Wilmington Community Asset and Resource Mapping:

An Analysis of the Resources Available to Residents of the City of Wilmington, Delaware

May 2018

The Wilmington Education Improvement Commission (Commission) aims to provide recommendations to improve the lives of families and children in Delaware. The Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty Committee was created by the Commission and tasked with developing a comprehensive plan for the integration of services for low income families and their children and schools with high concentrations of poverty (Wilmington Education Improvement Commission, 2016). A key step in this effort is to evaluate current Wilmington community assets and resources and the extent to which they serve the needs of low income families. This research brief summarizes the first stage of a resource mapping project that focuses on determining what public and nonprofit community resource institutions are in Wilmington, what types of services they provide, who they serve, where they are located, and how their location and operation corresponds to the needs of the city's children and low income families. The University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration conducted research, provided staff support, and created this brief on behalf of the Commission and the committee. The full report on the first stage of this research will be posted to the Commission's website: www.solutionsfordelawareschools.com.

Key Findings

- *Wilmington has 548 public and nonprofit agencies delivering 1,095 programs to the city's 71,549 residents.*

- *The three types of categories, as defined by the study, that offer the highest number of community programs in Wilmington are: 1) health and healthcare, 2) academic and education, and 3) housing.*

- *The organizations and agencies included in the mapping analysis are heavily concentrated in center city rather than in the neighborhoods with the highest concentrations of families and children living in poverty.*

- *The Riverside and Eastside neighborhoods have high concentrations of children living in poverty, as well as the densest percentages of people living in poverty, but appear to have relatively few community organizations, including few highly-rated licensed early childhood providers, operating in those neighborhoods.*

The City of Wilmington has the highest rate of children living in poverty in Delaware (KIDS COUNT in Delaware, 2017). With one-quarter of the population under eighteen years old and **one-third (34.7%) of the youth living in poverty** (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011–2015 American Community Survey). From the outset, the Wilmington Education Improvement Commission (Commission) has called for the alignment and integration of existing services, increased funding for students with high needs, and responsive and streamlined governance in Wilmington and across the state.

If these three areas work in unison, Delaware children and families will benefit and thrive.

This policy brief is based on an asset mapping report that is the first step in creating a comprehensive database that captures information integral to understanding the services available to Wilmington residents as well as aligning and coordinating efforts between stakeholders.

The asset mapping report is an attempt to respond to the Commission's recommendations focusing on what public and nonprofit community resource institutions are located in Wilmington, what types of services they provide, who they serve, where they are located, and how their location and operation corresponds to the needs of the city's children and families, particularly their availability in neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty.

Wilmington Community Assets

Wilmington, Delaware, is a unique city with its prime location as a Mid-Atlantic hub of commerce and business (The City of Wilmington, 2017). The city of Wilmington is one of the most densely populated areas in Delaware with 71,549 residents in 10.91 square miles of land.

To better understand the resources available to Wilmington children and families, information was collected on community assets and resources through online research and organized into a database. For the purposes of this brief, **an asset is defined as an entity that works to improve the quality of life for children and families** (Carroll, Perez, & Toy, 2004), which includes the following:[1]

- Public entities (e.g., local, state, and federal agencies and service centers)
- Nonprofit entities (e.g., churches, healthcare providers, and advocacy organizations)

A survey was also sent to these organizations to collect more detailed information. Each of the

organization's programs, or assets, were categorized into one of the following categories.

- Academic and Educational
- Early Childhood Education
- Food and Nutrition
- Health and Healthcare
- Housing
- Mental Health
- Recreational
- Transportation

The key findings from the organizational analysis and survey are below.

- There are 548 public and nonprofit agencies that run **1,095 programs serving residents in the greater Wilmington area.**
- A majority of programs located in Wilmington focus on the children living in the city, with **one out of every three responding programs reporting that they provide services specifically for children**, or those that are eighteen years or younger.
- Age six and first and second grade are the median age and grade level, respectively, at which individuals are eligible for services. While there are numerous services offered to young children in Wilmington, there are many fewer **services focused on older children, their families, and extended families.**
- Adults are the least represented/served group across all categories of analysis.
- The largest portion of public and nonprofit programs offered in Wilmington are health and healthcare based (25%).
- Approximately 49% of organizations provide services in multiple locations (operates in several locations simultaneously) throughout Wilmington and/or the state of Delaware. While 41% of organizations operate at a single,

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[1] Private organizations offer assets and programs that can improve quality of life for individuals. Since the study focused on low-income individuals, data collection was focused on public and nonprofit entities because these entities are more

likely to target low-income individuals and provide accessible resources in the community. Data on private entities was only used to track early childhood education providers.

stationary site (one unmoved location), the other 10% of organizations operate cycling locations (occasional/frequent changes in location) or were indeterminable.
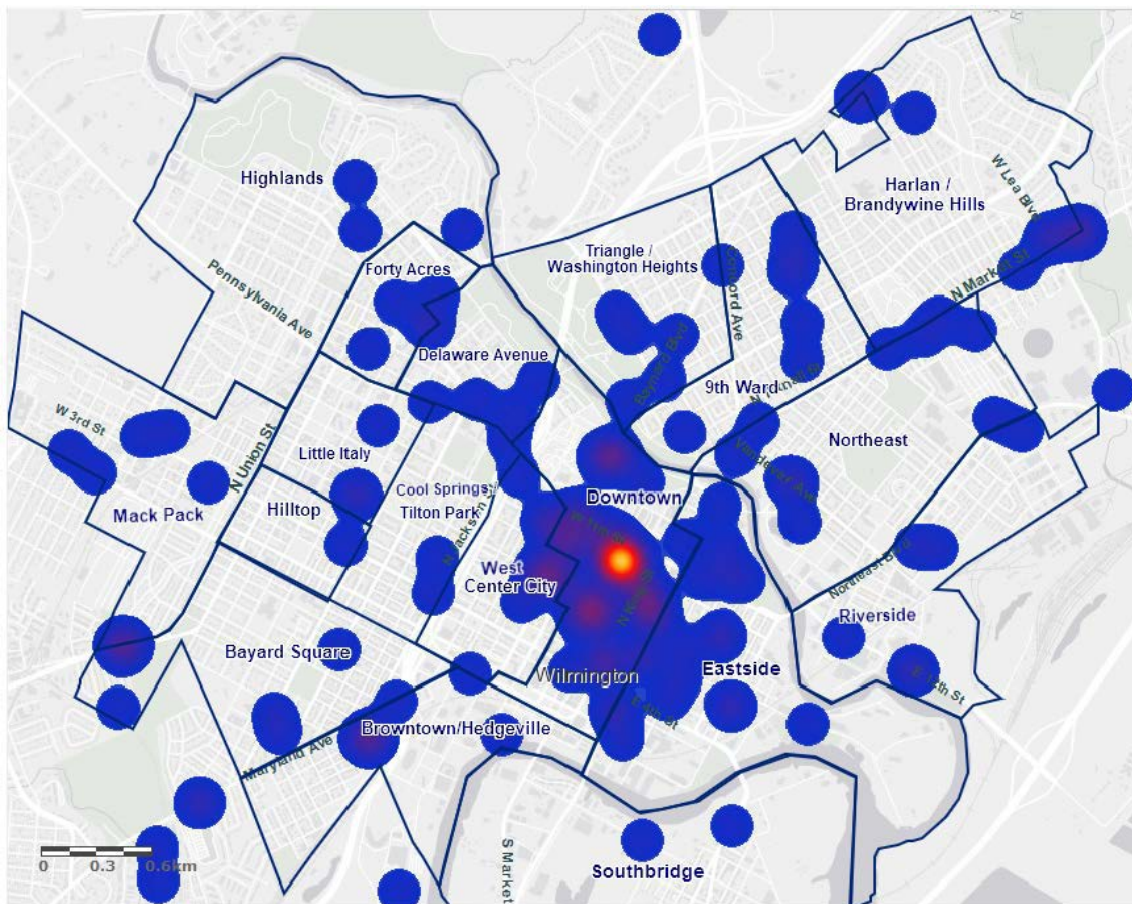
The Location of Wilmington Community Assets

After determining *what* assets exist in Wilmington, the next step in the research was to analyze the *location* of these community assets. Organizations and agencies that provide services in the ci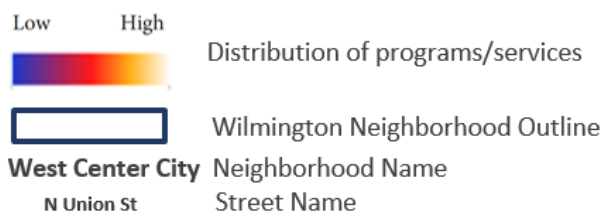ty of Wilmington were tracked and mapped based on their reported main location. Most providers indicate that their services are citywide or statewide. The next step in the asset mapping project will be to audit the actual availability of and access to services in neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty.

Figure 1, below, is a heat map that demonstrates the density of the locations of organizations identified in the study. The heat map shows that most organizations are located in the center of the city of Wilmington.

Figure 1: Distribution of Community Assets in the City of Wilmington, Delaware

Heat Map of All Programs, Wilmington, Delaware

February 21, 2018
Map prepared using Online ArcGIS.
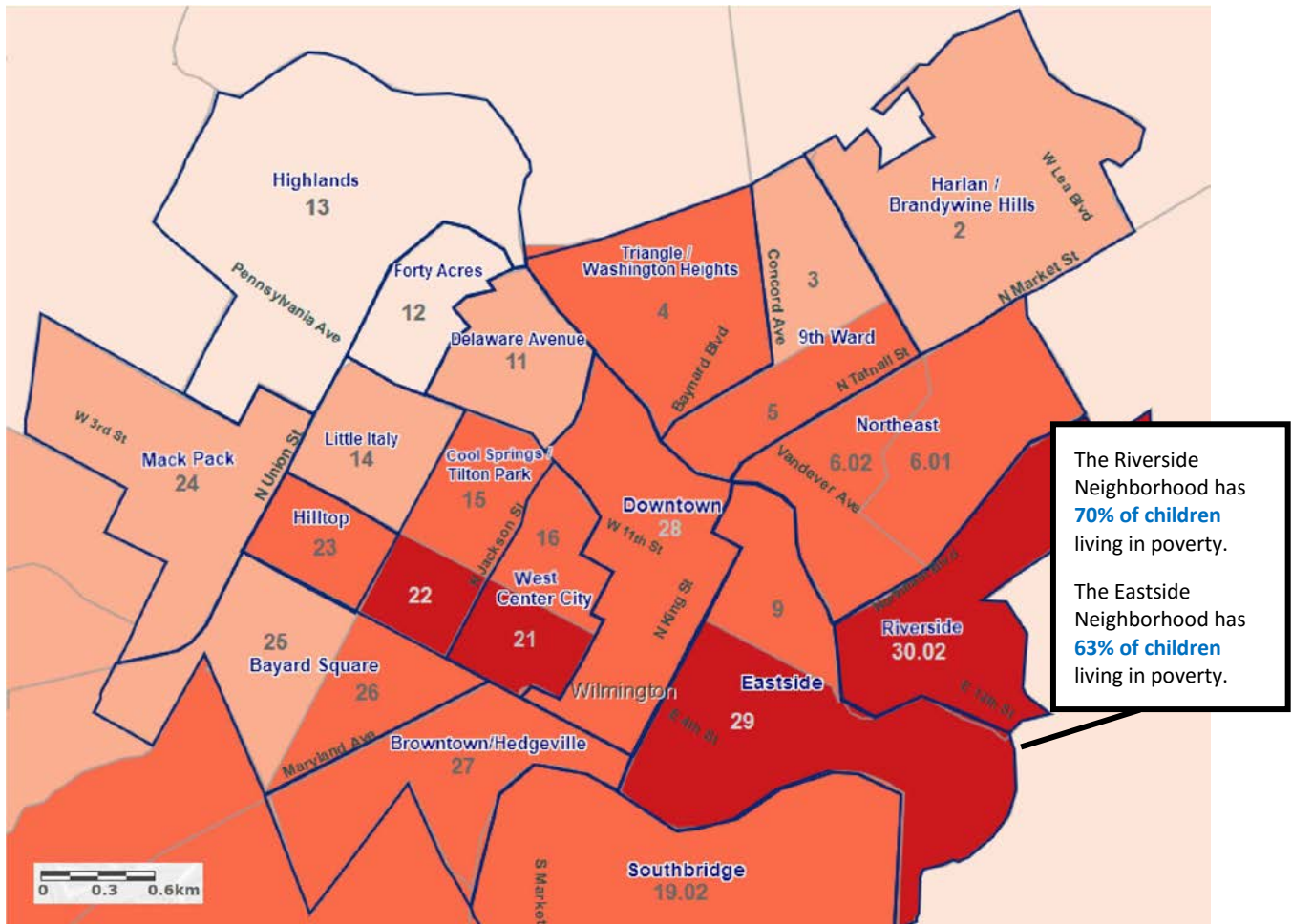Source: IPA Comprehensive Database, 2017; and IPA Survey Results, 2017.

Note: This map is provided by the University of Delaware, Institute for Public Administration (IPA) solely for display and reference purposes and is subject to change without notice. No claims, either real or assumed, as to the absolute accuracy or precision of any data contained herein are made by IPA, nor will IPA be held responsible for any use of this document for purposes other than which it was intended.

Community Assets and Child Poverty

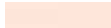The locational distribution of community assets as reflected by the heat map was then evaluated in relationship to the concentrations of child poverty in Wilmington neighborhoods. Figure 2 below depicts the percent of children living in poverty. The darkest red areas are those with the highest concentrations of child poverty, these correlate to areas where children, parents, siblings, and extended families are struggling most.

Figure 2: Percent of Children Living in Poverty by Census Tract in the City of Wilmington, Delaware

The Riverside Neighborhood has **70% of children** living in poverty.

The Eastside Neighborhood has **63% of children** living in poverty.

☐ City of Wilmington Neighborhood Outline

Southbridge Neighborhood Name

25 Census Tract Number

Percent of Children Living in Poverty

■	41 − 77%
■	22 − 40%
■	8 − 21%
■	0 − 7%

As depicted in Figure 2, the concentrations of poverty vary significantly in different parts of the city. For example, **63% of children** in the Eastside neighborhood live in poverty and **70% of children** in the Riverside neighborhood live in poverty. These poverty levels greatly contrast with the Delaware Avenue neighborhood, where only 2% of children live in poverty and where there is a lower concentration of children, overall. A key objective of mapping community assets at the neighborhood level is to uncover and highlight these differences in poverty level and need.

As Figure 2 indicates, the most significant levels of child poverty exist outside of center city, with the greatest concentrations in the east portion of the city—an area where few community assets are located. Perhaps the most important general finding of the first stage of this research is that **while Wilmington has a number of substantial public and nonprofit programs, these resources are not located in some of the neighborhoods in greatest need.**

Category Highlight: Early Childhood Education

Early Childhood Education is one of eight categories of community services evaluated in the initial stage of the Asset Mapping project. This category is highlighted because it directly relates to the Commission's goal of creating education equity in Delaware. In addition, data are available about the actual location of Delaware Stars for Early Success (Delaware Stars) rated programs, providing one indicator of neighborhood access to high-quality programs.

While the location of a service does not always equate to access to that service, location is an important factor for early childhood education programs. Particularly for low income families, having or finding transportation to an early childhood provider is a challenge, which makes it critically important that services are available to these families near their homes. Also critical is the quality of the early childhood service being provided. Delaware Stars is the state's quality rating and improvement system, with ratings being earned from 1–5 and 5 being the highest quality.
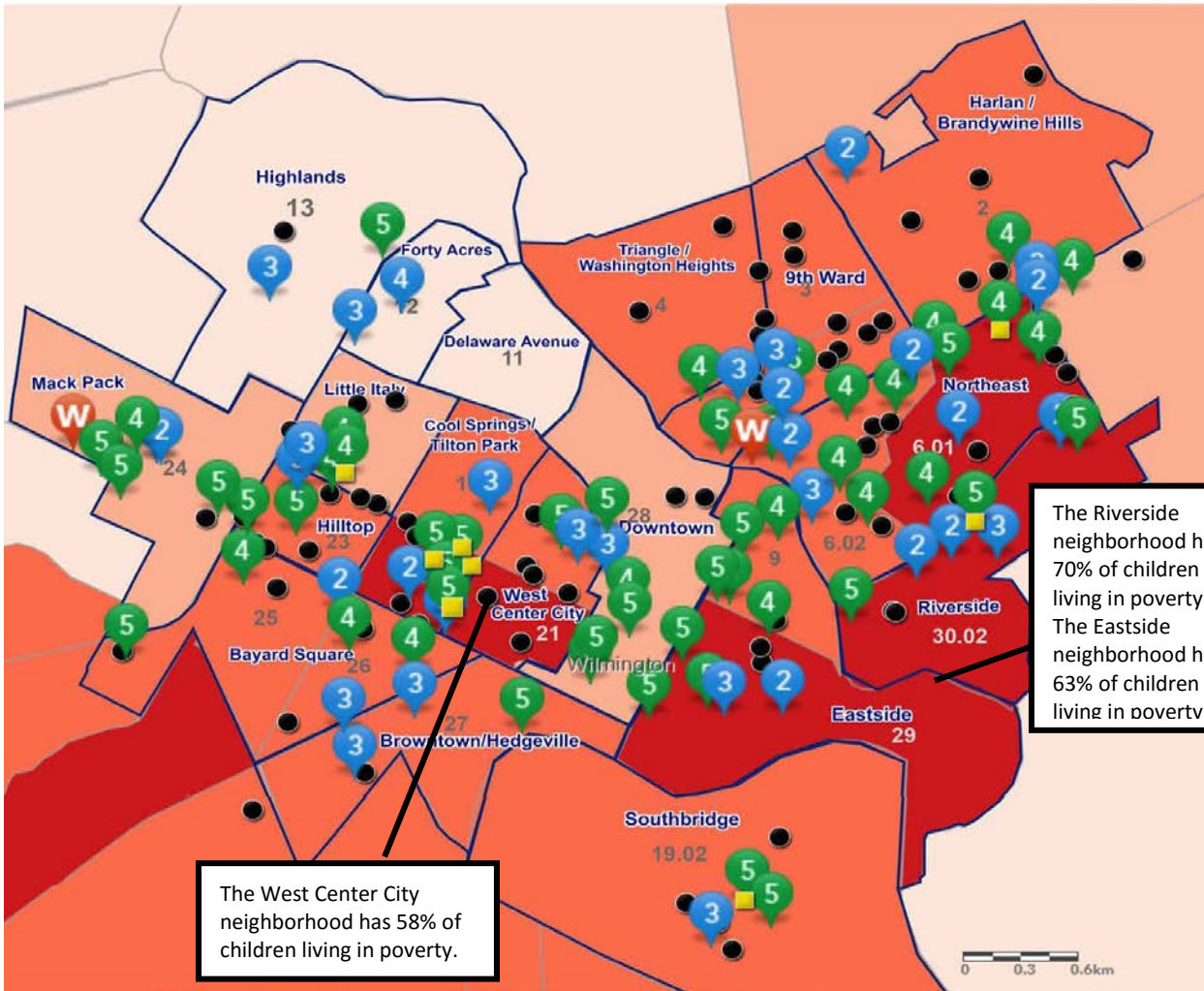
As of November 2017, there were 91 early childhood education providers in the city of Wilmington (Office of Child Care Licensing, 2018). Of these, 32 providers had a Delaware Stars rating of 5, and 24 had a Delaware Stars rating of 4. Figure 3 below depicts the ratings for the early childhood education providers that participate in Delaware Stars in Wilmington, compared to child poverty rates in the city. The areas highlighted indicate gaps in high-quality (Delaware Stars ratings 4 and 5) early childhood providers in the areas with the highest concentrations of children living in poverty: the east part of the Eastside neighborhood, south part of the Riverside neighborhood, and middle of the West Center City neighborhood. These three areas have a dense concentration of children living in poverty and few or no high-quality early childcare providers. This gap is a concern for the Commission, which has identified access to high-quality early childhood education as among the most critical factors in meeting the needs of children in poverty.

It is important to note that other neighborhoods in the city with dense concentrations of child poverty appear to have more high-quality early childhood education providers. For example, in the Northeast neighborhood the child poverty rate is 38–44%, and there are 25 licensed providers and 10 have high-quality Delaware Stars ratings. In the south portion of the Cool Springs/Tilton Park neighborhood the child poverty rate is 54%; there are 11 licensed providers, 5 of which have high-quality Delaware Stars ratings.

Commission Priorities and Key Findings

From the outset, the Commission has called for the alignment and integration of existing services to support schools and communities with high concentrations of students in poverty and students at risk.

Figure 3: Delaware Stars Ratings of Early Childhood Providers and the Percentage of Children in Poverty by Census Tract in the City of Wilmington, Delaware

The Riverside neighborhood has 70% of children living in poverty. The Eastside neighborhood has 63% of children living in poverty.

The West Center City neighborhood has 58% of children living in poverty.

Legend

☐	City of Wilmington Neighborhood Outline
Southbridge	Neighborhood Name
●	Licensed Child Care Provider Not Participating in Delaware Stars
◻ (yellow)	Head Start and Early Head Start Center

Percent of Children Living in Poverty

■ (dark red)	41 − 77%
■ (red)	22 − 40%
■ (light red)	8 − 21%
■ (lightest)	0 − 7%

Ratings for Centers Participating in Delaware Stars

- 5 — 5 Stars Rating
- 4 — 4 Stars Rating
- 3 — 3 Stars Rating
- 2 — 2 Stars Rating
- W — Stars Warning of Probation Enforcement Action
- P — Stars Probation Enforcement Action

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This asset mapping aligns with the Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty Committee's recommendations to help families and improve student outcomes:

- **Integrate** existing public, private, and nonprofit services
- **Align and mobilize** cross-sector initiatives and resources
- **Enhance** parent and community participation, awareness, and access to resources
- **Increase** in-school, out-of-school, and early childhood supports

Key Findings

The key findings outlined by this research brief are a call to action. The main findings are: (1) Over 1,000 programs exist in Wilmington that serve low-income children and families, (2) public and nonprofit organizations in Wilmington are heavily concentrated in center city rather than in the neighborhoods with the highest concentrations of families and children living in poverty, (3) the Riverside and Eastside neighborhoods have high concentrations of children and adults living in poverty, but have relatively few community resource organizations, such as high-quality early childhood education providers, located directly within the neighborhood.

Many community programs exist in Wilmington, but it was also found that these programs and resources are not equally distributed in the city especially for the children and families that need these resources most. Simply increasing the volume of resources does not necessarily equate to increased impact or improved outcomes for families or students. Therefore, the Meeting the Needs of Students in Poverty Committee's recommendation **to integrate, align, and mobilize the resources—human, material, and fiscal—needed to improve student outcomes,** is critically important.

This research brief also highlights that children whose families live in poverty have unequal access to a high-quality early childhood education. A child's access, or lack thereof, to an education will affect their life trajectory and ability to be successful. Therefore, there is a need to **enhance parent and community engagement** and **increase in-school, out-of-school, and early childhood supports** because children do not exist in a vacuum, but are shaped by their families, school, and neighborhood. Demonstrated by this report, numerous community programs exist and parents, schools, and community members need to communicate and be made aware of the resources available to them.

Next Steps

There are hundreds of organizations and over a thousand programs in Wilmington aimed to improve the lives of children and families, many of whom live in poverty. It is critically important to take a closer look into the delivery of these programs and the opportunities for access at the neighborhood level. The next phase of the asset mapping project will focus on intensive analysis of three neighborhoods: West Center City, Eastside, and Riverside, which overlap the Christina School District. These three areas have the highest rates of child poverty in the city. The initial analysis of Eastside, Riverside, and West Center City can be repeated in other neighborhoods.

As part of the more intensive analysis, we will seek to inventory the numerous programs that provide early childhood education, including home-visiting services, the Nurse Family Partnership, Healthy Families America, Parents as Teachers, and Early Head Start. We also intend to consider how availability of community resources is impacted by the provision of private health and social services, including health promotion, healthcare, and mental health services.

An ongoing objective is to provide online access to the growing asset mapping database, enabling users to utilize this resource in an interactive manner. Ideally, this tool will create greater awareness of the resources available to and accessed by Wilmington city residents and encourage collaborative efforts to enable community resources to effectively *serve all Wilmington city residents*.

References

This brief relies upon key findings of research conducted and sponsored by the Commission including a report in preparation carried out by the Institute for Public Administration at the University of Delaware.

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The Wilmington Education Improvement Commission is mandated by law to advise the Governor and General Assembly on how to improve the quality and availability of education for children P–12 within the city of Wilmington and recommend actions to address the needs of all schools statewide that have high concentrations of students in poverty, English language learners, and other students at risk.

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