

Kresge Foundation / Urban Institute Definition of Human Service Organization

Community and economic development focuses broadly on strengthening the economic, cultural, educational, and social services of an urban community. More specifically, community development organizations provide technical assistance, loans, and management support to create businesses and jobs in local communities.

Housing and group homes include assistance programs, such as Section 8 housing and other forms of low-cost or temporary housing; group homes provide 24-hour, non-medical care for individuals with disabilities and/or neglected or abandoned youth.

Emergency assistance and homeless services providers meet basic needs, particularly in emergency situations. They include food banks and pantries, congregate meals, homeless shelters and centers, and Traveler's Aid. They also include domestic violence shelters, sexual abuse and victim services, and spousal and child abuse services.

Family and legal services support healthy family and individual development. This category includes family counseling, single-parent support, adoption services, family planning, and foster care centers and agencies.

Physical and mental health and disability programs provide community-based health centers and clinics. This category includes substance abuse prevention and treatment centers, mental health centers, addiction support, and programs for the disabled. Hospitals are not included in this category.

Preschool and child care programs are organizations that provide care and education for young children during some portion of a 24-hour day.

Senior or elder services target their services to the older population and include continuing care communities, senior centers, and Meals on Wheels programs.

Work-readiness programs help individuals find, secure, and sustain gainful employment. This category includes adult continuing education, vocational rehabilitation, Goodwill Industries, sheltered employment for the disabled, job training, and vocational counseling.

Youth and teen programs provide recreational and supportive services to children and youth. This category includes Boys and Girls Clubs, youth centers, and mentoring programs like Big Brothers-Big Sisters. It also includes services for adolescent parents.

Multipurpose programs supply a broad range of social services. Nationally recognized groups such as the YMCA, YWCA, Urban League, Salvation Army, and Volunteers of America are included in this category, as well as neighborhood and immigration centers.