

Executive Summary

Introduction and Approach

As part of South Central Iowa Community Action Program's overall Community Needs Assessment, we incorporated data from a 2015-2016 Client Needs Assessment (which included customer satisfaction data), a 2013 Community Stakeholders Assessment, the Community Action Partnership's Community Assessment Tool (completed March 2016), the American Community Survey (data from 2010-2014), the 2015 Executive Summary of Workforce Needs Assessment, data from the Department of Urban Studies, MIT's Living Wage Calculator and data from KIDS COUNT.

The Client Needs Assessment was distributed throughout the five county service area (Clarke, Decatur, Lucas, Monroe, Wayne) from the period of November 2015 to February 2016. During this time, clients of the agency were encouraged to either go online to complete the assessment on the agency website or complete a paper copy. Many people chose to complete the assessments while waiting for services in the county outreach offices. During the assessment period, 303 assessments were completed and data was compiled by the Department of Human Rights. Along with the quantitative data that was compiled, there was qualitative data asking specific questions of the clients about services in their area, needs, and customer satisfaction. Though it appears that not as many clients chose to participate in answering the customer satisfaction questions, there was still valuable information compiled from the answers.

All counties in the service area are represented in the survey data with over one third of the completed surveys being done in Monroe County. Twenty two percent were from Decatur County, seventeen percent from Wayne County and almost eleven percent from Clarke County as well as Lucas County. Eighty percent of those completing the survey are female and almost seventy five percent are under 55 years of age. It is worth noting that the surveys were mainly completed during Liheap season. A large majority who come into the outreach office are under age 55 due to automatically eligible households not having to come to the office. It is also worth noting that the largest program accessed by the elderly through the outreach offices was the garden program. Sixty-one percent of the participants of the garden program are households with persons age 55 or older. Sixty percent of those completing the survey receive food stamps.

For the purposes of this summary, according to the [Department of Urban Studies](#) the living wage is defined as the wage needed to cover basic family expenses (basic needs budget) plus all relevant taxes. The basic needs budget includes the cost of food, child care, insurance premiums and health care costs, housing costs, transportation costs and other necessities. According to [The Living Wage Calculator](#), the average living wage for 2 adults in the report area is \$15.76. The average living wage for a couple with one child in the report area is \$19.11.

Key Findings

Client and Community Needs

The significant client needs that were identified in the data reviewed were issues concerning housing conditions, food and nutrition conditions, being able to meet basic needs and transportation conditions.

Two hundred eleven people completed the questions about housing with fifty two percent stating they needed assistance with making their home more energy efficient. Forty- one percent stated they needed help finding affordable housing to meet their family's needs, while one third of those answering the question stated they could use assistance with qualifying for a home loan. All can be considered conditions of poverty. It is indicated in the data that 25.89% of owner and renter occupied housing units have conditions that identify the homes as being substandard. Conditions that contribute to being deemed substandard include lacking complete plumbing fixtures, lacking complete kitchen facilities, with 1.01 or more occupants per room, selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of the household income greater than thirty percent and gross rent as a percentage of household income greater than thirty percent.

Two hundred and three people answered questions about food and nutrition. Over fifty- five percent stated they could use help getting food from food pantries or food banks. Fifty- one percent stated they could use assistance with having enough food at home, while nearly thirty- five percent stated they needed help to stretch their food dollars. Many stated they also could use assistance with learning how to shop for and cook healthy meals - this is a condition of poverty. In the SCICAP service area, there are 3,400 students who qualify for free and reduced lunches. According to the Community Action Partnership's Community Needs Assessment Tool, there is an estimated 12.88% of the report area that have food insecurity. Food insecurity is defined as the population that experienced food insecurity at some point during the report year. The American Community Survey also states an average of 14.95% of the population in the report area received SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits. Populations receiving food assistance represent vulnerable populations which are more likely to have multiple health and social support needs. Information from KIDS COUNT data center states 32% of children ages 0-4 receive services through the WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Program.

Over fifty- seven percent of the people surveyed stated they need help financial assistance with paying utility bills. Another large number of people stated they need assistance with purchasing personal care needs, clothes, shoes, as well as basic furniture and housewares. Accessing help with yard work and snow removal was also a basic need families identified.

Transportation appears to be a need with a large percentage of people identifying a need for help with getting financial assistance to purchase a car, repair a vehicle, or pay for license and registration. Fifty one out of one hundred eighty people completing the question identified having dependable transportation as a need and forty eight stated having access to public transportation as a need.

Through analysis of the data, it is concluded that possible causes for the needs are lack of living wage jobs and the lack of education or skills needed to obtain living wage jobs. The data in the American Community Survey supports these causes. The American Community Survey data states an average of thirty percent of the population living in poverty in the SCICAP area do not have a high school diploma or equivalency. The data also indicates 14.5% of the population living in poverty in the report area have achieved a high school diploma or equivalency, 9.08% have some college or an Associate's degree and 3.2% have attained a Bachelor's degree or higher. The data indicates 23.2% of the population living in poverty in the SCICAP area have not worked in the past twelve months, 17.9% worked part-time or part-year within the past twelve months and 3% worked full-time, year-round in the past twelve months.

According to the Iowa Workforce Development Needs Assessment released in 2015 for the service area, employers perceived a lack of skills among applicants overall. Employers stated that 27.6% lacked basic

skills to complete the job. Within the basic skills, employers stated that 53.8% of applicants could not read for information, 46.2% had poor written communication skills and 38.5% had difficulty with mathematics. The survey also indicated that employers perceived that 36.2% of applicants lacked the soft skills to complete the job requirements, with 76.5% stating motivation as the leading soft skill deficiency. Other soft skills that employers perceived as lacking were dependability, communication skills, teamwork and time management. Though this survey was not specific to people living in poverty, it could lend to the causes of the lack of job skills and low educational levels. It was also noted in the Iowa Workforce Needs Assessment that 1,092 employees in the region are currently over the age of 64, which represents 7.2% of the total area workforce. Of those employees, 49.3% are male and 50.7% are female.

There is a large percentage of the Hispanic population that live in poverty in 4 of the 5 counties. This could be due to lack of legal status to work in the United States or lack of job skills.

The Community Stakeholders Assessment was conducted in 2013. Respondents were from a variety of stakeholder groups including county officials, educators, health care providers and faith based groups. An overwhelming number felt there are insufficient opportunities to obtain a living wage job in the service area. The stakeholders felt jobs are not available in the area and people lack the educational requirements of the job or lack the technical job skills required to fulfill the job.

Forty percent of the stakeholders stated people have trouble getting and keeping a job due to substance abuse issues. It is also worth noting the stakeholder's data states that youth need information, guidance, education and/or assistance with substance abuse/tobacco issues. The data also suggests that one of the greatest challenges faced by low-income families or individuals is substance abuse which stakeholders, in turn state is a main reason families are not achieving self-sufficiency.

Stakeholder data indicated that there are not adequate child care programs available to parents evenings, weekend, and nights and there are not affordable child and youth activities or after school programs available.

The Stakeholder data also identified transportation as a need stating there was not enough public transportation available.

Other areas of concern in the Stakeholder Survey were inadequate levels of wellness programs as well as lack of dental services in the area.

One of the greatest challenges facing low-income families and individuals is housing. The identified need from the Stakeholder Survey was assistance with home energy and utility costs. It was also identified as a need that for seniors to remain in their homes they may need assistance with home repairs, energy and utility costs, yard work and snow removal.

Of the Stakeholders completing the survey, one third were unsure if SCICAP was meeting the needs of low-income families and some had absolutely no relationship with the agency.

When stakeholders were asked what they believe to be the causes of poverty, an overwhelming majority stated there was a lack of employment opportunities, lack of job skills and lack of education. Stakeholders were also asked what community improvement initiative they would like their community to address. Nearly half of the people surveyed stated that the communities needed new businesses and

industry for employment growth. Many stakeholders also stated that more mental health and substance abuse services were needed in the area. Stakeholders were asked what community issue they would like solved if money was not an issue. Again, many stakeholders identified more mental health and substance abuse services. Stakeholders also felt that incentive programs needed developed to encourage industries to move into the area and work programs needed implemented.

Through analysis of the data, it is concluded that possible causes for the community needs are lack of industry to promote living wage jobs. Data from the American Community Survey also indicates that 30% of those living in poverty in the five county area have less than a high school education. The survey also indicates that of those people at or below poverty level an average of 39% of men are unemployed and 32% of females are unemployed. The Community Action Partnership's Community Needs Assessment Tool indicates language may be a barrier as there is a large Hispanic population in Clarke County and a large Ukrainian/Russian population in Lucas County. Data indicates a small population have limited English proficiency. This data would support the causes of poverty to be lack of education and job skills.

Information gathered from the Iowa Workforce Needs Assessment also states that the majority of jobs in the area are in the healthcare and social service field which has a 1% vacancy rate. Construction jobs had the highest vacancy rate at 19.6% but also had an entry-level wage listed at \$11.94 per hour, which is below a living wage for SCICAP's service area.

According to the assessment, 75.5% of employers plan to maintain their current workforce - 22.4% plan to expand their workforce; 83.3% plan on expanding within the next twelve months and 16.7% plan on expanding within the next two to three years; and 2.1% of employers plan to reduce their workforce. This data suggests there will be limited new jobs created in the next two to three years.

Community Demographics

Information gathered through the Community Action Partnership's Community Needs Assessment Tool shows the five county area has a total population of 40,759 people which is a 2.93% decrease from the 2000 Census. Of the total population in the report area 6,233 people live in poverty (at 100% of the federal poverty income guidelines), which is 15.89% of the population. The poverty rate in the report area has increased by 3.2% according to the U.S. Census.

Of the total population 1,319 are male ages 0-4, 1,249 are female ages 0-4, 3,687 are male ages 5-17, 3,401 are female ages 5-17. The data states of the total population 11,889 people are male ages 18-64 11,320 are female ages 18-64. The male population over age 65 is 3,016 and the female population over age 65 is 4,462.

The data from the Community Action Partnership's Assessment Tool shows for the report area 13.96% of the population in poverty are male, while 16.78% are female. The data also indicates that 42.57% are Hispanic/Latino and 14.46% are not Hispanic/Latino. 15.2% are White, 18.52% are Black or African American, 12.88% are Asian and 26.98% are multiple races.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates there were 1,227 families living in poverty within the report area. Of these, 620 were married couple and there were 119 male heads of household and 488 female heads of household.

According to American Community Survey, 2,187 children ages 0-17 are living in poverty in the SCICAP service area. Of those children, 16.03% are male and 21.35% are female. The data further indicates 35.47% of the children ages 0-17 living in poverty are Hispanic and 17.54% are White or another race. The data states the poverty rate for children in the service area ages 0-4 is 24.22% and children ages 5-17 the poverty rate is 17.16%. The poverty rate change for all children in the report area from 2000-2013 increased by 7.1%.

According to American Community Survey estimates, there are 7431 seniors (persons age 65 and over) living in the SCICAP service area. Eight hundred seventy seniors; 11.7%- are living in poverty within the report area. The senior poverty rate for Iowa is 7.4% and the senior poverty rate for the United States is 9.4%.

As stated previously, The American Community Survey data states an average of thirty percent of the population living in poverty in the SCICAP area do not have a high school diploma or equivalency. The data also indicates 14.5% of the population living in poverty in the report area have achieved a high school diploma or equivalency, 9.08% have some college or an Associate's degree and 3.2% has attained a Bachelor's degree or higher. The data indicates 23.2% of the population living in poverty in the SCICAP area have not worked in the past twelve months, 17.9% worked part-time or part-year within the past twelve months and 3% worked full-time, year-round in the past twelve months.

Client Demographics

Information gathered from the CSBG year end report specific to the agency client information states over sixty percent of the clients served last year were at 100% of poverty or less. Fifty- five percent were female and forty-four male. The families that were served and reported on constitute all of SCICAP programs except some clients of Parents as Teachers and FaDSS. Twenty four percent of the families relied only on funds from their employment. Over nineteen percent were employed and received some other source of income. Nearly forty-five percent of the clients received social security benefits while sixteen percent received SSI benefits.

Of the people served by SCICAP, thirty-six percent were ages 0-17, forty percent were ages 18-54 and twenty-three percent were over age 55. The Hispanic population constitutes two and a half percent of the population with ninety-seven percent reported being non-Hispanic or Latino. Ninety-six percent of the client population indicated White as their race; eighty-six people, or less than two percent, indicated Black or African American as their race; seven people indicated American Indian or Alaskan Native; six people indicated Asian and six people indicated Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. One and a half percent of the people indicated multi-race or other as their race.

Other characteristics worth noting are:

- 5,143 people or 86.85% had health insurance
- 779 people or 13.15% did not have any health insurance
- 893 people or 15.08% were disabled
- 202 people or 3.41% were veterans

- Over 18% of the clients served were from single parent households with the female being the head of household in 16% of the homes
- 23.59% of household were 2 parent households
- 998 people or 40% of people served were single people
- 16.11% of the people served were two adults with no children

Other data relevant to determining needs of the SCICAP service were indicated in the Community Action Partnership's Community Needs Assessment Tool.

Customer Satisfaction Information

Results from the Customer Satisfaction Survey shows the programs that were utilized the most through SCICAP were food and utility assistance programs. The majority of people completing the survey stated the biggest barrier to not receiving services was from not wanting to ask for help. A large number also stated they were not aware of all services SCICAP offers. The data indicates there is a gap in services around public transportation, housing, utility help and dental care.

Over ninety percent of those surveyed stated they were treated with respect and helped in a timely manner. Over eighty percent received the information or services they needed and seventy- five percent were informed of other services available in the community.

Those completing the survey indicated they would like assistance with getting school supplies, help in an emergency and indicated an interest in assistance with budgeting and money management.

People completing the survey also indicated the problems or needs they were unable to get help with were paying bills, housing, access to food, accessible transportation and adequate medical and dental care.

Areas that people surveyed would like to see improved in their communities include transportation issues, housing, employment, help with bills, adequate daycare and adequate child/youth activities.

SCICAP will communicate with the local transportation authorities in the service area and share the needs assessment with each group. SCICAP will also compile information about the transportation services to make available to the persons we support.

SCICAP will continue to meet with inter-agency groups in all communities to collaborate on services and share information with persons we support.

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