

Community Needs Assessment

Detailed Needs by Category

Community in Action Harney and Malheur Counties



Missions Statement: We serve low and moderate-income individuals and families by providing education and counseling, skills development, and access to community resources that help to create self-sufficiency.

Vision Statement: CinA's vision is to build inclusive, diverse, and caring communities. We envision communities where residents, regardless of their income status, have hope, optimism, and access to community resources.

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Appendix

Introduction

Every three years, Community in Action participates in a Community Needs Assessment. The purpose of this assessment is to gather a cross section of information from residents, community partners, non-profit entities, and other groups that can provide valuable information regarding the community needs.

After the survey is completed, it will be analyzed to determine gaps in services to address areas that may need additional focus for future planning. It will be incorporated into the Community in Action Strategic Plan to assist low-income residents of Harney and Malheur Counties.

When the survey was developed it included quantitative data to inform the respondents of the facts about their community. The survey also solicited qualitative information from survey respondents to get a better picture of the information that is available during the process. This information is listed under the section heading of “Qualitative Information Gathered”.

The survey will be made available to the community by posting it on the Community in Action web site and sending it to partner agencies for their use.

Community in Action Background

Community in Action officially became the Community Action Agency that represents Harney and Malheur Counties in 2009. A non-profit 501 C 3, charitable contribution agency was established to deliver programs and services to low-income residents who qualify for services. Main program funding is designated through Oregon Housing & Community Services, private donors, and foundation grants that are available to serve low-income residents.

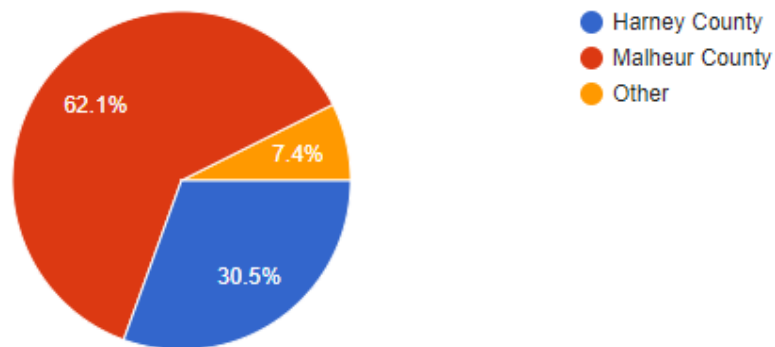
The agency has grown from approximately \$1M in funding to over \$3M in funding over the past eight years. Funding is diversified to include state, federal, and private funding sources. CinA remains flexible to address gaps in services and to address needs in the communities.

Survey Respondents

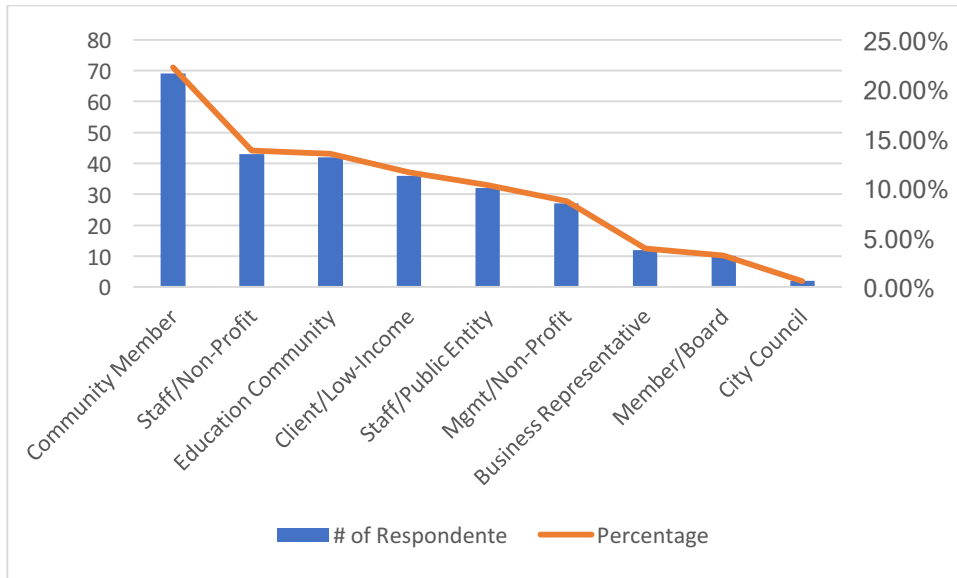
The summary graph below indicates the counties where the respondents reside. The category of “other” is generally known to include those who work in one of the counties but reside outside that area. This is largely due to Ontario bordering the State of Idaho. 311 individual surveys were received of which 95 were from Harney County and 193 were from Malheur County leaving 23 respondents from these other areas.

Please indicate which county you reside in.

311 responses



The chart below further breaks down the respondents by how they identify themselves within their community. Respondents may identify themselves as clients who receive low-income services even though they may also be a community member or a member of a non-profit organization. The largest representation of respondents are community members with 69 responses. The second highest group consists of staff members that identify themselves with non-profits (43 responses) and the third are members of the education community (42 responses). These categories are followed by clients who utilize services designed to assist them (36 responses).



The smaller portions of the chart indicate that local business representatives, members of city council, and board members of non-profit entities participated in the survey. This is a good cross section of the community members represented in the survey.

Survey Availability

The survey was made available to the community by publishing it on the Community in Action (CinA) web site at www.communityinaction.info, by making it available in written format in English and Spanish, and by providing a survey link to the community by utilizing partner agencies and list services. Community meetings were also attended to market the survey.

Process

Survey Introduction

The survey was developed with the following introduction that allowed each respondent to understand more about the community that they were assessing.

“From time to time Community in Action assesses the needs of low and moderate-income individuals and families within its service areas by creating a survey to determine needs, identify gaps in services, and to plan for future funding. Please take a moment to complete the survey so your expertise and information can be used to help identify the needs for low-income individuals and families. The survey will only take about five minutes to complete. Thank you.

Harney and Malheur Counties include frontier communities that typically lack infrastructure needed to compete with larger areas of the state for funding and larger scale employment opportunities. Subsequently, the communities tend to have higher poverty rates among adults and children and a high need for services designed to help low and moderate-income people meet their basic needs. Community in Action exists to serve low to moderate-income individuals and families by providing education and counseling, skills development, and access to community resources that help to create self-sufficiency.

According to the US Census, Harney County is the largest county by land mass and one of the smallest in population including population estimates of 7292 residents in 2016, which is less than one person per square mile. The population has changed slightly since 2010 and 22.8% of its residents are people over 65 years of age. Harney County's Race reflects predominately white with a small Hispanic and Native American population included. Foreign born in these communities represent 2% of the population. Owner-occupied housing is reflected at 69% with median gross rent reported to be \$563.00 per month. Median household income is reported at \$37,580 as compared to the statewide average of \$51,243.

According to the US Census, Malheur County is the second largest county by land mass and also one of the smallest in population including population estimates of 30,439 residents, which is slightly over 3 people per square mile. The population has changed slightly since 2010 and 16% of its residents are people over 65 years of age. Malheur County's Race reflects 77.5% white and 33.2% Hispanic or Latino. Foreign born in these communities represents 11% of the population. Owner occupied housing reflects 59.7% with median gross rent reported to be \$604.00 per month. Median household income is reported at \$35,418 as compared to the statewide average of \$51,243.

The information gathered will help define the future strategic plan for Community in Action in Harney and Malheur Counties, will help consider its sub-recipient needs and services provided, and will be used to create public reports that will be accessible on the web site at www.communityinaction.info.”

Community Input

The survey was made available to the community in many formats. In June of 2017, Community in Action (CinA) collaborated with multiple community based partners in Harney and Malheur Counties to come up with the Community Needs Assessment Survey (CNA) areas of interest and questions. The final product is a result of community collaboration that created a wide array of survey areas and included input from a cross section of the community members.

The intent of the CNA process was to involve the community residents, community partners, faith based entities, clients who receive services, city/county officials and others who have key roles in the communities to gain a wide spectrum of input. The survey specifically identified quantitative information from the US Census related to gender, age, and race/ethnicity for our service area. The survey collected quantitative data by rating options for certain areas and included qualitative data that helps to tell the story of additional information needing to be considered when addressing services/gaps. A series of questions that combined multiple choice, ranking, and open questions gave us the maximum ability to gather information in multiple formats. The survey was

designed to assess both needs and resources in the community and produce a document that can be published for the community to access.

How will the survey be used?

The information gathered will help define the future strategic plan for Community in Action in Harney and Malheur Counties, will help consider its sub-recipient needs and services provided, and will be used to create public reports that will be accessible on the web site at www.communityinaction.info.

About the Communities/Service Area

Harney and Malheur Counties include frontier communities that typically lack infrastructure needed to compete with larger areas of the state for funding and larger scale employment opportunities. Subsequently, the communities tend to have higher poverty rates among adults and children and a high need for services designed to help low and moderate-income people meet their basic needs. Community in Action exists to serve low to moderate-income individuals and families by providing education and counseling, skills development, and access to community resources that help to create self-sufficiency.

Harney County

In addition to the information provided in the survey on pages 6 & 7, Harney County's population includes 20.5% under the age of 18 and 22% over the age of 65. The population is made up of approximately 50% males and 50% females. The ethnicity is predominantly white with almost 90% of the population identifying in this category and 2% being foreign born citizens. There are 36 less housing units available as compared to 2010. High school graduates are represented as 88% with 17% holding a Bachelor's degree or higher. There are also 39 students who are experiencing homelessness according to the 15-16 Statewide Report Card from Oregon Public Schools.

Malheur County

In addition to the information provided in the survey on page 6 & 7, Malheur County's population includes 25.2 % under the age of 18 and 16% over the age of 65. The population is made up of approximately 46% males and 54% females. Malheur County consists of 63% of its residents identifying their ethnicity as white, 32% of its residents identifying with Hispanic or Latino, and 11% of the population is foreign born. There are 52 less housing units available as compared to 2010. High school graduates are represented as 80% with almost 14% holding a Bachelor's degree or higher. There are also 286 students experiencing homelessness according to the 15-16 Statewide Report Card from Oregon Public Schools.

Detailed Needs by Categories:

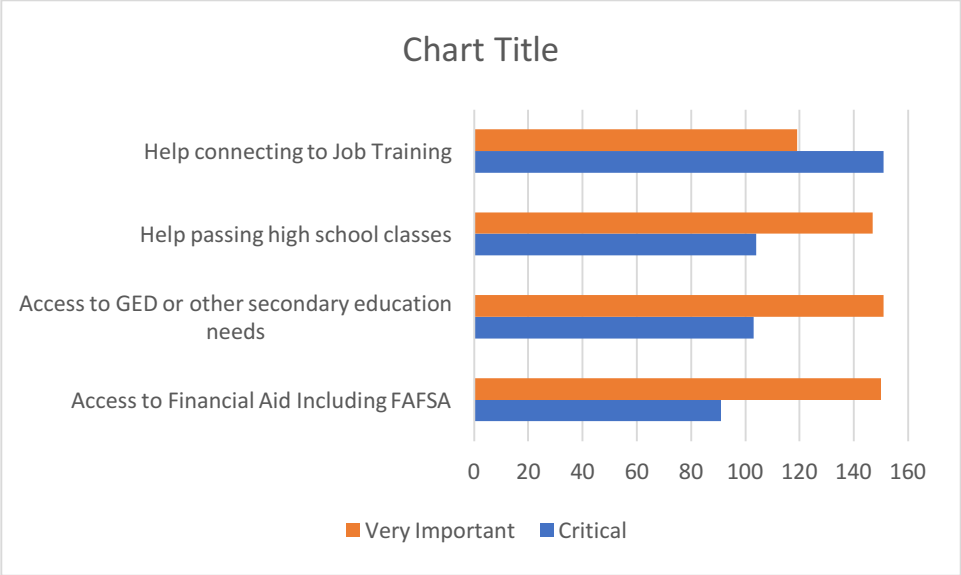
Education Supports:

The bar graph below illustrates the information as it was ranked in the order of:

- Not Important
- Important but Not Pressing
- Very Important
- Critical Need

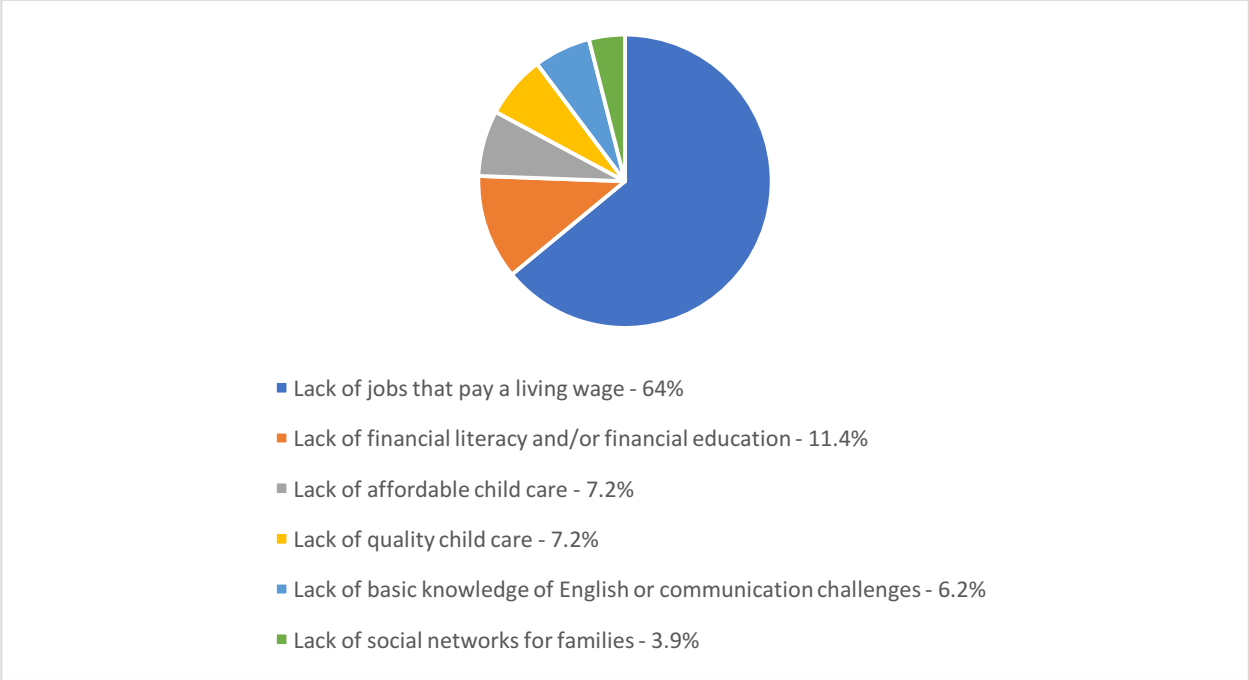
The highest ranked critical need in the Education Support category was help connecting to job training options with 151 respondents choosing this answer. The second and third ranked critical need in this category is 104 respondents who identified help passing high school classes and 103 identifying access to GED or other post-secondary options.

The ranking of "very important" illustrates that the communities understand that help passing high school classes, access to GED and other Post-Secondary options, and Access to Financial Aid are very important. Another interesting component this question brought up is that 127 respondents ranked help with affordable and attainable housing while in college is "very important".



Critical Issues Relating to Childhood Poverty:

The graph below illustrates that lack of jobs that pay a living wage is the most critical issue that lends to the high childhood poverty rates.

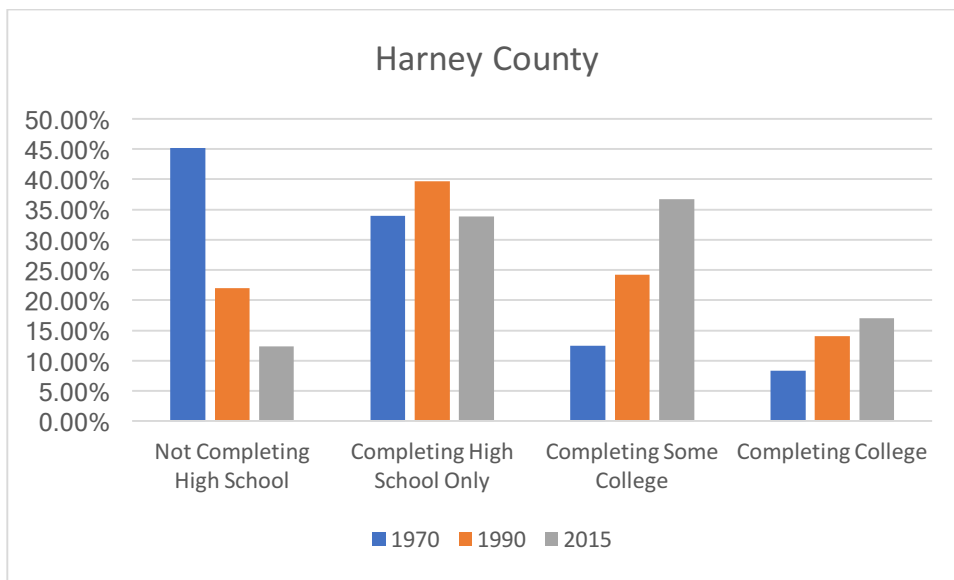


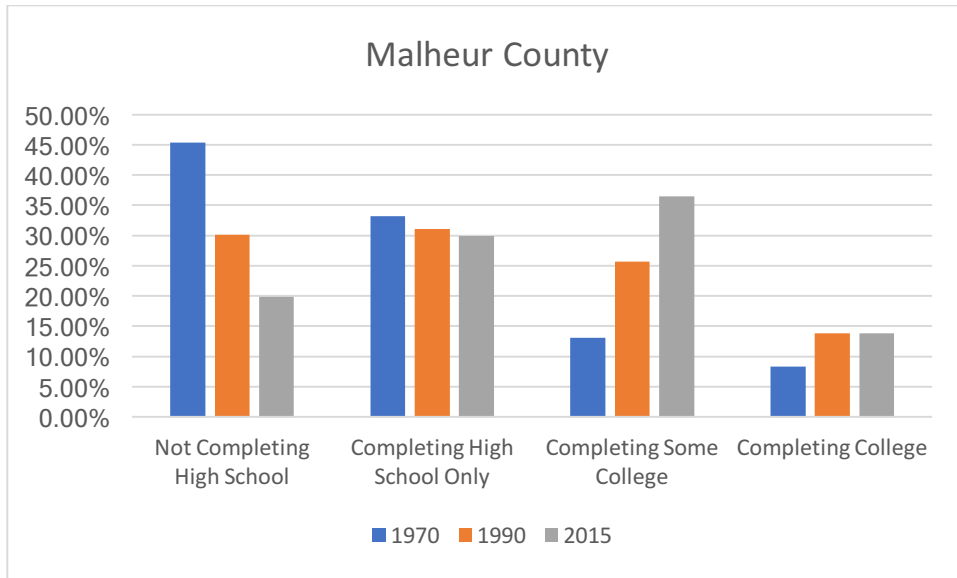
Poverty rates based on percentage from 2011 to 2015 have dropped slightly for Harney County, according to Kids County Data Center, which is a project of the Annie E Casey Foundation. 2011 rates were reported at 29.7%, raised in 2014 to 31.6% then dropped in 2015 to 25.5%

Poverty rates based on percentage from 2011 to 2015 have dropped slightly for Malheur County, according to Kids County Data Center, which is a project of the Annie E Casey Foundation. 2011 rates were reported at 35.1%, raised in 2014 to 38.3% then dropped in 2015 to 33.9%

These rates are very high when you compare them to larger areas of the state including Washington County whose rate in 2011 was 16%, which dropped to 12.3% in 2015.

The second most critical issue identified is the lack of financial literacy and/or the lack of financial training. According to the USDA Economic Research Service, the charts illustrate how education has been transformed since 1970.





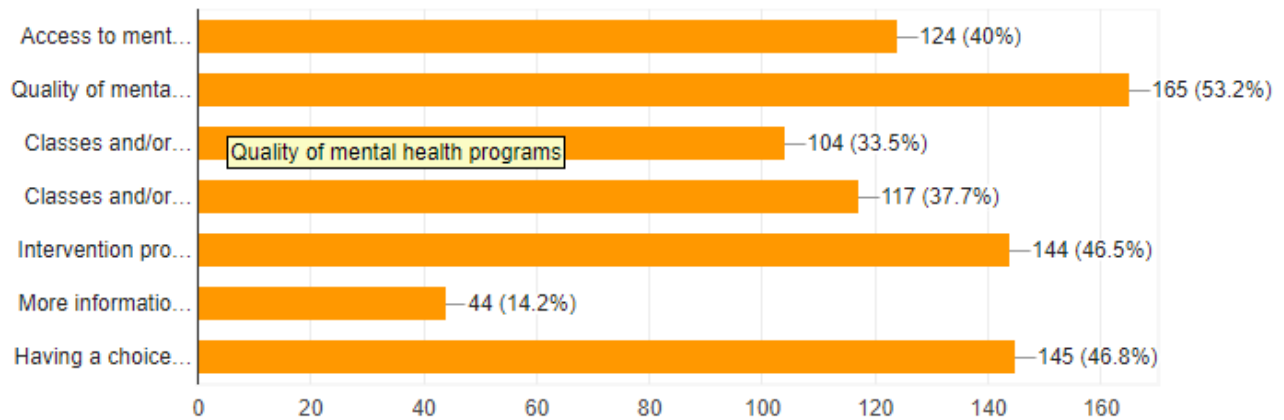
While the improvements in our communities are encouraging, comparisons to larger areas bring us back to the reality that education results of larger metropolitan areas are much better. For example: Multnomah County shows only 9.7% of high school participants do not graduate and 41.3% complete college. These are huge gaps in education expectations between rural/frontier and metropolitan areas.

Mental Health Assets:

When respondents chose their top three mental health assets that are most important in their communities, the highest pick was Quality of Mental Health Program with 165 respondents making this choice. The second highest need regarding mental health is having a choice of mental health providers and having prevention programs designed to help youth.

What types of mental health assets are most important in your community?
Check the top three that you think are most important.

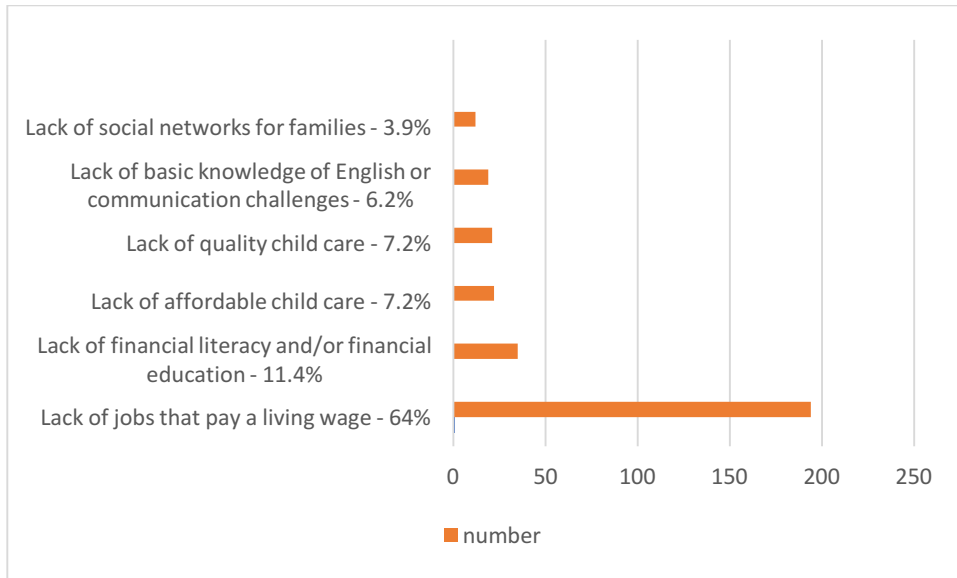
310 responses



Employment Supports:

Critical needs were identified by 148 respondents who determined that higher wage jobs are needed and 124 respondents determined that qualified workers/staff is a critical need. It is interesting that the two most critical needs identified have to do with industry, wages and a skilled workforce when only 12 or 3.9% of the respondents identified themselves as “Local Business Representatives”. This is an indicator that the need for more living wage jobs and the lack of a qualified workforce are well known issues in the communities.

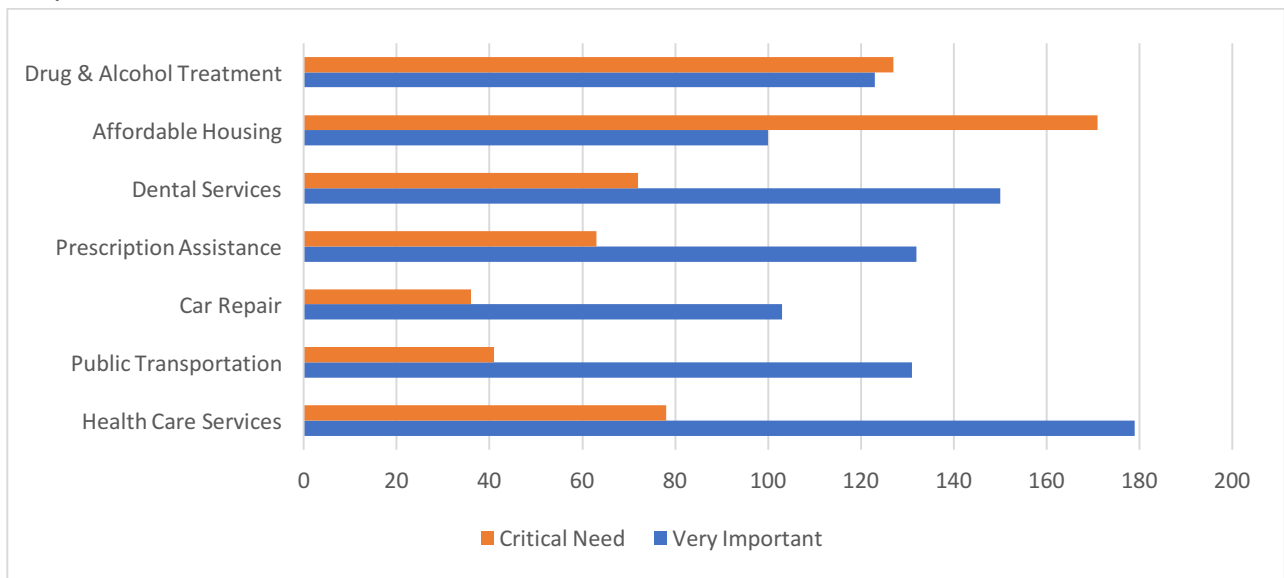
Job opportunities for youth was the number one choice for 173 respondents in the category of Employment Supports identified as a “Very Important” need. This was closely followed by 172 choices for Job Training for Adults and 158 respondents choosing Before and After School Programs as “Very Important” in this category.



General Needs:

The highest ranking general need shows that Attainable Housing is the most critical issue in our communities. 171 respondents identified Attainable Housing as the highest critical need in this section.

Drug and Alcohol Treatment is the second highest critical general need with 127 respondents who identified with this area.



The highest need listed as “Very Important” has been identified as Health Care Services. Earlier in the survey we learned that the most critical need regarding health care services is quality and choice of health care providers.

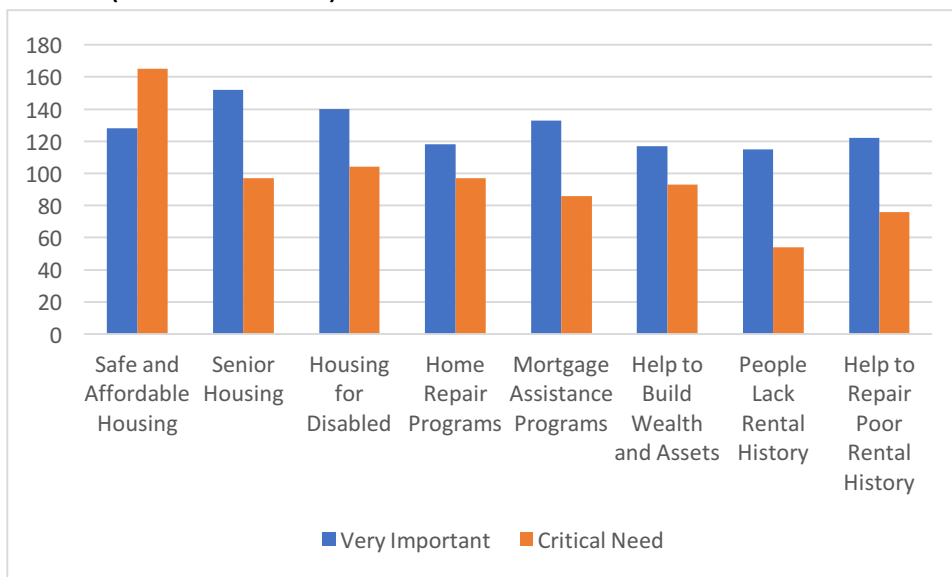
Housing Needs:

The single most critical need regarding housing has been identified as Safe and Affordable Housing. 165 respondents identify that Safe and Affordable Housing is the most critical need in Harney and Malheur Counties. Housing seems to be the category that has garnered the highest number of survey respondents. This is also confirmed in “General Needs” on page 14.

Senior housing is the second most critical need with 97 respondents choosing this option. In addition, 152 respondents chose senior housing as a “Very Important” issue.

Housing for the disabled is also a critical need with 104 respondents who indicate this as the third most critical housing need. In addition, 140 respondents chose housing for the disabled as a “Very Important” issue.

The survey also indicates that programs that assist low-income to repair their homes are among the critical needs as well as programs designed to help build assets (create wealth).



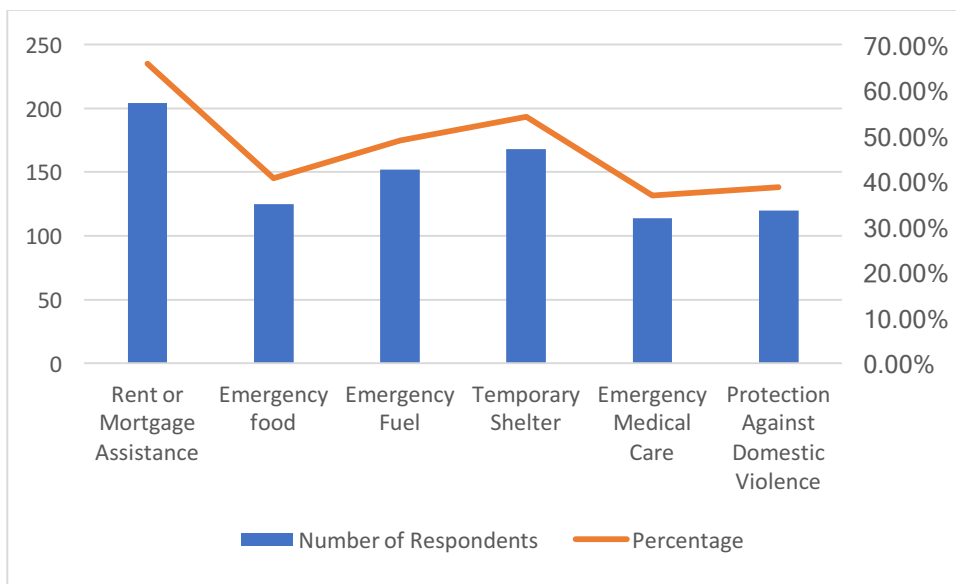
Services That are Most Critical:

Expanding on the housing concern, the survey shows that 204 respondents recognize Rent/Mortgage Assistance is the most critical issue that needs to be addressed in the communities as listed in the chart below.

The second most critical need is temporary shelter, which neither community currently has. Temporary shelter, warming shelter, and other shelter activities are being addressed by utilizing hotel/motel vouchers with local hotels, which is costly to manage.

The Malheur County Homeless Task Force is working to identify a solution to the areas lack of shelter. Currently the New Hope Kitchen is offering nutritious meals to the homeless and other low-income residents go to the site for services that include a nutritious meal, limited access to camping equipment, and donations from the community.

The good news is that there are multiple options and conversations regarding lack of shelters happening in Malheur County. CinA will address this in the strategic plan with a goal of identifying a viable solution for 2018 winter weather needs.



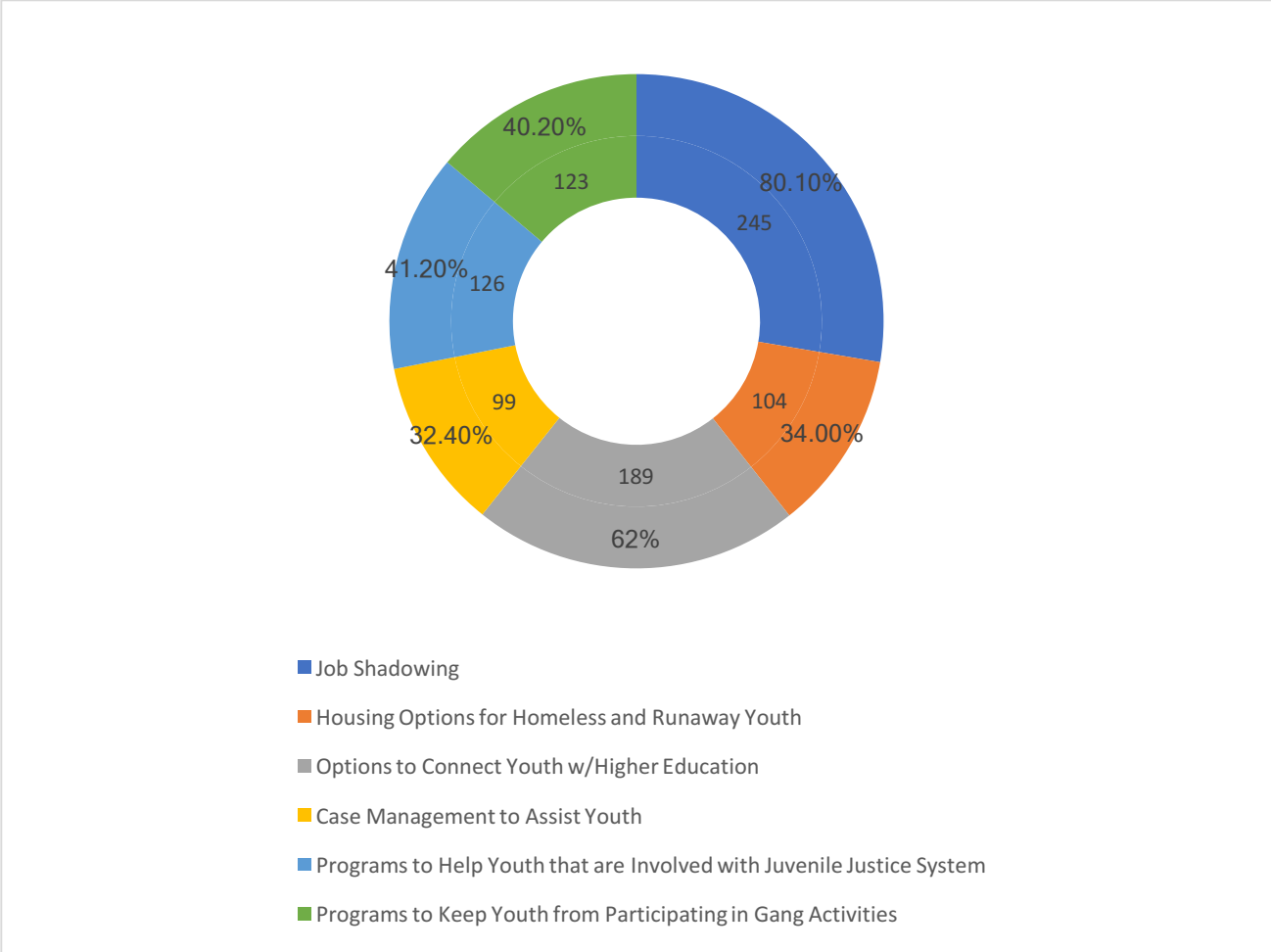
Harney County does not have a temporary or warming shelter in place. These are also ongoing conversations with the community partners, the city/county officials, and citizens of the community. The current system allows for transportation to other areas that are better equipped to manage clients who need shelter services.

Inclement weather shelters have been developed in the past with good results, however, these options have not been sustainable.

Thriving Youth:

Job Shadow and Options to Help Youth Connect with Higher Education were identified as the most critical needs when asking what services youth need to thrive. 245 respondents agree that job shadowing options can help youth develop into positive adults while 189 agree that connecting youth with higher education will help them to thrive.

The third and fourth categories identified include programs to help youth stay out of the Juvenile Justice System and away from gangs.



Additional input was solicited from the survey. The responses are below:

- Drug Prevention and Education is Needed – 1 additional response
- Extra-Curricular Activities, Sports, etc., are Needed for Youth – 10 additional responses agree that these activities will help youth thrive
- Affordable Housing is needed for youth – 2 respondents
- Mentoring Programs for Youth – 2 respondents
- Job Skills Programs are needed for youth – 3 respondents
- Better Public Education was the response from 2 respondents
- Mental Health Services are needed to help youth – 1 respondent
- Personal Development Options are needs for youth – 1 respondent
- Care of Elderly is needed to help youth thrive – 1 respondent
- I don't know was another respondent's comment

Critical Issues that Creates the Needs:

Low Paying Jobs

It is no surprise that low paying jobs has surfaced as the most critical issue that creates the needs in the survey. This has been a need for many years in the rural parts of Oregon. There is no quick solution in sight and the Community Action Agency Network can work with Economic Development and City/County officials to provide critical information to assist in this area.

Harney - Median household income is reported at \$37,580 as compared to the statewide average of \$51,243.

Malheur - Median household income is reported at \$35,418 as compared to the statewide average of \$51,243.

Lack of Basic and Higher Education

The next most critical issue indicates that the lack of higher education and/or the lack of basic education creates issues related to poverty and low-income.

According to the US Census:

- Malheur - High school graduates are represented as 80% with almost 14% holding a Bachelor's degree or higher.
- Harney - High school graduates are represented as 88% with 17% holding a Bachelor's degree or higher.

The next layer of serious needs that cause the conditions of poverty indicate that housing is not available and the cost to rent or own a home is out of reach for almost 1/3 of the respondents. The lack of affordable/attainable housing has been a strong theme throughout the survey.

- Harney - There are 36 less housing units available as compared to 2010. Owner-occupied housing is reflected at 69% with median gross rent reported to be \$563.00 per month.
- Harney - There are also 39 students who are experiencing homelessness according to the 15-16 Statewide Report Card from Oregon Public Schools.

- Malheur - There are 52 less housing units available as compared to 2010. Owner occupied housing reflects 59.7% with median gross rent reported to be \$604.00 per month.
- Malheur - There are also 286 students experiencing homelessness according to the 15-16 Statewide Report Card from Oregon Public Schools.

In addition, there were multiple comments from respondents that indicate that housing for youth is an issue. There is a lack of structure to house unaccompanied youth, runaway youth, and youth who are couch surfing and/or homeless. Respondents included suggestions that housing is needed for convicted felons, homelessness in general is an important issue to address, and there are too many people moving into the community that are not self-sufficient and rely on services to sustain them long-term.

Job training is an issue that many respondents included in this category. Lack of job skills to get/keep a higher wage job, lack of basic education, lack of quality education, and lack of experience to compete for higher wage jobs were all issues that were emphasized in the survey results.

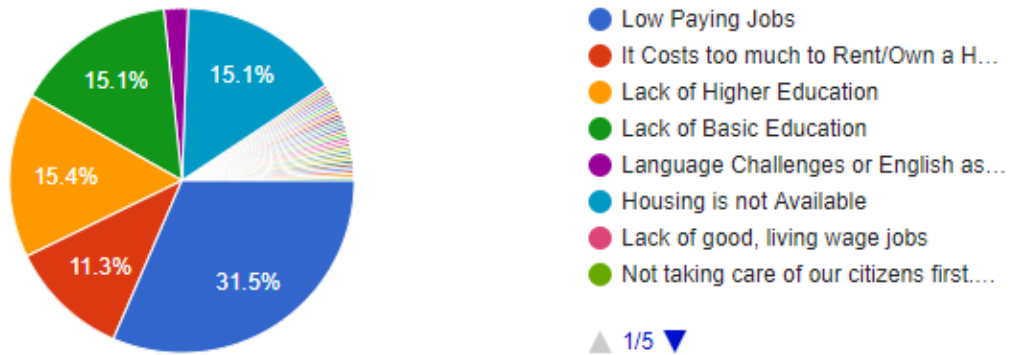
The lack of activities for youth also was mentioned repeatedly in this category. Statements included that there are no inexpensive activities that can engage youth, gang activities are still an issue, programs are needed to allow youth to work and gain experience in job markets, and positive youth engagement is needed.

Many respondents also commented that all of the above services in this category are a critical to address the needs of the communities.

In addition, respondents made comments that indicate that a lack of job skills is an issue, gang activity is still an issue, there is a need for more behavioral health services, and there is a need to get youth out of the cycle of poverty. General comments also included that a combination of the lack of jobs and the lack of rental property is a critical issue.

What is the most critical issue that creates the needs listed in the survey questions above? Check the one that is most important.

311 responses



Additional information was requested from the respondents to help us better understand what they think are critical issues creating the needs listed. They include:

- Housing is not available
- It costs too much to rent or own a home
- Housing for convicted felons does not exist
- Many residents cannot pass a drug test
- Lack of industry in general
- Lack of skills to get a job – five individuals added similar comments
- Gangs are a problem for youth and community
- Behavioral health issues
- There is a need to stop the cycle of relying on government programs – multiple comments in this area
- Communities lack inexpensive activities for youth
- Lack of jobs for youth was an issue for three individual respondents
- Quality education is lacking
- Homelessness is an issue
- Parents are not equipped for children’s needs
- Low paying jobs in our areas/lack of good living wage jobs

- Higher/basic education is lacking
- Language challenges exist
- Not taking care of our citizens, no incentive to get off welfare

Resources Known to the Community/Respondents:

The top five ranked entities that are known to respondents include:

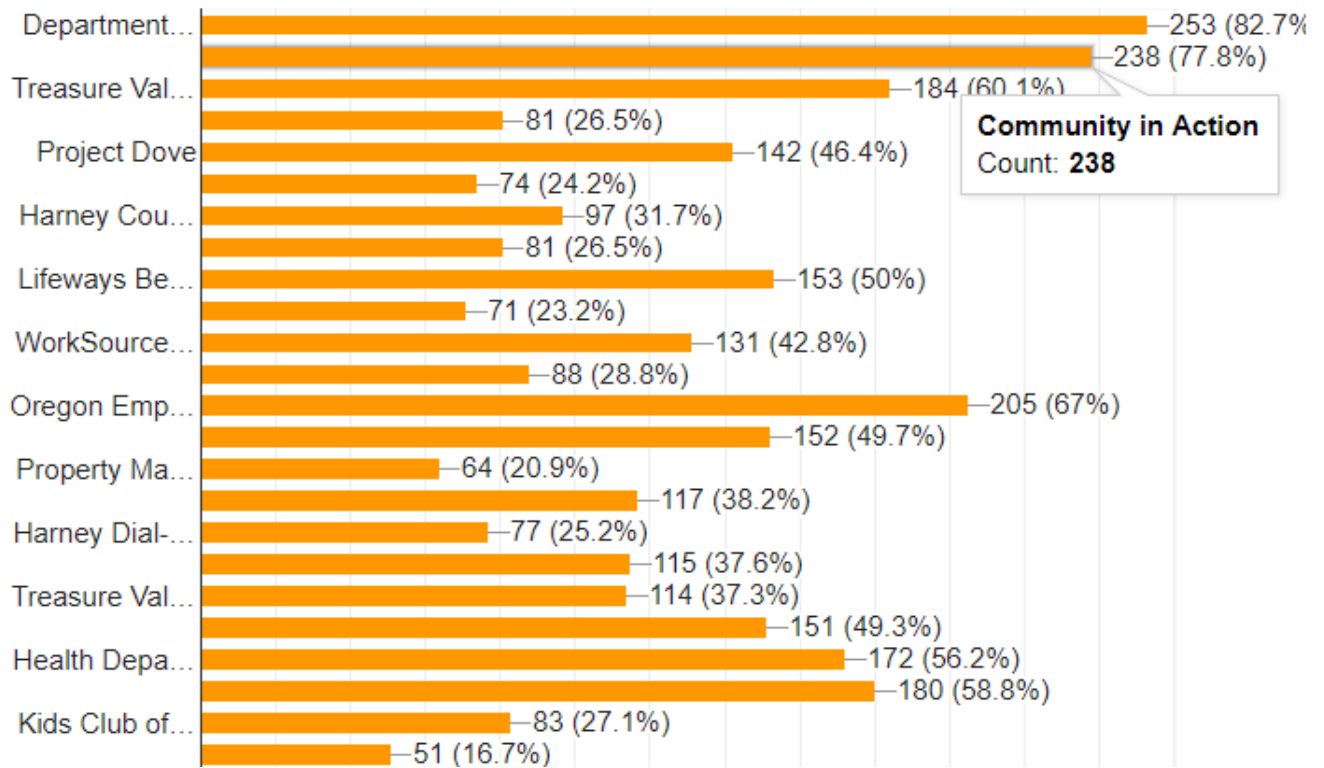
- Department of Human Resources – 253
- Community in Action – 238
- Oregon Employment Department – 205
- Local Food Pantries – 180
- Health Departments – 172

It is important to know what resources are well known in our communities. Resources that are difficult to identify can be challenging to connect low-income residents to. Smaller communities rely heavily on volunteer help, local churches, and other resources to help people in need.

Seeing that Community in Action ranks second in resources that are known in the community indicates that we are succeeding in getting needed information into the hands of those who seek it. We can determine that clients are able to connect to services, and staff is available to assist the community.

Having state and county resources rank among the top five of known resources is also a good illustration that the community and low-income residents connect with services offered through the state for assistance.

Local food pantries seem to be easily identifiable as 180 respondents indicate that the services they provide are well known in the communities where they reside.



Qualitative Information Gathered

In addition to the information above, respondents also identified that local churches are known in communities, non-profits that help with specific needs are known in communities, and many other resources can be identified.

Additional comments regarding youth garnered the most comments and they included issues with homelessness among youth, the need for clubs such as “Big Brothers/Big Sisters” and the Boys & Girls Club need to be expanded. Training for career and technical skills was listed as a need from several respondents. Activities to keep youth occupied in a positive way was a common statement throughout the survey. Mentorship of multiple types was referenced including daytime programs, gang prevention activities, one-on-one activities, and stable extra-curricular activities being critical needs in the communities.

Many respondents commented on the ruralness of our areas and that we lack the options for youth and other programs as compared to the larger cities. Multiple

comments regarding the lack of affordable housing and that low-income people cannot afford rent nor can they afford to purchase a home.

Comment regarding older workers who need to get back into the workforce is also an issue in our communities. We need to do a better job of hiring older workers at a wage higher than minimum were among the comments.

Community in Action Strategy Moving Forward

Next steps for Community in Action will be to have the Board of Directors analyze this Community Needs Assessment Data in more depth. This will give the Board ideas on how to move forward with seeking programs to help improve the lives of low-income residents that have been identified by the survey. These ideas will be included in the new Strategic Plan for 2018.

Informing the Strategic Plan

The new Strategic Plan that will be developed for 2018 through 2021 will include the information presented in the survey. This information is valuable to determine what programs to continue, what programs may not be meeting a need, and what programs need to expand or be created.

The Strategic Plan will span the next three years, which will give Community in Action the ability to measure improvements made in service delivery. It will also give staff time to further develop programs and services to continue to meet the needs of low-income residents on our communities.