



**A Message from Lois Wexler
Broward County Commissioner
District 5**

Public service agencies and charitable organizations throughout Broward County are discussing how calls for assistance have more than doubled in the past year. My office has also been answering numerous questions from people who have been adversely affected by the ailing economic.

Not only have the number of people requesting help increased, but for many this is the first time that they've been unemployed or faced an illness or other crisis that lead them to need some sort of help.

People who aren't familiar with government processes can find the whole ordeal complicated and overwhelming. Please know that there is help available and finding it isn't as daunting as it may seem.

Broward County has four family success centers regionally located throughout the County that are designed to be a "one-stop" source of social services designed to assist individuals and families in setting goals, learning skills, and accessing the services they need to build a stronger, healthier, self-sufficient family unit. In most instances you'll fill out only one application and someone will work with you to identify your needs and what help may be available for you. Last year Broward's Family Success Centers provided emergency assistance and case management services to nearly 1,500 households. That number is expected to increase to 1,700 households in 2009. The South Region Family Success Center-Carver Ranches is located at 4733 SW 18th Street in Hollywood. You can call them for more information at (954) 985-1920.

Broward County's Elderly and Veterans Services agency specializing in providing County sponsored and grant funded programs to residents since 1977. Their goal is to assist physically and psychiatrically impaired elderly residents and veterans maintain their independence and improve their quality of life. For more information please call 954-537-2936 or go to <http://www.broward.org/eldervets/elderly.htm>.

2-1-1 Broward is also a very good community resource. It's a 24-hour; free, confidential telephone Helpline for crisis/suicide counseling, empathetic listening and

community information and referrals for health and human services resources in Broward County. Just Dial 2-1-1

Consumer confidence is very low and all of us are tightening our belts and spending as little as possible. That's bad news for Broward County business owners. Overhead for business owners stays the same no matter what the economy is doing and many are seeking loans to get them through this difficult time. The South Florida Planning Regional Council is assisting small business owners. Please call Ms. Cheryl Cook at 954-985-4416 for information on what business loans are available.

Everyone is waiting for the benefits of the federal stimulus package to kick-in. It's estimated that more than 200,000 jobs will be created in Florida, workers will receive tax breaks and checks for \$250 will be sent to eligible retirees in May. Broward County is also applying for grants and working to position ourselves so that we will be eligible for as much funding as possible to benefit our community.

Please know that I am well aware of the fear and uncertainty that is out there. If you need help or know someone who does, please contact these government agencies that I've mentioned to see what you may be eligible for. There is also additional information and links available at www.broward.org

I'm always open to your comments, suggestions and questions. You can call my office at (954) 357-7005 or send an e-mail to lwexler@broward.org
Sincerely,

Lois Wexler
Broward County Commissioner
District 5