



HRDC

COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY

2 0 1 3 COMMUNITY N E E D S ASSESSMENT

District 7 Human Resources Development Council
Serving Big Horn, Carbon, Stillwater, Sweet Grass
and Yellowstone Counties of Montana

www.hrdc7.org



H O P E
R E S P E C T
D R E A M
C H A N G E

Introduction

HRDC delivers programs and supportive services which encourage self-sufficiency and community collaboration for the betterment of Montana's most disadvantaged. Through our mission, we empower people in need through mobilizing and developing community resources by creating opportunities for success in Big Horn, Carbon, Stillwater, Sweet Grass and Yellowstone counties. An estimated 142,000 or 14 percent of Montana's community members live in poverty. Montana ranks 42nd in the nation for number of low-income working families; 47th for low-income minority working families; 41st for children in low-income working families; and 42nd for jobs in occupations paying below poverty. This needs assessment is conducted every two years as a way to evaluate the effectiveness and need of current services and to explore areas where services are needed. The information obtain is then used as a planning tool for the agency.

Service Area Profile

The counties of Big Horn, Carbon, Stillwater, Sweet Grass and Yellowstone are the service area for HRDC Community Action Agency. Based on 2011 U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates, the population for the service area is 185,944 with an average household income of \$43,078.

		MONTANA	Big Horn	Carbon	Stillwater	Sweet Grass	Yellowstone
DEMOGRAPHIC	Total County Population, 2011	998,199	13,093	10,028	9,131	3,623	150,069
	2011	10%	3%	5%	11%	0%	16%
	Population Under age 18, 2011	222,354	4,288	1,948	2,040	819	35,286
	Children under age 5, 2011	61,768	1,318	417	507	178	10,067
	Children ages 5-13, 2011	109,865	2,106	1,012	1,035	431	17,431
	Children ages 14-17, 2011	50,721	864	519	498	210	7,788
	2011	-3%	-5%	-15%	-1%	-13%	7%
	race/ethnicity, 2011	250,672	4,684	2,154	2,233	901	38,744
	White alone	210,050	1,020	2,050	2,119	847	33,429
	alone	24,564	3,433	38	32	8	2,444
	Hispanic/Latino	12,905	304	99	85	33	3,142
	Median age in years, 2011	40	31	49	46	47	38
SOCIAL & ECONOMIC	Median household income, 2010	\$44,011	\$34,778	\$43,223	\$49,185	\$40,859	\$47,346
	Unemployment rate, 2011	6.8%	12.4%	5.7%	5.7%	3.3%	5.1%
	100% FPL, 2011	21%	36%	18%	14%	15%	17%
	receiving TANF benefits (monthly family)	3,282	384	11	12	3	515
	(monthly average), FY2012	\$ 426	\$ 473	\$ 334	\$ 419	\$ 399	\$ 432
	recipient	126,547	4,139	703	626	139	17,652
	through 12th grade eligible for child care scholarships (monthly)	\$ 129	\$ 134	\$ 118	\$ 118	\$ 131	\$ 127
		57,563	2,218	383	324	107	8,177
		10,352	254	59	39	9	2,556

Methodology

Needs assessment studies are one component of the Results Oriented Management and Accountability cycle. This process is a key feature of an agency's planning and evaluation process that relates to ROMA National Goal #5: Agencies Increase Their Capacity to Achieve Results.

This Assessment is undertaken as federally required under *Section 676(b) (11)* of the CSBG (Community Services Block Grant) ACT that states *"The State will secure from each eligible entity in the State, as a condition to receipt of funding by the entity, a community action plan... that includes a community-needs assessment for the community served, which may be coordinated with community-needs assessments conducted for other programs"*.

In 1994 the CSBG Act was amended, in response to GPRA, to provide outcome measures to monitor success in three areas: promoting self-sufficiency, family stability, and community revitalization. The CSBG Monitoring and Assessment Task Force (MATF) supported by the Administration for Children and Families, Office of Community Services (OCS), and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services produced a National Strategic Plan in 1996. This plan identified six national goals for community action that specifically addressed these three areas.

The CSBG six national goals are as follows:

Goal 1. Self Sufficiency

Goal 2. Community Revitalization

Goal 3. Community Ownership and Pride

Goal 4. Partnerships among supporters and providers of services

Goal 5. Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results.

Goal 6. Strengthen Families and Communities

As part of a comprehensive needs assessment for the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), HRDC was interested in obtaining data from a broad sampling of residents in Big Horn, Carbon, Stillwater Sweet Grass and Yellowstone counties. The four overarching goals of this assessment were to:

- (1) Identify and quantify the incidence or prevalence of individual need;
- (2) Identify gaps in human service provision;
- (3) Identify barriers to self-sufficiency; and
- (4) Identify strategies for overcoming barriers to self-sufficiency.

An online survey was created using the web service Survey Monkey based on common themes found among the client population based on demographic data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the National Association of Community Action Agencies, the Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services, the Montana Office of Public Instruction, the Montana Board of Crime Control and the Montana Department of Transportation. The survey design included question logic to guide respondents based on their answers in order to make the survey more efficient. Printed copies of the survey were also created and distributed to organizations in the five county areas who serve a similar population. Those printed surveys were then collected and input by HRDC staff. The survey was open from February 4th to March 15th, 2013.

Results

The following pages summarize the information from a newly modified questionnaire completed by 378 respondents from February 4th through March 15th in 2013. This assessment includes comparisons to community and national data collected outside the HRDC survey. HRDC uses all of the information shared by clients to gain insight into how, as an agency, we can better achieve our mission of helping clients achieve self-sufficiency. The information generously provided by clients assists us in designing

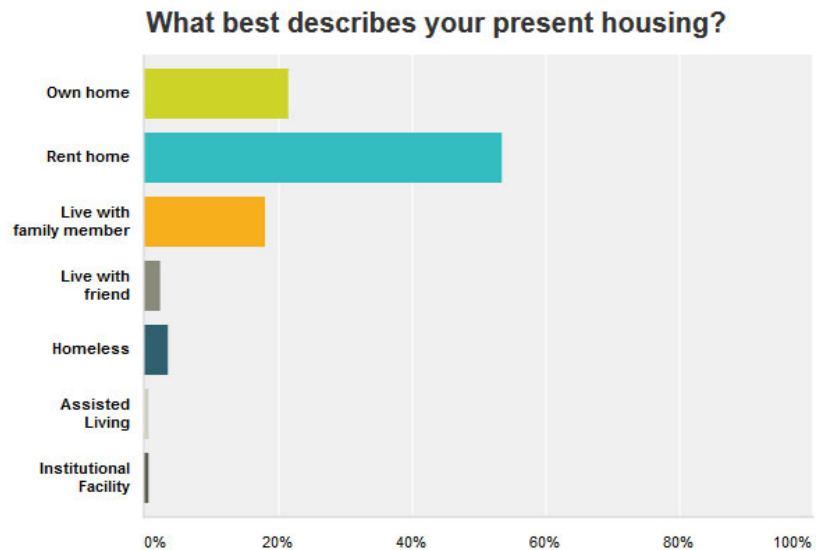
and refining programs, documenting local unmet needs and providing the data needed to improve the systems that impact low-income clients' lives.

Demographics

Of the total respondents, the majority (66%) were from Yellowstone County, with Big Horn County having the second most respondents at 22%. The percentage of participation for each county was consistent to their rankings based on total population from the U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates. The largest percentage of respondents was between the ages of 25-44 (39.56%), with 70% of respondents being female. The majority indicated having children either as a single or married parent (56%).

Housing

Ninety-four percent of respondents indicated they had moved no more than two times in the last 12 months. A slight majority (52.89%) indicated experiencing no barriers to housing, with the main issue for those indicating a barrier



being a lack of money for first and last month's rent. A majority (53.49%) of respondents live in rental property with home ownership at 21.51% followed by living with a family member at 18%.

Homelessness was a condition indicated by only six respondents, and the results were split between living at a shelter or a friend's house. Seventy-nine percent of respondents indicated that no one in their home was disabled, and 49% had three bedrooms or more in their home. Half of respondents

indicated having three or more people living in their home with 56% indicating no one under the age of 12 lived with them.

When asked to describe the condition of their residents, the majority of respondents split between stating their home was well maintained (30.67%) and in need of minor repairs (28.22%). Of those indicating a need for major repairs (17%), the main issues were leaking roofs (15.5%) and holes in the floors or walls (30.3%). The majority (56.41%) of respondents who indicated they did receive some form of housing assistance selected Energy Assistance, with Section 8 chosen 46.15% of the time.

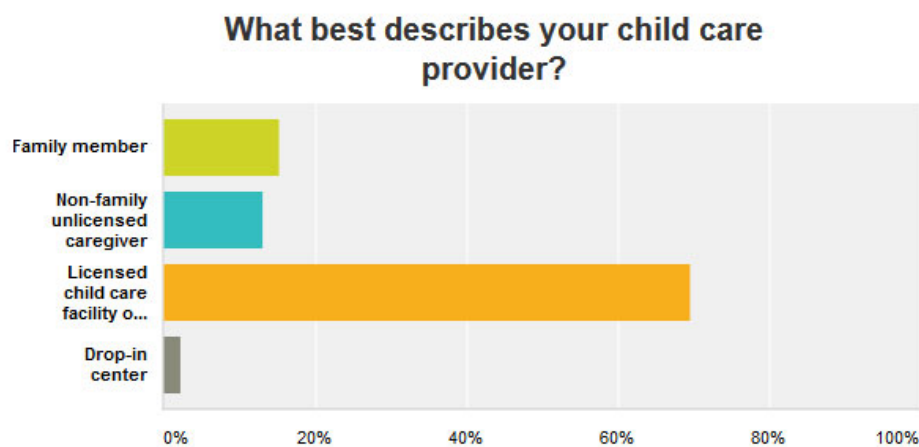
Transportation

The vast majority of respondents (83.29%) own their own vehicle, and 46.24% experienced no barriers to transportation. The main issue among those indicating a barrier to transportation was the high cost of fuel (24.51%).

Employment

The majority of respondents were employed, with 53.76% holding a full-time job. Seventy-six percent of respondents felt they were not under-employed or overqualified for the type of work they performed. Also, 80.77% were not involved in any employment and training programs. Of those unemployed (8.99%), 47% had been unemployed for over a year.

Child and Adult Care



Of those respondents who used child care, 69.57% used a licensed child care facility. No major issue prevented respondents from using child care other than

simply not having any children who needed care either as daycare or after-school care. Of those using child care services, 93.90% indicated that they did not receive the Best Beginnings scholarship for child care or after school care. Ninety-six percent of respondents indicated no need for elder care for anyone in their household.

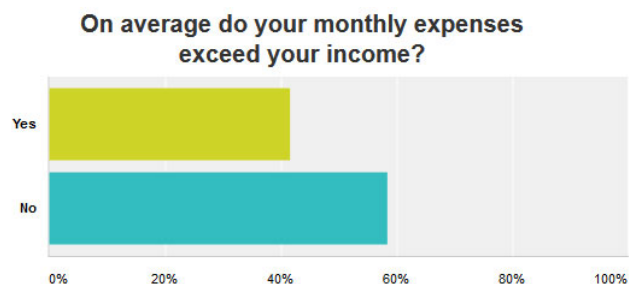
Nutrition & Health

Most respondents (87.56%) had not gone without food in the past 12 months, and those that had indicated a lack of money as the main reason (80.85%) and 50% stated they used a local food bank. The majority (69.23%) of respondents indicated they had some form of health insurance coverage, with 58.7% stating coverage was provided by their employer with the next closest form being Medicaid (16.25%) and Medicare (12.50%). Most respondents (55.04%) had received a dental exam in the past 12 months. Of those indicating someone in their household required medication for chronic pain or illness (45.53%), 76.54% stated they had never had to go without their medication because they could not afford it.

Money Management

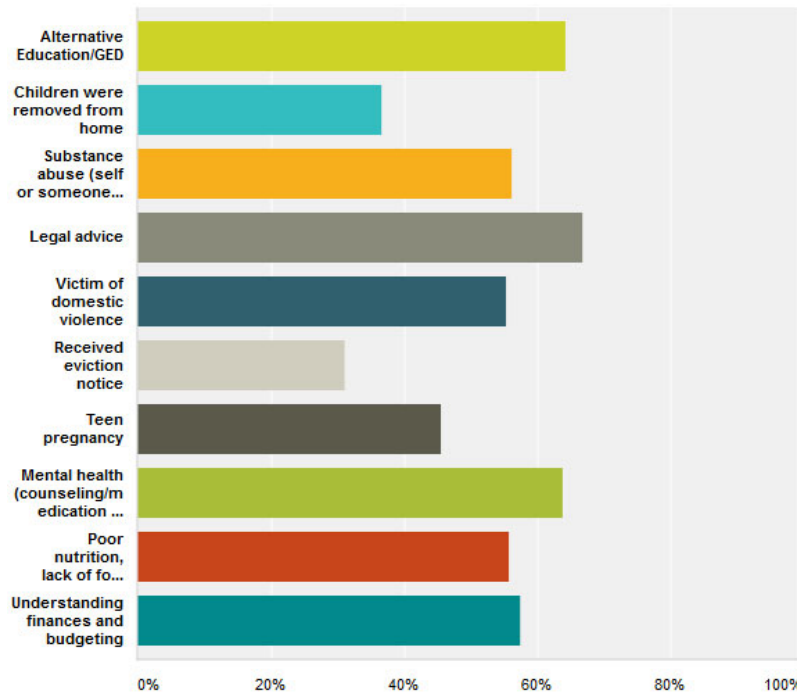
A majority (57.26%) stated they created a spending plan every month, and 72.77% indicated they stayed within a couple of dollars of their budget each month. Most respondents (58.40%) did indicate their monthly expenses exceeded their monthly income. In regards to account, most respondents (54.15%) had both a checking and savings account. Of those not having any form of bank account (15.6%), a lack of money to open and maintain an account was the main reason (50.85%).

A large majority (76.57%) indicated their household income fell below \$51,000 a year, and 84.41% filed their taxes every year with 64.39% of filers not paying anyone to prepare and file their taxes.



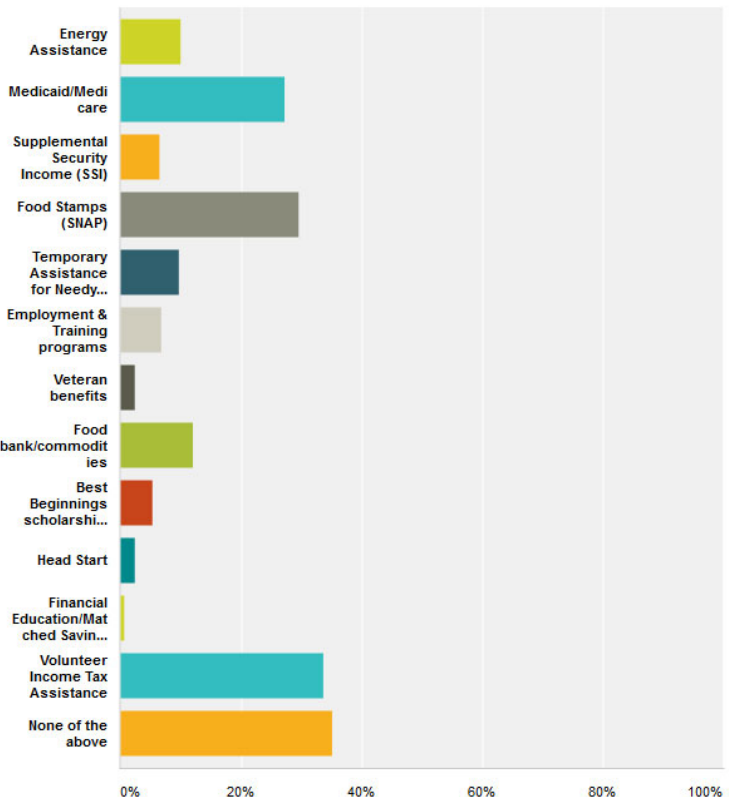
Most respondents (72.29%) indicated they do not have an emergency savings fund.

Program Awareness & Participation



When asked if they knew where to get help when experiencing certain issues or needs, the results were more balanced among the issues presented. The weakest area indicated was in regards to receiving an eviction notice (31.06%) and the strongest was information on Alternative Education or GED studies (64.26%).

When asked what programs they currently participated in, the results were consistent with how respondents completed other portions of the survey. Money management programs had the least amount of participation (0.58%), followed by Head Start and Veteran benefits (2.34% each) and the Best Beginnings scholarship program (5.26%).



Summary

Community Needs Assessment survey is a tool to identify data to assist Community Action Agencies in providing a roadmap in the process of developing a strategy to address both the condition and cause of “poverty issues” in a community.

The 2013 Community Needs Assessment identified the top five needs as stated below:

1. **Housing** was identified as the top need by respondents who completed the survey. Housing conditions of rental property rated poorly showing a need for repairs to structural issues as well as minor repairs such as windows and doors. Participants provided information stating that safety was an issue due to home location and limited rental property availability. A barrier of no money for deposits and required first month-last month rent prohibits families from moving out of substandard homes.
2. **Money management** and financial security was a concern and rated second on outcomes of the survey. Individuals stated the lack of sufficient money to start a savings program for their families therefore lacking the ability to have an emergency fund for unexpected needs arising in their lives.
3. **Transportation** was indicated as a concern and although many have their own automobiles car repairs and affording the cost of fuel, vehicle insurance, and registration for their vehicles were stated as barriers to secure transportation.
4. **Employment and Training** opportunities for the unemployed who are not receiving state assistance rated fourth on our outcomes chart. The unemployed population completing the survey stated that they have been unemployed for more than a year and although they may have qualifications for employment they are not acquiring adequate employment opportunities

in their communities. Continuing education and completion of GED and High School graduation greatly affects employability and can be directly tied to achieving a living wage job.

5. **Childcare** for working parents ranked 5th in the survey, however it was due to lack of knowledge of the program and therefore clients are not applying for services they may be eligible to receive. This is true along with many programs offered through our agency therefore indirectly showing a need for improved marketing of programs. Continued capacity building through advocacy and communications will create improved utilization of programs.

Conclusion

Low unemployment rates in Montana and the service area counties may be a factor in the number of employed individuals in this survey. With most indicating they were not under-employed or overqualified for the type of work they performed along with a lack of participation in an employment and training program could be a sign that the employment available is suitable for the skill set of the population. The fact that over 90% of those using child care were not participating in the Best Beginnings scholarship program would indicate a need to promote the program more, as income data for the population would suggest many families would qualify. Also, given both the U.S. Census data and the responses from the survey the majority of residents in the five county service areas qualify for free income tax preparation assistance.

Also considering income levels in the service area along with the lack of an emergency savings funds by respondents would indicate a continued need for money management and savings programs and more promotion of such programs.

Participation in current HRDC sponsored programs was consistent with how respondents answered specific portions of the survey, as financial and child care programs had the lowest numbers. As

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) is a new program to HRDC, the results of this survey in regards to participation in Veteran services not unexpected. It does create an opportunity to further

promote our SSVF program moving forward to compare participation during the next needs assessment period.

One obvious conclusion from this assessment is that the community is largely unaware of the many services HRDC provides. The demographic information indicates that a majority of the population of the five county area would qualify for many of the programs offered, however even those who were currently participating in an HRDC program were unaware of the other programs offered. This shows a clear need for more outreach and advocacy outside of the agency and more cross-training of staff on all HRDC programs so that they can better know if their clients may benefit from other programs. Internal referral of current clients needs to be improved and a suggestion would be to conduct an initial review of every potential applicant when they walk in the door to see what other programs they may qualify for.