



Ashtabula County Community Action Agency Community Needs Assessment 2015- Summary

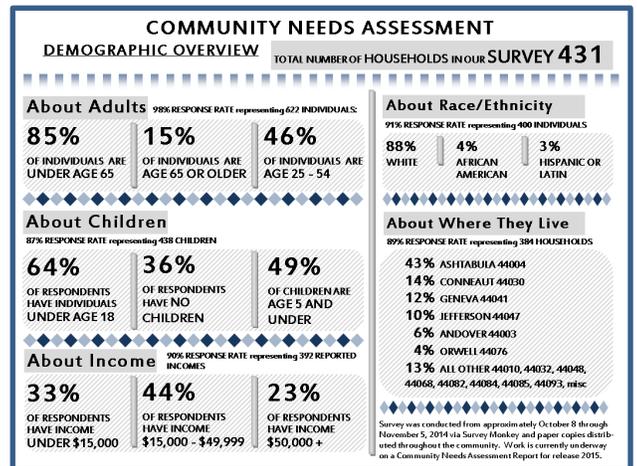
In order to accomplish our mission we must provide programs that address verified and urgent local needs and fill gaps in service or resources to meet those needs. A periodic analysis of community-wide conditions is required and conducted by ACCAA at least every three years, to identify those existing and emergent community needs. The Community Needs Assessment process was conducted in the fall of 2014.

About the Survey

To ensure that we had comprehensive data, key topic areas important to thriving communities and related to ACCAA services specifically were identified to survey. The topic areas were: Education, Employment, Transportation, Health Care/Nutrition, Child Care, Food, Housing/Shelter, Substance Abuse/Alcohol/Drug, Family, Community, Financial, and Utilities/Energy. The survey tool was available online through Survey Monkey and in hard copy from October 8 through November 5, 2014. The link for the online survey was issued to the public via email to various social and human service providers, governmental, and service organizations who were asked to circulate to their customers/clients and contacts. Local libraries and the Ohio Means Jobs- Workforce Development office were asked to post cards containing the link on all public computer terminals requesting users to take the survey during their sessions, as well as through our ACCAA Facebook page and website. The hard copy was distributed to customers/clients of our ACCAA programs, to partner social and human service providers and organizations to distribute to their customers/clients, and to the general public during local health fair and community events. We received 431 responses, the results and a scan of the environment that are summarized here.

Overall Results

- Respondents indicated the three (3) most utilized ACCAA programs are: HEAP/PIPP (Utility assistance)- 57%, WIC- 55%, and 2-1-1 Information & Referral- 37%
- In the last 12 months, respondents reported needing the most help with: Food 43%, Utility Assistance 41%, and Transportation 16%.
- At the time of the survey, respondents were receiving the following services: HEAP/PIPP (Utility assistance) 40%, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) 25%, and Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) 10%.
- Majority of respondents were age 25-54 (65%); 1/3 had no children; and of those with children the largest age group were children of age 6-12 years old.



Comparison 2012 Needs Assessment and 2015 Needs Assessment

2012 ISSUE RANKING	2015 BIGGEST PROBLEM
Unemployment	Drugs/Drug Abuse
Crime	Jobs/Lack of/Poor Wages/ Unemployment
Access to Healthcare	Crime/Violence/Theft
Housing	Apathy/Erosion of Values
Drug Abuse Prevention	Poverty

In our most recent survey, the question asked “what is the biggest problem in your community,” in the last survey we provided a list of important issues for the respondents to rank. The answers from both surveys are represented in the chart above. Comparing the new results to the top three results of 2012, “Drugs and Drug Abuse” moved up to number 1 (up from 4th as Drug Abuse Prevention) bumping Jobs/Employment/ Unemployment from number 1 to number 2; Crime moved from number 2 to number 3. These results, Drugs and Drug Abuse, Lack of Jobs/Unemployment, and Crime, echo the anecdotal observations regarding the biggest problems/issues facing the community.



Category Results

The key topic areas in the assessment were organized around 4 basic categories: Economic Well-Being, Education, Health, and Family and Community. Here are a few key points in each of these categories derived from the survey...

Economic Well-Being

- For more than half of respondents (55%) unexpected expenses were difficult to manage and the ability to set aside emergency savings was not likely.
- For households with incomes under \$15,000/year- only about half had a checking account and debit card; less than a third had a savings account; and only about 1 out of 7 has a credit card.

Education

- One in four respondents is a college graduate, a little more than ¼ had some college or vocational training.
- Over 1/3 read to their children daily and almost 3/4 report using their local library.
- In addition to the 292 children served through the seven (7) Licensed Head Start Centers, there are 27 Licensed Child Care Centers in the County with the capacity to serve over 1,936 children.

Health

- Though most (94%) reported having access to food on a daily basis; one in eight (13%) utilized local hunger centers for food assistance of which 44% are children and seniors.
- Most (91%) report that they are able to access care or see a doctor when necessary.
- Reinstatement of Medical Assessment program for seniors was noted as a need since it is often the only time some seniors see a medical professional.

Family and Community

- Crime was listed as the third most significant problem in the community, while 67% rated safety in their community “good” or “very good”.
- The majority rated “Shopping” options in their community “neither good or bad”, “poor”, and “very poor”.
- Budgeting skills and financial planning were the most desired topics to help people become more self-sufficient. Respondents were largely non-committal about attending workshops, however “interest in the topic” was cited as the most influential factor for attendance and their training preference was “hands-on”.
- With regard to Access to Information in the Home, more than 3/4 had a computer in the home and have internet access; 69% have a smart phone.
- “Word of Mouth” was cited by 3/4 as the method for finding out about assistance, programs, events and activities within the community; followed by the “newspaper” and “social media”.

Using the Survey Information

Comparing the demographic responses from our survey to the overall County demographics, indicates the sample is representative of the population as a whole. The answers provided within our survey provide a snap-shot of the community-wide conditions and reveal areas of urgent local needs and gaps in service or resources. We will utilize this information to develop programs, add or improve services, make it easier to use existing services, and prioritize the most important service types to better help individuals and families within the community. Wherever possible we will partner and collaborate with other agencies and organizations to increase efficiency, maximize resources, decrease duplication, and extend services.

The ultimate outcome of the Community Needs Assessment process is to identify the causes and conditions of poverty, the needs of our community, and the barriers preventing people from moving forward, then use that information to meet people “where they are” and provide them with opportunities, alternate experiences and choices, and new skills to create their own path to success.

The complete report is located at www.accaa.org or contact Ashtabula County Community Action Agency- Community Development Services at 440-997-5957 or Head Start at 440-993-7716.