

South Central Iowa Community Action Program Comprehensive Community Needs Assessment Executive Summary – January 2021

The purpose of this document is to provide current and accurate information to the SCICAP Board of Directors, Management Team, and Planning and Evaluation Committee. This allows the agency to make the most informed strategic decisions possible regarding CSBG (Community Service Block Grant) funding as well as other agency resources. CSBG funds must contribute to the achievement of one or more of the three Community Action goals:

- Individuals and families with low incomes are stable and achieve economic security
- Communities where people with low incomes live are healthy and offer economic opportunity
- People with low incomes are engaged and active in building opportunities in communities

This report is intended to act as a “blueprint” that demonstrates the linkages between community needs and the programs and services that are offered in our five-county service area.

Service Area

Five counties in South Central Iowa: Clarke, Decatur, Lucas, Monroe, and Wayne and provides the Parents as Teacher’s Program in Appanoose and Davis counties.

Approach

As part of the South Central Iowa Community Action Program’s overall Community Needs Assessment, we incorporated data from a 2020 Client Needs Assessment (which included customer satisfaction data), a 2017 Community Stakeholders Assessment, The Community Action Partnership’s Community Assessment Tool (completed January 2021), and the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (data from 2014-2018). The information we obtained assists SCICAP in identifying:

- Program design and options
- Areas of need
- Priorities
- Gaps in service
- Emerging trends that may affect programming

SCICAP uses the Community Needs Assessment results, along with our Mission to design all programs and services to meet the needs of low-income families and individuals.

Mission

In collaboration with community partners, the mission of South Central Iowa Community Action Program is to provide advocacy and services for persons striving for economic security while preserving their dignity and bring about change for the benefit of the people we serve and the community at large.

Iowa Community Action Agencies Client Needs Assessment Results (2020)

The client needs assessment was distributed throughout the five-county service area online using a SurveyMonkey link, a Survey Monkey QR code or a paper copy. The survey focused on collecting information regarding the needs of low-income individuals and families in SCICAP's service area.

Survey Respondent Demographics

253 SCICAP clients participated in the survey. The most common characteristics among the survey respondents were:

- Female (73.6%)
- Under the age of 55 (40.48%)
- Physically Disabled (27.2%)
- Mental Health issues (34.4%)
- Receiving Food Stamps (49%)
- One- or two-person household (46.24%)
- Receiving Medicaid (75.79%)
- White (92.8%)
- Ethnicity (Not Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin) (95.6%)

Conditions of Poverty

The significant client needs that were identified in the data reviewed were issues concerning housing conditions, food and nutrition, being able to meet basic needs, utility costs and transportation. Sixty-five percent of families stated they needed assistance with making their home more efficient. Forty-eight percent stated they needed help making necessary home or property repairs, while twenty-nine percent of those answering stated they could use assistance with obtaining a loan to buy a house.

Causes of Poverty

The main obstacles preventing self-sufficiency for individuals or families are 1) Safe/affordable housing/rent assistance 2) Utility bills/energy efficient housing 3) Food insecurity/nutrition conditions 4) Basic needs 5) Dependable transportation 6) Lack of living wage jobs 7) Lack of education/skills.

Customer Satisfaction

Clients were asked to rate their overall satisfaction of SCICAP programs and employees

- 99.5% stated they had a positive experience when receiving services (20% of the survey respondents did not answer the question)
- 99% stated they were helped in a timely manner (20% of the survey respondents did not answer the question)
- 99.5% stated that staff were friendly and helpful (20% of the survey respondents did not answer the question)
- 90% of clients said they received information about other agency or community services that could help them with their needs (20% of the survey respondents did not answer the question)

Results from the Customer Satisfaction Survey shows the programs that were utilized the most through SCICAP were food and utility assistance programs. Most 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 transportation, housing, affordable healthcare and dental care.

Those completing the survey indicated they would like more daycare spots available for kids, centers open more hours, increased funding for programs, occasional weekend hours, increasing income guidelines for services, increase awareness of available services and rent assistance.

Areas that people surveyed would like to see improved in their communities include transportation assistance, housing, employment opportunities, city government, junk cleaned up, legal aid assistance, adequate daycare and adequate child/youth activities, road maintenance, affordable groceries, speed limits, less drugs, taxes, crime, recreation centers for youth, homeless shelters, animal control, sidewalks, better wheelchair access at businesses, eliminate cop harassment, life skills classes, more street lights and signs, walking/bike trails, police patrolling, and more doctors.

Iowa Community Action Agencies Needs Assessment-Community Stakeholders Results (2017)

Respondents were from a variety of stakeholder groups including community-based organizations, private business or corporation, educational institutions, local government, health care providers and faith-based groups in our five-county area. The survey focused on collecting information regarding the perceived needs of low-income people from community stakeholders.

Survey Respondent Demographics

102 Community Stakeholders participated in the survey; most of the respondents were educational institutions (20.91%) and local government (19.09%).

Conditions of Poverty

Survey respondents indicated there are insufficient opportunities to obtain a living wage, jobs are not available, people lack educational requirements/technical skills, substance abuse, lack of childcare programs during weekends and evenings, lack of affordable child and youth activities and lack of transportation.

Causes of Poverty

Stakeholders felt substance abuse was one of the greatest challenges facing low-income families or individuals which in turn is a main reason they are not achieving self-sufficiency. Stakeholders stated 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 and assistance with home energy and utility costs. It was also identified as a need for seniors to remain in their homes. They may need assistance with home repairs, energy and utility costs, yard work and snow removal. 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 should be developed to encourage industries to move into the area and work programs needed implemented.

Community Satisfaction

Community Stakeholders were asked to rate SCICAP on several factors on a scale of 1-5, 1 being poor, 3 being fine/adequate, and 5 being excellent.

1. Relationship or partnership with SCICAP within the community
 - 98% of the Stakeholders rated between a three and a five
2. How familiar they were with SCICAP's programs and services
 - 90% of the Stakeholders rated between a three and a five
3. How well SCICAP is valued in the community
 - 90% of the Stakeholders rated between a three and a five
4. How well is SCICAP meeting the needs of low-income people in the community
 - 92% of the Stakeholders rated between a three and a five
5. Our staff were friendly and helpful
 - 100% of Stakeholders who connected with SCICAP within the past 12 months rated us between a three and a five
6. SCICAP conducted business in a professional manner
 - 95.55% of Stakeholders who connected with SCICAP within the past 12 months rated us between a three and a five
7. SCICAP staff had a thorough knowledge of our agency programs and services
 - 100% of Stakeholders who connected with SCICAP within the past 12 months rated us between a three and a five

Community Demographics:

(Community Action Partnership Community Needs Assessment and US Census data 2021)

Population Profile:

Overall, the SCICAP service area has seen a -4.27% change in population from 2000-2018 according to the US Census/American Community Survey. The total population decreased in all counties except for Clarke. Clarke County had the largest growth with 1.63%. Lucas County had the largest decline of -8.76%.

Report Area	Total Population, 2018 ACS	Total Population, 2000 Census	Population Change from 2000-2018 Census/ACS	Percent Change from 2000-2018 Census/ACS
Report Location	40,199	41,990	-1,791	-4.27%
Clarke County, IA	9,282	9,133	149	1.63%
Decatur County, IA	8,044	8,689	-645	-7.42%
Lucas County, IA	8,597	9,422	-825	-8.76%
Monroe County, IA	7,863	8,016	-153	-1.91%
Wayne County, IA	6,413	6,730	-317	-4.71%
Iowa	3,132,499	2,926,324	206,175	7.05%
United States	322,903,030	281,421,906	41,481,124	14.74%

Age and Gender Demographics: (US Census/ACS-American Community Survey)

Population by gender within the report area is shown below. According to ACS 2014-2018 5-year population estimates for the report area, the female population comprised 50.07% of the report area, while the male population represented 49.93%.

Report Area	0 to 4 Male	0 to 4 Female	5 to 17 Male	5 to 17 Female	18 to 64 Male	18 to 64 Female	Over 64 Male	Over 64 Female
Report Location	1,322	1,208	3,752	3,402	11,627	11,021	3,195	4,323
Clarke County, IA	345	299	897	793	2,721	2,596	674	905
Decatur County, IA	237	232	646	641	2,427	2,325	594	829
Lucas County, IA	267	237	805	714	2,411	2,352	773	976
Monroe County, IA	243	206	850	671	2,295	2,095	630	827
Wayne County, IA	230	234	554	583	1,773	1,653	524	786
Iowa	100,506	96,924	272,188	260,414	954,447	934,708	201,845	285,972
United States	10,146,960	9,689,890	27,438,613	26,277,777	99,617,317	100,493,892	19,630,586	27,457,281

Race Demographics

According to ACS 2014-2018 5-year population estimates, the white population comprised 96.91% of the report area, black population represented 0.54%, and other races combined were 1.26%. Persons identifying themselves as mixed race made up 1.28% of the population.

Poverty

2018 poverty estimates show a total of 5,486 persons (all ages) living below the poverty level (100% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines) in SCICAP's service area. The report area poverty rate of 13.65% is above the state average of 11.2%. Decatur had the highest poverty rate of 20.3% while Clarke had the lowest of 11.2%.

Report Area	All Ages No of Persons	All Ages Poverty Rate
Report Location	5,486	13.65%
Clarke County, IA	1,036	11.2%
Decatur County, IA	1,458	20.3%
Lucas County, IA	1,290	15.1%
Monroe County, IA	885	11.6%
Wayne County, IA	817	13.0%
Iowa	342,574	11.2%
United States	41,852,315	12.96%

Poverty Rate Change

Poverty rate change for Iowa from 2000 to 2018 is shown below. According to the U.S. Census, the poverty rate for the SCICAP service area increased by 1.96%, compared to a national increase of 1.8%.

Report Area	Persons in Poverty 2000	Poverty Rate 2000	Persons in Poverty 2018	Poverty Rate 2018	Change in Poverty Rate 2000-2018
Report Location	4,967	12.14%	5,486	14.11%	1.96%
Clarke County, IA	893	9.8%	1,036	11.2%	1.4%
Decatur County, IA	1,214	15.2%	1,458	20.3%	5.1%
Lucas County, IA	1,102	11.8%	1,290	15.1%	3.3%
Monroe County, IA	822	10.5%	885	11.6%	1.1%
Wayne County, IA	936	14.1%	817	13.0%	-1.1%
Iowa	237,684	8.3%	342,574	11.2%	2.9%
United States	31,581,086	11.3%	41,852,315	13.1%	1.8%

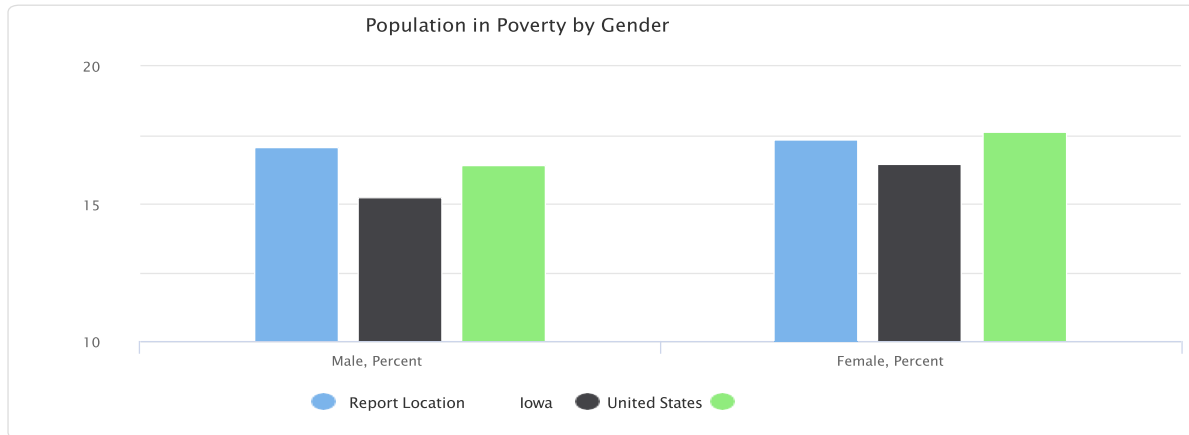
Households in Poverty

The number and percentage of households in poverty are shown below. In 2018, it is estimated that there were 2,410 households, or 14.43%, living in poverty within the SCICAP service area. Decatur (21.4%) and Clarke (13.8%) Counties have the largest percentage of households in poverty. Lucas County has the lowest percentage at 12.2%. The state average is 11.5%.

Report Area	Total Households	Households in Poverty	Percent Households in Poverty
Report Location	16,707	2,410	14.43%
Clarke County, IA	3,854	532	13.8%
Decatur County, IA	3,213	689	21.4%
Lucas County, IA	3,642	443	12.2%
Monroe County, IA	3,329	423	12.7%
Wayne County, IA	2,669	323	12.1%
Iowa	1,256,855	144,293	11.5%
United States	119,730,128	16,027,481	13.4%

Population in Poverty by Gender

14.71% of females live in poverty in SCICAP's service area compared to 14.11% of males. For the state of Iowa, 12.87% of females and 10.45% of males live in poverty. In the United States, 15.26% of females and 12.80% of males live in poverty.



Report Area	Male	Female	Male, Percent	Female, Percent
Report Location	2,765	2,822	14.11%	14.71%
Clarke County, IA	624	681	13.56%	15.16%
Decatur County, IA	697	729	19.25%	19.97%
Lucas County, IA	526	475	12.45%	11.39%
Monroe County, IA	461	440	11.45%	11.89%
Wayne County, IA	457	497	14.65%	15.64%
Iowa	156,851	196,783	10.45%	12.87%
United States	19,737,150	24,520,829	12.80%	15.26%

Child Poverty Rate Ages 0-4 (American Community Survey)

The child poverty rates for ages 0-4 average 16% for Iowa, 21.5% for the United States, and 21.3% for SCICAP’s service area. Wayne (29.1%) and Decatur (28.4%) Counties have the highest rate, while Lucas County has the lowest at 8.8%.

Report Area	Ages 0-4 Total Population	Ages 0-4 In Poverty	Ages 0-4 Poverty Rate
Report Location	2,488	531	21.3%
Clarke County, IA	644	114	17.7%
Decatur County, IA	469	133	28.4%
Lucas County, IA	465	41	8.8%
Monroe County, IA	449	109	24.3%
Wayne County, IA	461	134	29.1%
Iowa	194,442	31,184	16.0%
United States	19,514,070	4,193,998	21.5%

Poverty Rate Change (Age 5-17)

Child poverty rates for ages 5-17 average 12.5% for Iowa, 17% for the United States, and 19.8% for SCICAP’s service area. Decatur County has the highest rate of 25.1%, while Monroe County has the lowest at 14.8%.

Report Area	Poverty Age 5-17 2000	Poverty Rate Age 5-17 2000	Poverty Age 5-17 2018	Poverty Rate Age 5-17 2018	Difference in Rate Age 5-17 2000 -2018
Report Location	1,046	14.0%	1,351	19.8%	5.8%
Clarke County, IA	204	11.8%	255	14.9%	3.1%
Decatur County, IA	218	15.8%	300	25.1%	9.3%
Lucas County, IA	252	14.7%	343	24.6%	9.9%
Monroe County, IA	173	11.9%	203	14.8%	2.9%
Wayne County, IA	199	16.4%	250	21.5%	5.1%
Iowa	91,744	8.9%	129,702	12.5%	3.6%
United States	22,606,876	14.6%	26,786,403	17.0%	2.4%

Seniors in Poverty (Age 65 and Up)

743 Seniors are living in poverty or 10% of SCICAP’s service area. All counties are above the state average of 7.1% except for Clarke County at 7%. The U.S. average is 9.3%

Report Area	Ages 65 and Up Total Population	Ages 65 and Up In Poverty	Ages 65 and Up Poverty Rate
Report Location	7,394	743	10.0%
Clarke County, IA	1,518	106	7.0%
Decatur County, IA	1,436	158	11.0%
Lucas County, IA	1,744	140	8.0%
Monroe County, IA	1,388	184	13.3%
Wayne County, IA	1,308	155	11.9%
Iowa	490,105	34,889	7.1%
United States	47,940,937	4,448,892	9.3%

Employment

The current unemployment rate (November 2020) for SCICAP’s service area is 2.6%, the state average is 3.1% and the United States average is 6.4%. All counties have an unemployment rate lower than the national average. Decatur County has the lowest at 2% and Wayne has the highest at 3%.

Report Area	Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
Report Location	19,654	19,152	502	2.6%
Clarke County, IA	4,519	4,387	132	2.9%
Decatur County, IA	4,117	4,033	84	2.0%
Lucas County, IA	4,425	4,327	98	2.2%
Monroe County, IA	3,827	3,723	104	2.7%
Wayne County, IA	2,766	2,682	84	3.0%
Iowa	1,618,578	1,568,587	49,991	3.1%
United States	161,489,601	151,129,451	10,360,151	6.4%

Note: This indicator is compared to the state average.

Data Source: US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2020 - November. Source geography: County

Household Income

Median annual household incomes in the report area for 2018 are shown in the table below.

Report Area	Estimated Population	Median Household Income
Clarke County, IA	9,282	\$52,541
Decatur County, IA	8,044	\$41,101
Lucas County, IA	8,597	\$49,956
Monroe County, IA	7,863	\$56,541
Wayne County, IA	6,413	\$46,725
Iowa	3,132,499	\$60,071
United States	322,903,030	\$61,937

Nutrition

51.3% of students in SCICAP’s service area were eligible for free or reduced-price lunches during the 2018-2019 school year, which is more than the state average of 42.5% and the national average of 52.4%. Decatur County had the highest at 58.4%, while Monroe County had the lowest with 36%.

13.8% of households in SCICAP’s service area received SNAP payments during 2018. The state average is 10.67% and the United States average is 12.22%.

Transportation

Report Area	Workers 16 and Up	Percent Drive Alone	Percent Carpool	Percent Public Transportation	Percent Bicycle or Walk	Percent Taxi or Other	Percent Work at Home
Report Location	18,437	77.5%	10.9%	0.2%	4.1%	0.9%	6.2%
Clarke County, IA	4,532	78.9%	13.2%	0.5%	2.3%	1.1%	4.0%
Decatur County, IA	3,634	68.1%	12.3%	0.1%	10.2%	0.7%	8.5%
Lucas County, IA	3,911	84.1%	7.4%	0.0%	1.6%	0.8%	6.1%
Monroe County, IA	3,609	78.7%	10.7%	0.2%	3.5%	0.0%	7.0%
Wayne County, IA	2,751	76.7%	10.9%	0.4%	3.6%	2.4%	6.0%
Iowa	1,583,271	81.2%	8.3%	1.1%	3.8%	0.9%	4.8%
United States	150,571,044	76.4%	9.1%	5.1%	3.3%	1.2%	4.9%

Education

Educational attainment is calculated for persons over 25 and is an estimated average for the period from 2014 to 2018. For SCICAP's service area, 12.9% have at least a college bachelor's degree, while 41.1% stopped their formal educational attainment after high school.

Report Area	No High School Diploma	High School Only	Some College	Associates Degree	Bachelors Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree
Report Location	10.4%	41.1%	21.1%	9.9%	12.9%	4.5%
Clarke County, IA	10.88%	41.4%	20.4%	10.4%	12.7%	4.2%
Decatur County, IA	11.31%	37.6%	19.9%	7.7%	14.1%	9.4%
Lucas County, IA	7.23%	41.6%	23.9%	10.3%	13.8%	3.2%
Monroe County, IA	11.96%	40.7%	20.6%	10.2%	14.4%	2.2%
Wayne County, IA	11.10%	44.7%	20.5%	10.7%	8.9%	4.0%
Iowa	8.01%	31.1%	21.2%	11.5%	19.0%	9.2%
United States	12.34%	27.1%	20.6%	8.4%	19.4%	12.1%

Literacy Skills

The percent lacking adult literacy skills for Iowa is 7%, and 9.08% for SCICAP's service area. All counties exceed the state average, while Lucas County has the highest at 10%.

National Center for Education Statistics

Housing

Number of Unsafe, Unsanitary Homes

U.S. Census data shows 147 housing units in the SCICAP service area were without plumbing in 2000 (state average .39%) and ACS 5-year estimates show 181 housing units in the service area were without plumbing in 2018 (state average 0.28%).

Report Area	Occupied Housing Units 2000	Housing Units without Plumbing 2000	Percent without Plumbing 2000	Occupied Housing Units 2018	Housing Units without Plumbing 2018	Percent without Plumbing 2018
Report Location	16,781	147	0.88%	16,707	181	1.08%
Clarke County, IA	3,584	20	0.51%	3,854	4	0.10%
Decatur County, IA	3,337	46	1.20%	3,213	112	3.49%
Lucas County, IA	3,811	47	1.11%	3,642	24	0.66%
Monroe County, IA	3,228	4	0.11%	3,329	9	0.27%
Wayne County, IA	2,821	30	0.89%	2,669	32	1.20%
Iowa	1,149,276	4,832	0.39%	1,256,855	3,527	0.28%
United States	106,741,426	736,626	0.69%	120,935,203	489,836	0.41%

Evictions

Clarke County has the highest eviction rate at 1.8% and Wayne County has the lowest rate at 0.51%.

Report Area	Renter Occupied Households	Eviction Filings	Evictions	Eviction Filing Rate	Eviction Rate
Report Location	4,365	72	42	1.65%	0.96%
Clarke County, IA	1,111	37	20	3.33%	1.8%
Decatur County, IA	1,028	12	7	1.17%	0.68%
Lucas County, IA	859	7	6	0.81%	0.7%
Monroe County, IA	782	11	6	1.41%	0.77%
Wayne County, IA	585	5	3	0.85%	0.51%
Iowa	365,324	14,520	7,358	3.97%	2.01%
United States	38,372,860	2,350,042	898,479	6.12%	2.34%

Vacancy Rates

The U.S. Postal Service provided information quarterly to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on addresses identified as vacant in the previous quarter. Residential and business vacancy rates for the report area in the second quarter of 2019 are reported.

For this reporting period, a total of 842 residential addresses were identified as vacant in SCICAP's service area, a vacancy rate of 4.1%, and 159 business addresses were also reported as vacant, a rate of 9.9%.

Report Area	Residential Addresses	Vacant Residential Addresses	Residential Vacancy Rate	Business Addresses	Vacant Business Addresses	Business Vacancy Rate
Report Location	20,671	842	4.1%	1,613	159	9.9%
Clarke County, IA	4,652	132	2.8%	344	26	7.6%
Decatur County, IA	4,156	309	7.4%	314	35	11.1%
Lucas County, IA	4,516	140	3.1%	309	28	9.1%
Monroe County, IA	3,959	128	3.2%	356	30	8.4%
Wayne County, IA	3,388	133	3.9%	290	40	13.8%
Iowa	1,526,041	41,755	2.7%	130,152	13,100	10.1%
United States	149,623,509	3,747,598	2.5%	13,904,730	1,270,600	9.1%

SCICAP Client Demographics (2020)

Gender

Male	45%
Female	55%

Age Demographics

0-5	11%
6-13	16%
14-17	8%
18-24	6%
25-44	21%
45-54	9%
55-59	6%
60-64	6%
65-74	8%
75+	9%

Race Demographics

American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.29%
Asian	0.16%
Black or African American	1.02%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.04%
White	95.24%
Other	1.88%
Multi-Race	1.37%

Ethnicity Demographics

96% of SCICAP's clients are not Hispanic or Latino.

Education

0-8 th grade	6.78%
9-12 th grade/Non-Graduate	18.33%
High School Grad/HiSET	57.68%
12 th + some Post-Secondary	10.83%
2- or 4-year College Graduate	6.28%
Graduate or other post-secondary school	0.10%

Housing

Own	52.95%
Rent	47.25%
Homeless	0.19%
Other	0.60%

Poverty Level

Up to 50%	17.69%
51% to 75%	19.76%
76% to 100%	20.75%
101% to 125%	16.33%
126% to 150%	14.82%
151% to 175%	8.09%
176% to 200%	1.08%
201% to 250%	0.73%
Over 250%	0.75%

Information gathered from the CSBG FY2020 annual report specific to the agency client information states over fifty-eight percent of the clients served last year were at 100% of poverty or less. Fifty-five percent were female and forty-five male. The families that were served and reported on constitute all the SCICAP programs except some clients of Parents as Teachers and FaDSS.

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

Other characteristics worth noting are:

- 4,497 people or 91.79% had health insurance
- 1839 people or 37.54% reported having a disabling condition
- 167 people or 3.41% were veterans
- 12% of the clients served were from single parent households with the female being the head of household in 10.54% of the homes
- 16.66% of households were 2 parent households
- 923 people or 43% of people served were single
- 16.52% of the people served were two adults with no children
- 51.95% of the people served owned their home, 47.25% were renters, and .19% were homeless

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

Summary of Findings

This Comprehensive Needs Assessment contains an assortment of data. The Community Needs Assessment should go beyond just collecting information and analyzing data; it can be the foundation for creating change. This assessment provides a glimpse of the communities and families that SCICAP serves, which includes their economic well-being, educational status, health, and welfare. This assessment will be a tool to assist SCICAP with its planning process to help govern what programs and services to offer and the influence it is having on families as well as the community. Developing partnerships in the community is the most effective tool in the fight against poverty. Outreach efforts and communication with residents and other community service providers is necessary to warrant that everyone has up-to-date information and access to programs and services. This report validates how important social services and community assistance are to low-income families in helping them deal with poverty.

Main Conditions of Poverty

Basic needs are not being met

- Housing conditions/utility costs
- Food insecurity/household supplies
- Healthcare

Basic Needs

- Housing conditions/utility costs: There is an insufficient number of affordable, quality housing units accessible for low-income families. Families with low incomes also need help paying deposits, rent, utility bills and making their homes more energy efficient. Several stated they needed help making necessary home or property repairs. Rent prices are unreasonable for minimum wage earners. Low-income families need assistance with obtaining a loan to buy a house.
- Food insecurity/household supplies: Families stated they could use help getting food from food pantries, meal sites, or food shelves. Survey participants specified that having enough food and household supplies is a barrier for low-income families and individuals. Populations receiving food assistance represent vulnerable populations which are more likely to have multiple health and social support needs. Food insecurity is a problem that requires various approaches to address, from emergency assistance to ongoing food support. Effective programs include WIC, SNAP, school lunch programs, and food pantries. Acquiring basic household supplies such as personal hygiene items, cleaning supplies, laundry soap, clothing, furniture, and appliances is also a strain.
- Healthcare: Families and individuals do not have access to affordable healthcare. The lack of financial resources is a barrier to basic health services.

Causes of Poverty (why the need exists)

- Lack of affordable housing/rent assistance
- Lack of education/skills
- Lack of living wage jobs
- Lack of affordable childcare
- Lack of dependable transportation
- Substance abuse

Housing

There is an insufficient number of affordable, quality housing units accessible for low-income families. Families with low incomes cannot afford rent/house payments and utilities. Data indicates that a large percentage 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, selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income greater than thirty percent.

Education

The lack of a high school diploma/HiSet or further education will influence the future earning potential and financial stability of individuals and families for generations. Early education programs play a substantial part in providing children with the necessary skills, training, and early interventions they need. Educational achievement is fundamental to the economic health of the communities we serve.

Living Wage Jobs

The surveys indicate there is a gap between available jobs and the community resident's skill level. Based upon the data, people do not have the skills required to qualify for jobs in today's market. Additional skill training and education are needed to obtain a living wage job.

Childcare

There are not enough adequate childcare programs as well as childcare financial assistance. Survey respondents indicated there are an insufficient number of evening and weekend options available for childcare. There is also a lack of child and youth activities or after school programs available. Childcare is an essential workforce support that reduces absenteeism and turnover for working parents.

Transportation

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, getting to and from appointments, and getting vehicle insurance.

Substance Abuse

Substance abuse is a complicated issue that prevents many people from obtaining and retaining employment, stable home environments, housing, and in general self-sufficiency. Many times, people choose to fund their addiction rather than providing the essentials for their families. Substance abuse has a direct impact on the communities in which people live.

Summary of Customer Satisfaction

Overall customer satisfaction results are exceptionally positive. SCICAP appears to be doing an outstanding job providing essential services and programs to low-income clients in a helpful and friendly manner. 99.5% of survey participants stated they had a positive experience when receiving services. Most people completing the survey stated the biggest barrier to not receiving services was from not wanting to ask for help. Over 95% of Stakeholders gave SCICAP high ratings for value, professionalism, and relationships with community partners.

Summary of Community/Client Demographics

The assessment of the client and community demographics reaffirms what we already knew about the population and counties we serve.

- Population is decreasing
- Decatur County has the highest poverty rate in the state
- The SCICAP service area has a higher poverty rate than the state average
- Median household income is much lower than the state average
- We have clients that lack higher education
- We have many children receiving free or reduced-price lunches
- We have clients living in unsafe and unsanitary homes
- The percent lacking adult literacy skills for Iowa is 7%, and 9.08% for SCICAP's service area

A noteworthy barrier to self-sufficiency is the gap between wages and the cost of living. The high cost of housing, shortage of childcare options, and lack of transportation make access to employment, childcare, and social services costly and challenging. South Central Iowa Community Action Program provides quality programs and collaborates with other organizations in order to pledge the best possible support and outcomes for the families we serve. We collaborate with state agencies, local governments, schools, non-profits, medical and mental health providers, utilities, local businesses, and faith-based organizations. Our greatest advantage in meeting the challenges we face and developing opportunities for our clients is the resilience of our community members, staff and partners. While SCICAP is not able to meet every need identified in the surveys, the Agency has services and referral options in place to tackle many of the issues that clients are facing in our communities.

Amended July 13, 2016

Amended February 20, 2020

Amended January 31, 2021