolis IN are respectively 36, 40, and 70 miles away), then Richmond serves as a primary social service provider for more than 85,000 people. Focusing in on Wayne County reinforces this finding, as the City houses the County's only two homeless shelters, and 11 of its 13 addiction and recovery facilities.

This spatial pattern creates challenges for both providers and clients. For the providers, resources may be limited relative to the service area, because municipalities outside



*Regional Context Map*

of Richmond do not contribute to these services. For clients not located in Richmond, services are inaccessible if transportation is not available, and a need for ongoing services may even necessitate a change in residence.

In order to provide a better-funded and more accessible safety net for persons in need, Richmond must CONNECT...

- Service agencies with a broader net of potential funding sources, potentially including Wayne County and surrounding municipalities.
- Potential clients with needed services.
- Existing clients who need housing with quality options.
- Former clients with ongoing support services that help them integrate into the community.

Community Survey Results

### I WANT TO IMPROVE...

"Access to assistance for substance abusers."

"The quality of programs offered. Free is nice, but free doesn't give you the ability to expand and grow."

"Mental health care and addiction recovery programs."

"Access to technical training."

### WE NEED MORE...

"Child Care."

"Treatment Centers."

"Affordable housing and access to mental health care."

"Low income housing and support for those on disability, family housing, more partnerships & collaboration between services."

### WE NEED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT...

"Providing addiction services and family support. Crumbling neighborhoods and home repairs."

"Uplifting the quality of life of citizens by investing in our social infrastructure."