# Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2020-2024

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today, Strategic Planning is essential to the success of any organization. In the nonprofit world, where government funds are turbulent, private foundation money is difficult to obtain, the needs of the communities often change and numerous organizations pursue the same funding, a Strategic Plan is necessary to keep the organization focused on what it desires to accomplish. This framework can serve as a roadmap for the agency to meet the mission of the organization with the Staff and Governing Board working together.

The Strategic Planning process allows individuals to utilize their energy and resources to think differently and pursue new opportunities to benefit the Community, Agency and Family.

The Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission Strategic Plan is targeted to be accomplished over the next five years. Some outcomes may be completed quickly, some may take longer and some not at all. The organization may need to adjust the plan due to dynamic and changing conditions. However, the key to success is having buy-in from both staff and board throughout the process including follow-up and monitoring.

*It always seems impossible until it is done.*
*Nelson Mandela*

# Mission

The Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission (OHCAC) will foster and promote planning services and developmental efforts for the mobilization and utilization of resources, public and private, for coordinated attack upon conditions of poverty affecting the inhabitants of the area.

OHCAC will continuously support economic self – sufficiency. It will encourage the provisions of services, and other activities toward developing employment and economic opportunities, improving human performance, individual and group motivation, productivity, housing and bettering conditions under which people live, learn, and work.

OHCAC will solicit, contract for, receive, administer, and disburse any funds, grants, bequests, devises, and other resources for the execution and implementation of specific or general programs in carrying out its purposes.

# Vision

(To be developed within this plan)

# Community Action Promise

The Promise of Community Action Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

# Strategic Planning Process

The purpose of the Strategic Planning process for the Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission was to reflect upon the organizational successes, scan the current environment and develop common goals to meet the organizations mission. Upon its conclusion, the organization can be strengthened and focusing its resources and energy on meeting the needs within the community.

Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission completed the agency Strategic Plan for the five-year period of 2020-2024 with the assistance of an Internal Consultant/Facilitator provided by the Ohio Community Action Training Organization from March through June 2019.

Process:

- ✓ Initial communication with OHCAC leadership with the OCATO facilitator to discuss steps in completing the upcoming plan including gathering information for survey, questions, review of survey and setting dates and times for onsite work.
- ✓ Review of previous Strategic Plans and accomplishments. This summary can be found on pages 16-17.
- ✓ Communication with leadership regarding what specific areas they desired to be included through sharing the results of the online surveys.
- ✓ Review of agency most recent community assessment data. This can be found on 41-50 pages.
- ✓ Review and compilation of survey results from Board, Staff, Customers, Community Partners including representation from Elected Officials, Education and Faith-based participants. Pages 19-33. A total of 109 surveys were submitted anonymously through survey monkey.
- ✓ Facilitation of 3 different working groups with 19 individuals participating representing all departments and various positions. These were held on consecutive dates in Galion, Mt. Gilead and Marion. The groups reviewed pertinent survey results as well as discussed, the SWOT analysis, current needs and identified areas the organization should focus on over the next 5 years.
- ✓ The **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreat information (SWOT analysis) can be found on page 21.
- ✓ Detailed discussion with all participants occurred prioritizing the needs and adding ones that might have been overlooked in the areas of Community, Agency & Family. *In many instances, these categories overlap*. Areas that impact the community also has impacts on families and the agency. For example: *If a large manufacturing facility was to close within a county, the community would be impacted. Employees would be unemployed which impacts their families. In turn, the agency will be needed more than ever to address emergency and long-term needs.*

- ✓ Conclusion of what workplans should be developed.
- ✓ Development of workplans by facilitator.
- ✓ Development of the formal strategic plan by facilitator.
- ✓ Review of draft plan by the OHCAC Leadership Team.
- ✓ Approval by OHCAC Governing Board.
- ✓ Implementation of the plan by the OHCAC board and staff.
- ✓ Ongoing monitoring by the Governing Board.
- ✓ Celebration of results.

## WORKPLAN REQUIREMENTS

Each work plan includes the following:

- Determination of which Goals are to be addressed.
- Outcome/Objectives are written statements that describe an intended outcome. This is if the outcome which would be achieved if possible. Example: *Poverty no longer exists.*
- Goal is the destination the agency would like to obtain. Example: *There will be a decrease in the number of individuals living in poverty.*
- Rationale identifies the reason for the goal. Example: *Lack of jobs, transportation, living wages and education often impedes individuals from moving out of poverty.*
- Objective/Performance Targets are measurable, time specific and measure success. Example: *By July of 2021, the organization will obtain funding to provide intensive case management. Of the 20 individuals enrolled, 15 will complete the program and 10 individuals will maintain full time living wage employment for 6 months after completion.*
- The plan includes strategies/milestones to be completed within specific timeframes.
- Identification of the leader for each work plan will be up to the Administration based on time constraints and individual strengths and interests. There is an opportunity for the agency to identify a leader in each area as well as methods to update the progress in meeting the plan

Workplans Follow.

## MISSION & VISION STATEMENT

(Agency)

OUTCOME: All Employees and Board Members of Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission will be able to state and understand the agency vision and mission statements.

GOAL: To develop a vision statement for the organization while creating a shorter mission statement which defines why OHCAC exists, its key objective and who it benefits.

RATIONALE: While in recent years, OHCAC has decreased the overall size of its mission statement, it is still extremely long. A mission statement is a formal summary of the aims and values of a company, organization, or individual. Best practices indicate it should be a single sentence or short paragraph at the most. The organization currently does not have a vision statement.

OBJECTIVE/PERFORMANCE TARGET: By January of 2021, the OHCAC Board will have adopted a new Mission and Vision Statement.

- ✓ Administration, board and staff review, revise and shorten the current mission statement.
- ✓ Administration, board and staff create a vision statement for the organization.
- ✓ Governing Board reviews and approves new *Mission* and *Vision* statements.
- ✓ Mission Statement is provided to the staff and community through various mechanisms (included on letterhead, social media sites, agency communication (internally and externally).
- ✓ OHCAC board and staff will be able to share the mission statement with those with whom they come in contact.

## RAPID REHOUSING

(Community, Family)

OUTCOME: All residents will reside in safe, affordable housing.

GOAL: OHCAC will develop a comprehensive housing program which will allow individuals needing emergency housing to maintain and remain in their homes.

RATIONALE: The current Rapid Rehousing program provides funding for only 3 months. This type of housing is frequently difficult to obtain due to unavailable and affordable rental properties and past experiences of tenants/landlords. Such short-term funding does not allow time for the individuals to obtain employment or other soft skills needed to remain in the same housing for more than 3 months. Thus, the cycle of homelessness or moving from house to house, further continues. This inhibits the ability of residents to move from Generational Poverty.

OBJECTIVE/PERFORMANCE TARGET: By January of 2023, the OHCAC in cooperation with community partners, will have developed and implemented a Rapid Rehousing Program. This program will have a minimum of 10 families that enter the program, 5 will complete the program and 2 will remain in affordable housing for 12 months.

- ✓ Meet with community partners to discuss the current program and its strengths and weaknesses.
- ✓ Develop a formal plan of collaboration and action to address the financial needs, training and case management program to assure families can remain in safe, affordable housing for longer than the currently funded 3 months.
- ✓ Obtain additional funding and MOU's in cooperation with partners.
- ✓ Enroll 10 families in the program while mutually setting goals and milestones for success for each month. (Obtaining and maintaining employment, budgeting resources, reinstatement of driver's licenses, obtaining transportation and childcare and others)
- ✓ Case manage families on a monthly basis with 10 families participating in the program, 5 completing the program and 2 families remaining in this affordable and safe housing for 12 months.
- ✓ Celebrate success and expand program to additional counties within the OHCAC service area.

## COMMUNITY AWARENESS

(Community, Agency, Family)

OUTCOME: Everyone will be aware of the Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission, its mission, its programs and how to access them.

GOAL: To provide more information to the staff, board, elected officials and general public regarding Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission programs/services, community needs, and residents needs to assist them in reaching and maintaining self-sufficiency.

RATIONALE: The needs within every county change regularly. The programs offered by the organization face continual changes due to funding requirements, changes within the community and increased/decreased funding. The board and staff of OHCAC need to be familiar with the scope and purpose of programs offered in all departments and counties. The community needs to be made aware of the services available and additional needs within the counties in order that they can access services or financially contribute to the agency. Elected officials need to be made aware of rules and regulations that inhibit moving individuals from poverty as well as needs for additional funding to address self-sufficiency.

OBJECTIVE/PERFORMANCE TARGET: By January of 2024, OHCAC will have increased the number of Facebook likes from 600 to 3,000 allowing their information to be shared throughout the region.

- ✓ OHCAC leadership team will provide information and updates to the local media (newspapers, local television and radio stations) twice per month.
- ✓ OHCAC will explore additional areas of media to reach the public with Facebook logo utilized on all correspondence.
- ✓ Agency website will be updated monthly.
- ✓ OHCAC staff and board will participate in at least 8 community activities each year to promote the agency. (Back to school events, festivals and other community events).
- ✓ OHCAC staff and board will be active in at least 8 different county coalitions each year.
- ✓ OHCAC staff and board will make special presentations at 10 meetings throughout the year between all counties. (Rotary, Lions Club, Chamber of Commerce and Church events)
- ✓ OHCAC staff will update the agency brochure and other promotional items and distribute throughout the county including to residents and other agencies and businesses.

- ✓ OHCAC Administration will update staff of current programs and requirements on an ongoing basis through written communication.
- ✓ OHCAC administration will create and provide a brief "elevator" statement for staff to promote the organizations mission. The template will include: WHO (you are), WHAT (you do) utilizing key results and impact to allow the "investor" to understand your organization, WHY (you are unique), WHEN (Concrete, defined and realistic goals).

## STAFF RETENTION
(Agency)

OUTCOME: There will be no staff turnover at Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission.

GOAL: To reduce turnover within the organization.

RATIONALE: OHCAC is a non-profit corporation with grant funding which can change at any time. The organization is unable to provide a living wage to all staff. While the organization offers a generous sick, vacation and personal leave package, OHCAC often faces increased health insurance and other fringe benefit costs.

OBJECTIVE/PERFORMANCE TARGET: By October of 2020, the organization will have implemented two "employee appreciation/engagement activities" for all staff.

- ✓ OHCAC administrative staff and board members will review the Employee Handbook to determine if there are various policies that could be changed or realigned within the workplace.
- ✓ OHCAC Administrative staff and board members will discuss and implement two "employee appreciation/engagement activities" for staff.

    - Opportunity to wear jeans on occasion with donation for specific programs and advocacy efforts.
    - Birthday Holiday
    - Lunch policy
    - Flexible lunch policy (allowed due to personal/family appointments)
    - Special monthly drawings for various events
    - Discounted group memberships (YMCA, SAMS club)
    - Other

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

(Community, Agency, Family)

OUTCOME: Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission is the leader in economic development within the region.

GOAL: To assist in economic development within the region to better the conditions of the counties, to provide opportunities for individuals and families, and to assist the residents in achieving and maintaining self-sufficiency.

RATIONALE: Marion, Crawford, Morrow and Richland counties face the same struggles of other counties within the State. Jobs pay less than a living wage. Homeless individuals live on the streets. There is limited transportation and child care for residents. Participating in and providing opportunities to improve the region will assist individuals and families in becoming self-sufficient.

OBJECTIVE/TARGET: Over the next 5 years, OHCAC will participate in a minimum of 2 economic development project to assist the region.

- ✓ Agency leadership will collaborate with other community leaders in developing projects including throughout the region.
- ✓ Agency leadership will explore opportunities to bring more affordable housing into the region.
- ✓ Agency leadership will engage in conversations with elected officials to address areas of concern and seek funding for new partnerships within the region.
- ✓ Agency leadership will explore opportunities to address key areas within the community through collaboration and/or provision in the areas of Alcohol/Drug awareness, Transportation and Child Care.

## NEW PROGRAMMING

(Agency, Community and Family)

OUTCOME: All Seniors and individuals with disabilities, within the Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission service area, will be able to remain in their own homes.

GOAL: To seek funding and provide services to the elderly and disabled to enable them to remain in their homes.

RATIONALE: Many seniors and disabled individuals are unable to remain in their homes due to lack of support services. Providing specific services, within their homes, will address various needs and allow them to remain independent.

OBJECTIVE/TARGET: By January of 2024, OHCAC will have implemented and delivered at least one new service which will address the needs of the elderly and disabled within their homes.

- ✓ Survey individuals within the community regarding services necessary through various avenues. (Senior Centers, Churches, Office Visits, Healthcare Providers)
- ✓ Seek funding and training to deliver specific services identified including CHORE and PAYEE programs.
- ✓ Implement programs.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING PREVIOUS PLAN AND RESULTS

The previous plan focused on the following areas which the Administration indicated all areas were addressed and the majority were able to be completed.

### Reentry Services

Outcome Desired: All offenders will be reintegrated into the Community successfully with reduced recidivism as they transition into the community and become self-sufficient.

Goal: Provide services and support to individuals and their families to assist them in becoming self-sufficient.

### Community Awareness

Outcome Desired: Everyone knows of the services offered by OHCAC and how to access them.

Goal: To increase the awareness of services offered by OHCAC as well as other community resources to assist residents in reaching self-sufficiency`

### Drug & Alcohol Awareness/Prevention

Outcome: Alcohol and Drug Abuse no longer exists.

Goal: To increase awareness of alcohol/drug abuse services within the county and to collaborate with these organizations to assist customers.

## Personal/Household Needs

Outcome: All residents will have education and access to products and services that will provide a positive living environment.

Goal: To assist households in addressing needs for personal care products and facing other issues within their residences.

## Community Awareness

Outcome: Everyone throughout the service region will know about Ohio Heartland and the programs offered.

Goal: Board Members will become more active in promoting programs and services to other members within the community through their networks.

## Economic Development

Outcome: Ohio Heartland will have enough funds to provide all services necessary to help residents reach self-sufficiency.

Goal: OHCAC is involved in the operation of an economic development project that employs customers and is a financial benefit to the organization

## Facilities

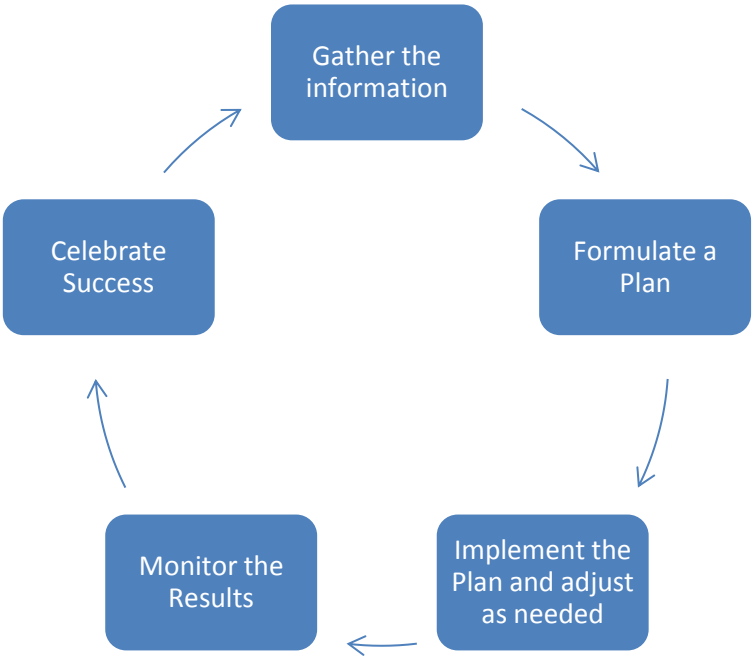
Outcome: Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission has facilities which are state of the art and provide quality working environments for customers and staff.

Goal: The Quality of OHCAC facilities improve to better serve staff and customers in Marion, Morrow and Richland Counties

# Strategic Plan Monitoring

The Stakeholders in this Strategic Plan include the Board, Staff, Customers and Community as a whole. All entities have been involved since the beginning responding to the survey and developing the plan. All will need to work together to implement the plan through collaboration and coordination. However, the key to success is effective monitoring. Understanding the goal, meeting or readjusting the objective, achieving the milestones and celebrating success is key to Strategic Plan. Assessment can occur via analyzing data, reviewing information and conducting surveys.

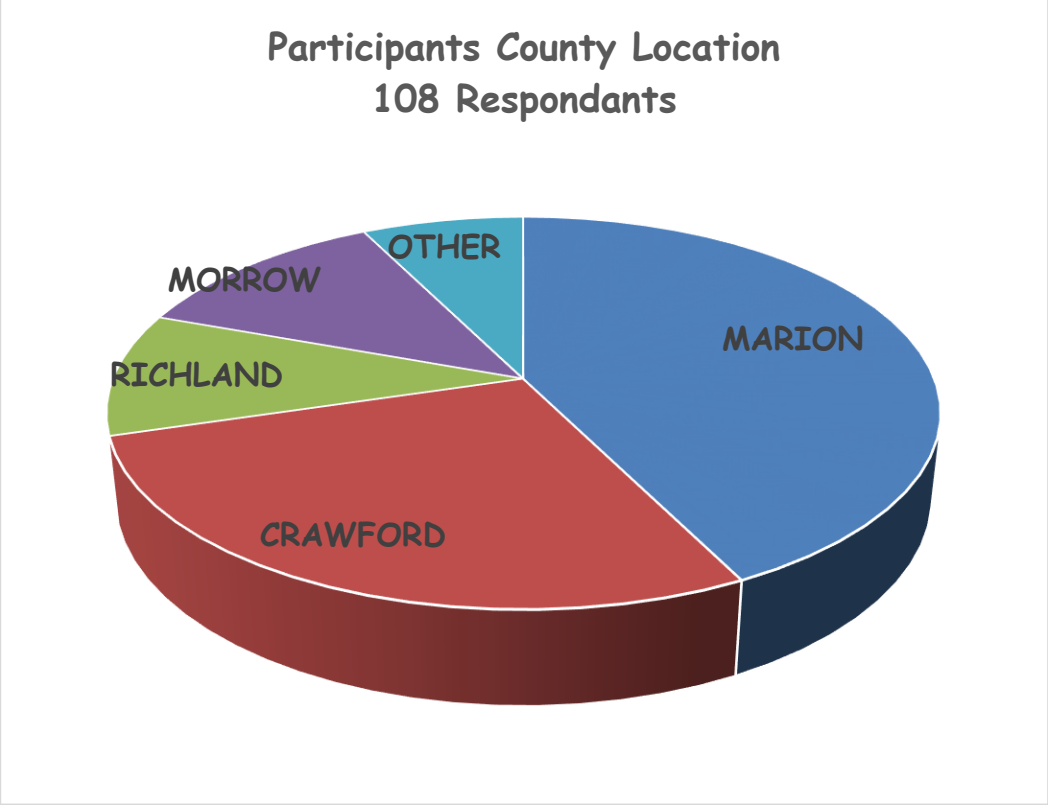
This plan should not sit on a shelf, simply developed to meet a requirement of funding sources. The agency viability depends on change and without change there is no progress. The Board must "regularly" review the results and assess whether there are additional services that the agency should offer if a need is *not* being met as well as target resources.

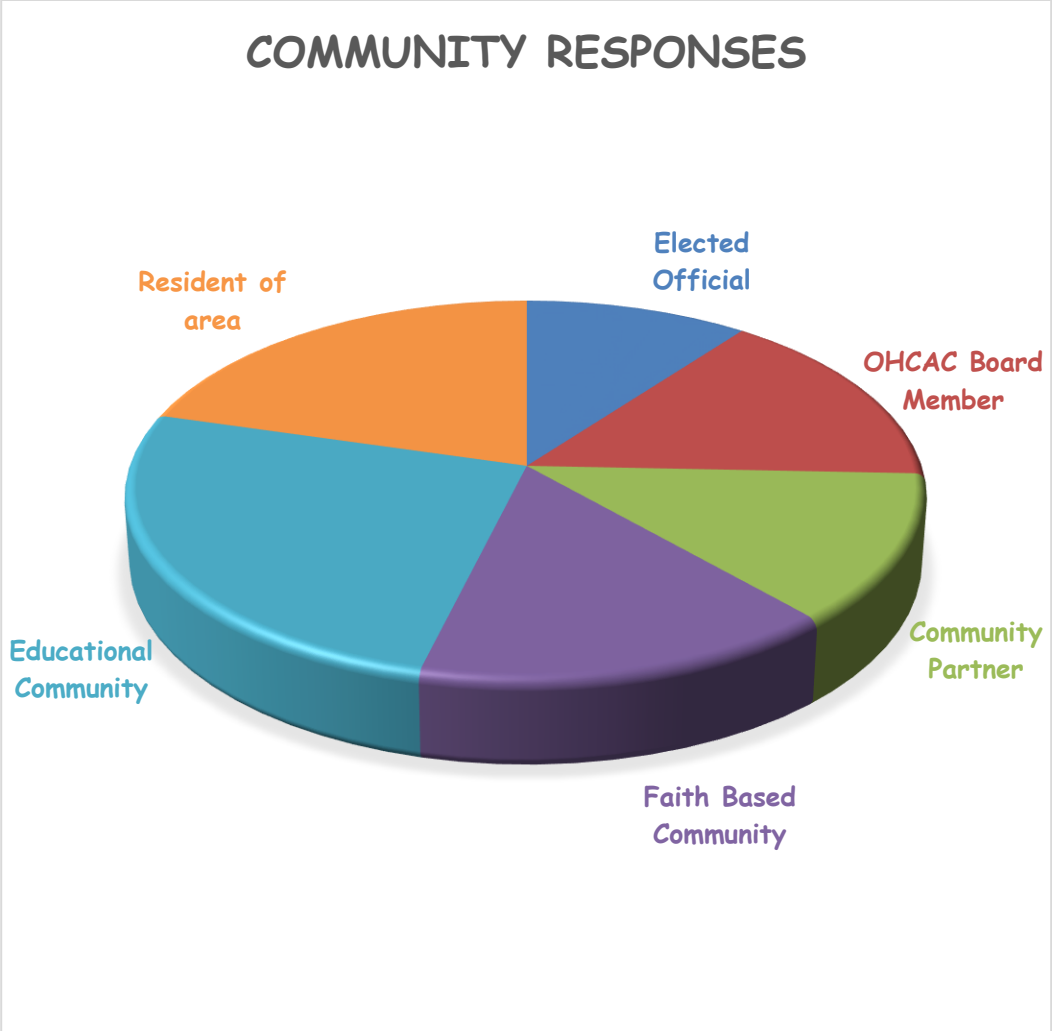


## Online Survey & Results

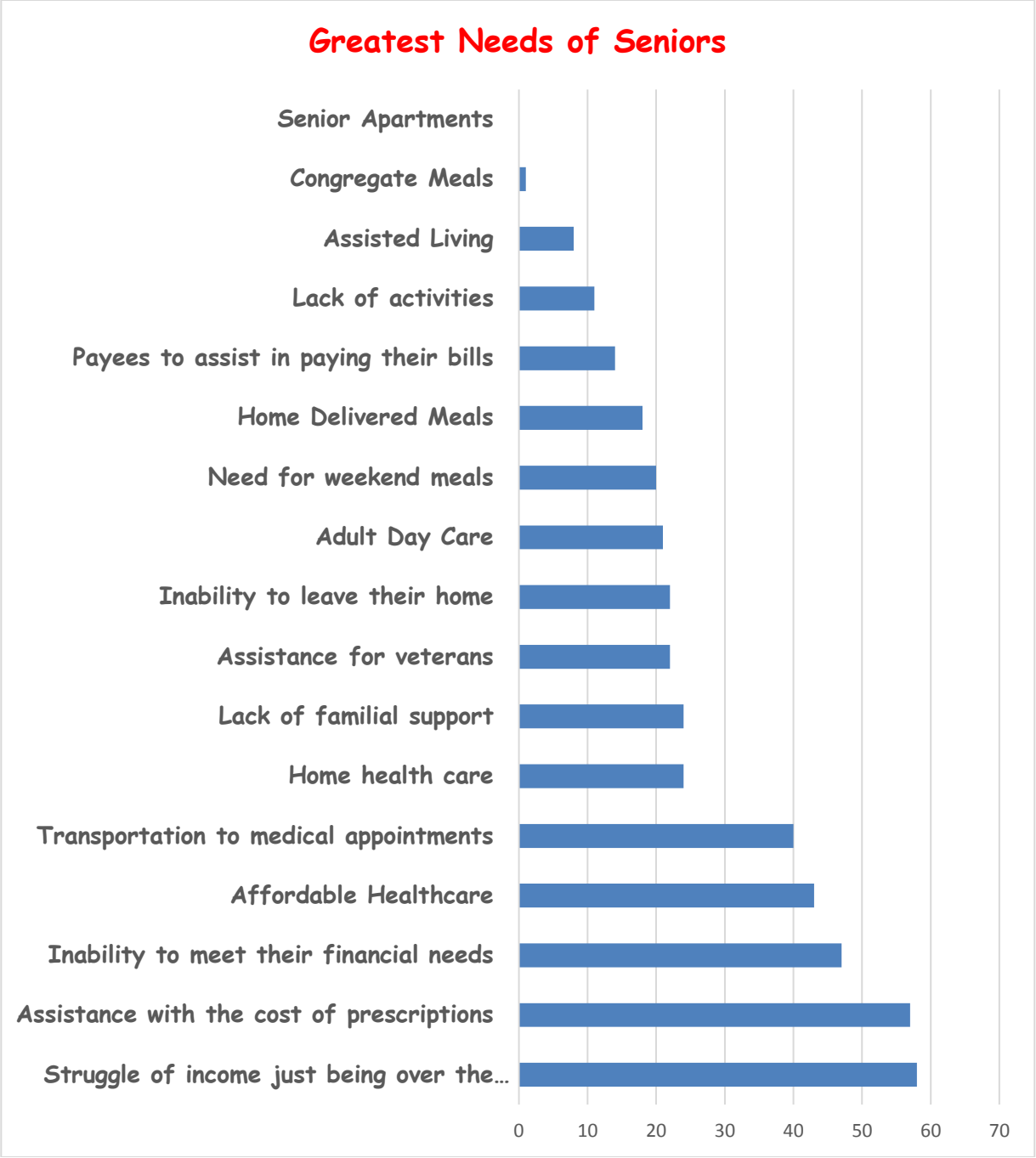
The Strategic Plan developed process included providing an anonymous online survey for critical input from key parties. This period extended over five weeks giving adequate time for participation from all parties. Survey responses were submitted online and anonymously to the facilitator. Review of community data with working groups provided the opportunity for the agency staff and board members to develop this plan.

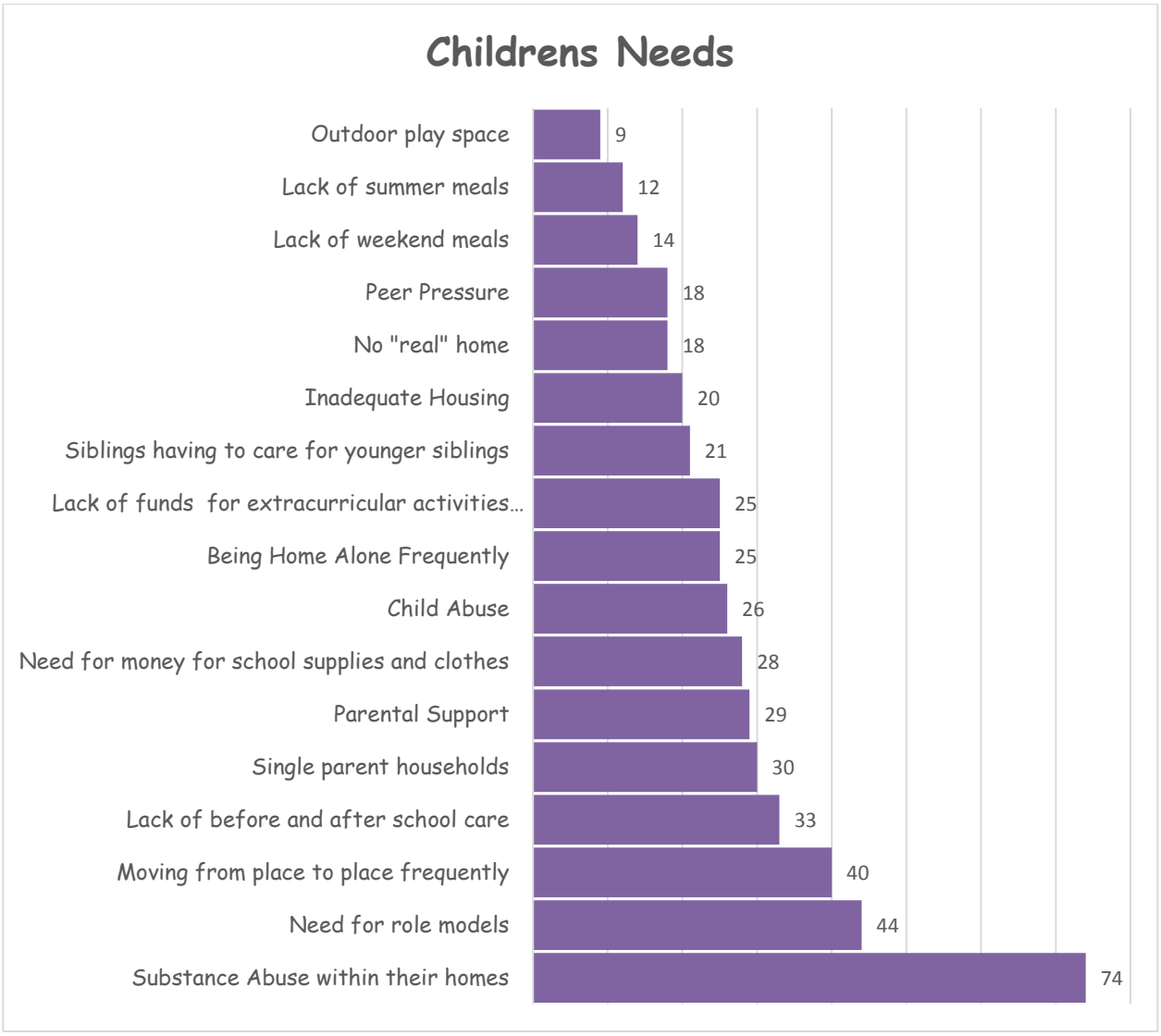
The following charts show the cumulative responses from the Employees, Board, Customers and Community Partners from residents (including the Educational, Faith Based and Public Officials).

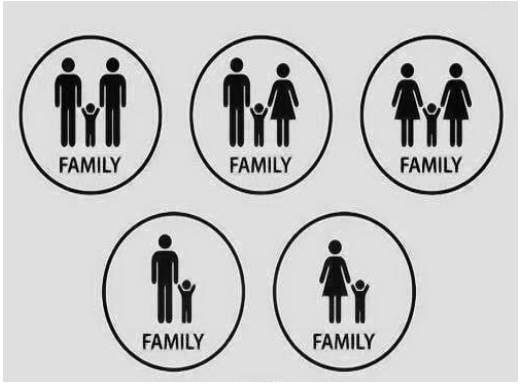



COMMUNITY RESPONSES
Elected Official
OHCAC Board Member
Community Partner
Faith Based Community
Educational Community
Resident of area

| | |
|---|---|
| Strengths | ✓ **Caring Staff**<br>✓ **Well known in the community and across the country**<br>✓ **Strong Leadership**<br>✓ **Excellent Provision of Services** |
| Weaknesses | ✓ **Staff turnover due to better paying jobs**<br>✓ **Not well known in the community**<br>✓ **Planning for future leadership**<br>✓ **Inability to meet changing community needs** |
| Opportunities | ✓ **Alleviation of generational poverty**<br>✓ **Educate community about agency services**<br>✓ **Educate governmental leaders about OHCAC**<br>✓ **Provision of new services** |
| Threats | ✓ **Staff turnover due to wages and benefits**<br>✓ **Decreased funding**<br>✓ **Funding being cut or eliminated**<br>✓ **Retirement of current leaders** |


Greatest Needs of Seniors
Senior Apartments
Congregate Meals
Assisted Living
Lack of activities
Payees to assist in paying their bills
Home Delivered Meals
Need for weekend meals
Adult Day Care
Inability to leave their home
Assistance for veterans
Lack of familial support
Home health care
Transportation to medical appointments
Affordable Healthcare
Inability to meet their financial needs
Assistance with the cost of prescriptions
Struggle of income just being over the…
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70


Childrens Needs
Outdoor play space 9
Lack of summer meals 12
Lack of weekend meals 14
Peer Pressure 18
No "real" home 18
Inadequate Housing 20
Siblings having to care for younger siblings 21
Lack of funds for extracurricular activities… 25
Being Home Alone Frequently 25
Child Abuse 26
Need for money for school supplies and clothes 28
Parental Support 29
Single parent households 30
Lack of before and after school care 33
Moving from place to place frequently 40
Need for role models 44
Substance Abuse within their homes 74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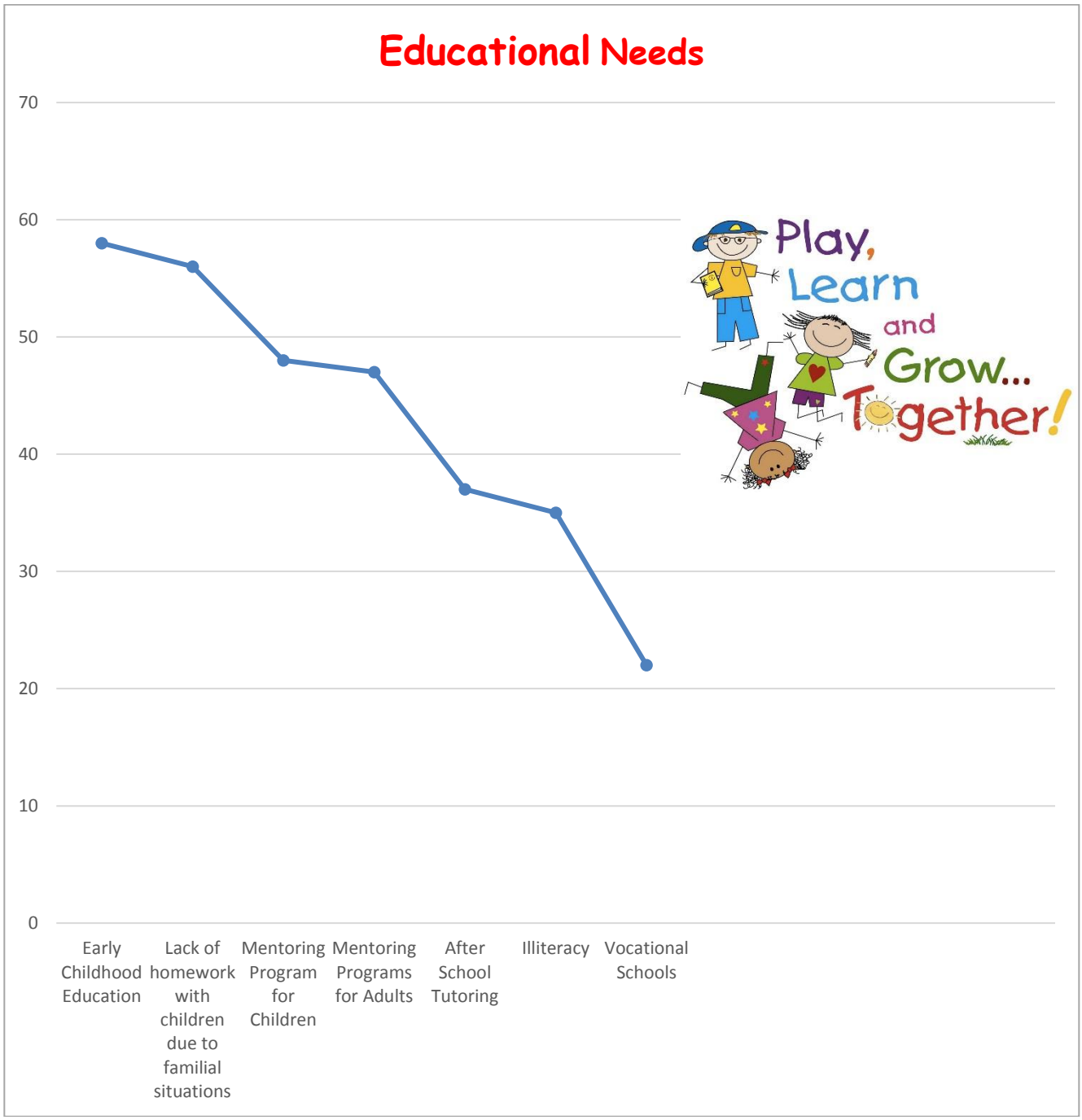
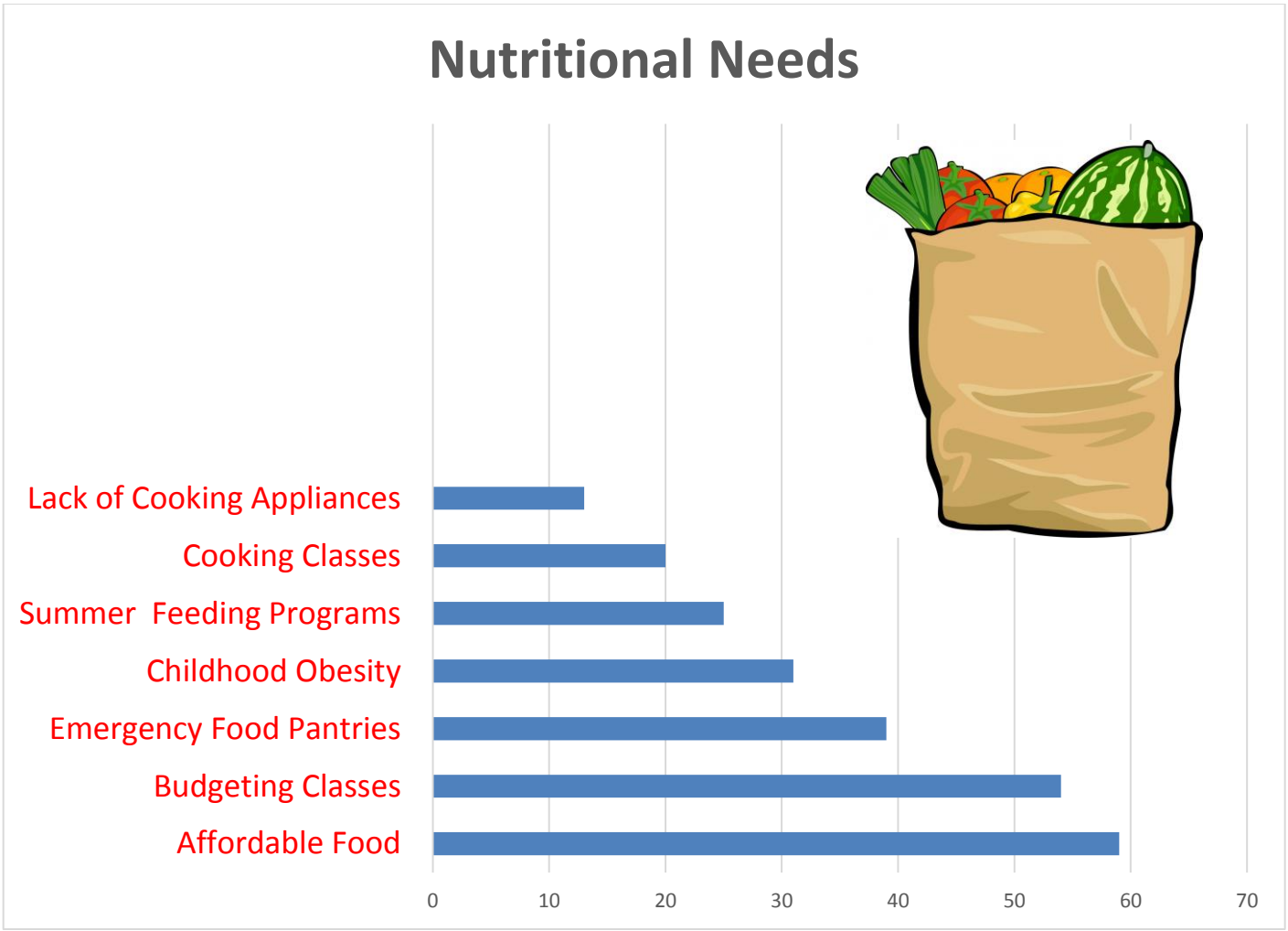
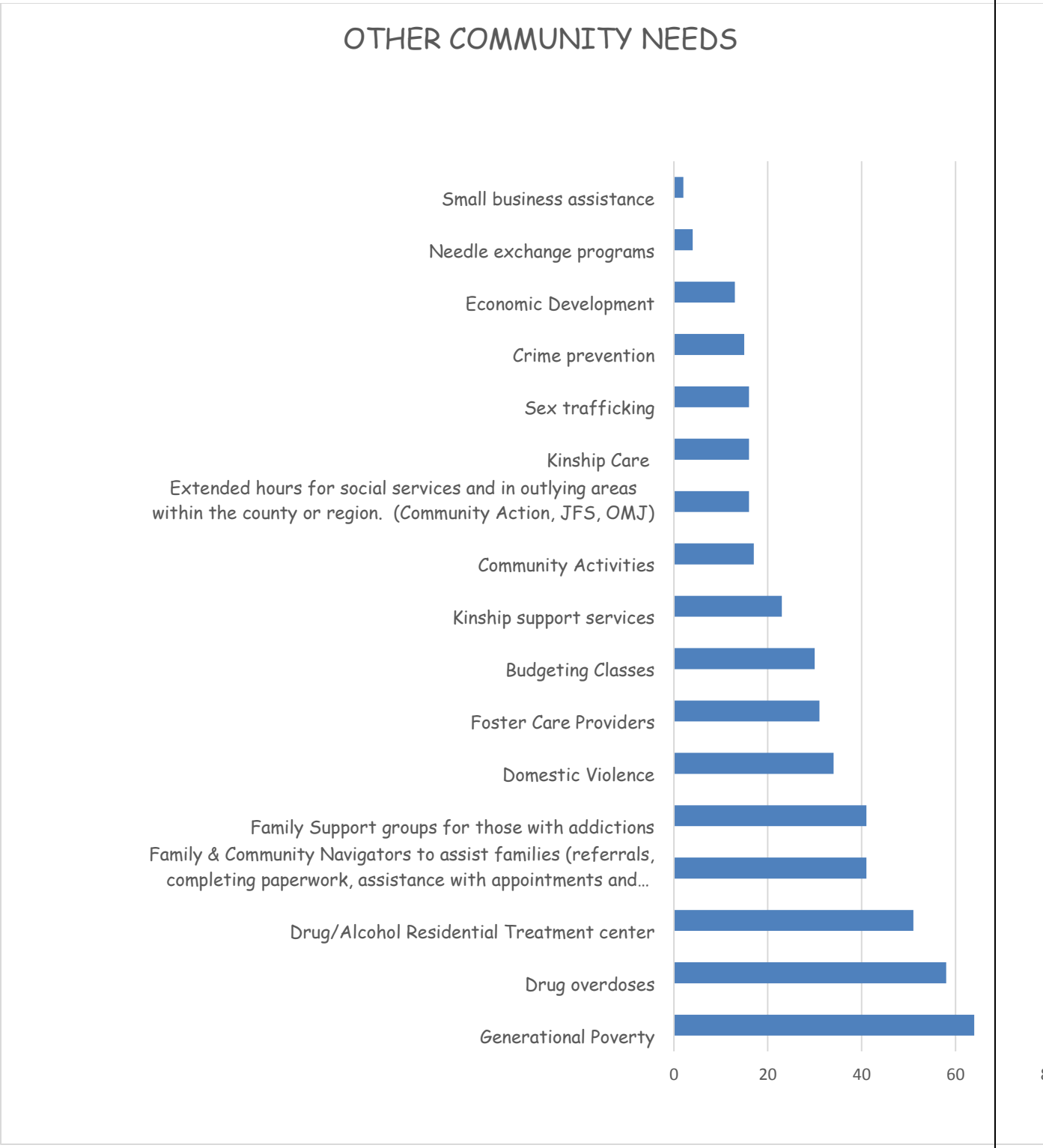

Educational Needs
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Early Childhood Education
Lack of homework with children due to familial situations
Mentoring Program for Children
Mentoring Programs for Adults
After School Tutoring
Illiteracy
Vocational Schools
Play, Learn and Grow... Together!

| Employment Issues | Responses |
|---|---|
| Jobs that do NOT pay a living wage | 59 |
| Lack of personal transportation to get to employment | 41 |
| Unreliable childcare | 39 |
| Employers refusing to hire workers with criminal backgrounds | 36 |
| Generational Situations (Work ethic of family or close friends) | 35 |
| Lack of 3rd shift Childcare | 25 |
| Lack of job training | 25 |
| Vehicles which are unreliable or lack of fuel | 21 |
| Lack of 2nd Shift Childcare | 20 |
| Lack of public transportation to get to 3rd shift employment | 19 |
| Lack of employment opportunities | 17 |
| Lack of public transportation to get to 2nd shift employment | 15 |
| Lack of funds to purchase necessary work items (shoes, clothes, tools) | 14 |
| Lack of 1st shift childcare | 13 |
| Lack of public transportation to get to 1st shift employment | 11 |

# HOUSING NEEDS

| | |
|---|---|
| Lack of Affordable Housing | 41 |
| Utility Assistance (Water, Trash, Gas, Electric) | 35 |
| Affordable Quality Rental Housing | 33 |
| Lack of funding for 1st month's rent and other deposits | 30 |
| Negligent/Unkempt Property | 29 |
| Dilapidated Housing | 27 |
| Lack of funding to address pest control (Bed Bugs, Roaches, Rats) | 27 |
| Homelessness | 26 |
| Safe housing in safe neighborhoods | 25 |
| Need for Homeless Shelters | 21 |
| Individuals and families relocating place to place | 19 |
| Lack of funding for major home repairs | 19 |
| Lack of down payment to purchase home | 17 |
| Lack of funding for minor home repairs | 16 |
| Lack of Metropolitan Housing Authority Vouchers | 15 |
| Lack of Rental Properties | 15 |
| Inability to find rental housing -- previous past due rents or damages | 13 |
| Transitional housing for those returning from treatment | 11 |
| Foreclosure Assistance | 6 |
| Overcrowded housing | 6 |
| Independent homes for individuals with developmental disabilities | 5 |
| Lack of homes to purchase | 4 |
| New housing construction | 2 |
| Foreclosure assistance | 1 |
| Short Term Transient Housing | 1 |
| Lack of rental assistance for individuals under 60 with no minor children. | 1 |
| Lack of clean, well-kept, affordable rental properties | 1 |


Nutritional Needs
Lack of Cooking Appliances
Cooking Classes
Summer Feeding Programs
Childhood Obesity
Emergency Food Pantries
Budgeting Classes
Affordable Food
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70


OTHER COMMUNITY NEEDS
Small business assistance
Needle exchange programs
Economic Development
Crime prevention
Sex trafficking
Kinship Care
Extended hours for social services and in outlying areas within the county or region. (Community Action, JFS, OMJ)
Community Activities
Kinship support services
Budgeting Classes
Foster Care Providers
Domestic Violence
Family Support groups for those with addictions
Family & Community Navigators to assist families (referrals, completing paperwork, assistance with appointments and…
Drug/Alcohol Residential Treatment center
Drug overdoses
Generational Poverty
0
20
40
60

## Community Action History

As part of the War on Poverty, President Johnson established the Community Action Program in 1964. This Program established Community Action Agencies (CAAs) in communities throughout the United States to coordinate poverty relief programs. The Community Action Network of national and locally focused organizations connects millions of children and families to greater opportunity. Popular programs administered by CAAs include Head Start, Weatherization and Meals on Wheels. Since its foundation, the Community Action Approach emphasizes local priorities and maximum feasible participation—a requirement that individuals from communities-served be represented in the decision-making body of the agency. In short, the Community Action Approach empowers struggling individuals by including them in the community's problem-solving process and ensures a collaboration of all the community's stakeholders in determining the community's priorities and actions. CAAs serve 99 percent of counties in the United States.

America was built on the promise that every family should have an opportunity for success. Today's economy has made self-sufficiency difficult to achieve. In turn, the opportunities for success is out of reach for many individuals and families.

Today, the 1000+ Community Action Agencies embody our nation's spirit of hope, change people's lives, and improve communities. When national, state and local leaders tap into these agencies' experience, they can promote workable solutions that connect more families to opportunity – and make America a better place to live for everyone. CAA's are present and strives to create pathways to opportunity and prosperity in 99% of counties across the US.

# Network Overview

Community Action network:

Connects individuals and families to approaches that help them succeed – including high quality education programs for children, job retraining for adults, stable and affordable housing for families, utility assistance for seniors, and so much more.

Promotes community-wide solutions to seemingly stubborn challenges throughout our cities, suburbs, and in rural areas – whether it's the lack of affordable housing or the need to promote economic growth that benefits all families.

Shares expertise with national, state, and local leaders looking for evidence on what works to promote greater economic opportunity for children and families. America's Community Action Agencies connect millions of children and families to greater opportunity, transforming their lives and making our communities – and our nation – stronger. Every year Community Action Agencies change the lives of over 15 million individuals in over 7 million families.

Each Community Action Agency is unique as it addresses needs within their community with the input of the Board Members, staff, community partners, residents and customers that access services offered by the agencies. Some agencies only operate a few services as other organizations are addressing needs. However, the agency coordinates and provides input for service delivery with cooperation of the other organizations. Some of the programs various agencies operate include Head Start, Home Weatherization & Rehabilitation, Health Care, Transportation, Emergency Food and Utility Assistance, Financial Education and Job Training. Each Community Action Agency strives to assure all needs within the community are met. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR STATE COMMUNITY SERVICES PROGRAMS | nascsp.org

# Community Services Block Grant

CSBG: is a federal, anti-poverty block grant which funds the operations of a state-administered network of local agencies. This CSBG network consists of more than 1,000 agencies that create, coordinate and deliver programs and services to low-income Americans in 99 percent of the nation's counties. This core funding to local agencies to reduce poverty, revitalize low-income communities, and to empower low-income families to become self-sufficient. The CSBG is currently authorized under the 1998 CSBG Act.

Most agencies in the CSBG network are Community Action Agencies (CAAs), created through the Economic Opportunity Act, a predecessor of the CSBG. Community representation and accountability are hallmarks of the CSBG network, where agencies are governed by a tri-partite board. This board structure consists of elected public officials, representatives of the low-income community, and appointed leaders from the private sector.

Because the CSBG funds the central management and core activities of these agencies, the CSBG network can mobilize additional resources to combat the central causes of poverty. ROMA Next Generation (NG) is a system for continuous quality improvement to enable the network to measure, analyze and communicate performance.

## Theory of change--National Community Action Goals

Goal 1: Individuals and families with low incomes are stable and achieve economic security.

Goal 2: Communities where people with low incomes live are healthy and offer economic opportunity.

Goal 3: People with low incomes are engaged and active in building opportunities in communities.

## Service & Strategies within the National Goals

- Education & Cognitive Development
- Employment
- Income, Infrastructure & Asset Building
- Housing,
- Health, Social/ Behavioral Development
- Civic Engagement & Community Development

As Community Action Agencies, it is important to recognize the complexity of the issues of poverty and strive for the following:

- Build local solutions specific to local needs
- Support family stability as a foundation for economic security
- Advocate for systemic change
- Pursue positive individual, family, and community level change
- Maximize involvement of people with low incomes
- Engage local community partners and citizens in solutions
- Leverage state, federal, and community resources

http://www.ncaf.org, https://nascsp.org/, https://communityactionpartnership.com/about-us

## National Standards and Strategic Planning

The Standards were developed by the Organizational Standards Center Excellence at the Community Action Partnership. These were designed to strengthen the capacity eligible entities to fulfill their anti-poverty missions. Organizational Performance Standards will serve as a capacity-building tool to help agencies provide comprehensive and coordinated anti-poverty services across America.

- **Standard 6.1** The Organization has an agency-wide Strategic Plan in place that has been approved by the governing board within the past 5 years.

- **Standard 6.2** The approved Strategic Plan addresses reduction of poverty, revitalization of low-income communities, and/or empowerment of people with low incomes to become more self-sufficient.

- **Standard 6.3** The approved Strategic Plan contains Family, Agency, and/or Community goals.

- **Standard 6.4** Customer satisfaction data and customer input, collected as part of the Community Assessment, is included in the strategic planning process.

- **Standard 6.5** The governing board has received an update(s) on meeting the goals of the Strategic Plan within the past 12 months.

There are several other Performance Standards that relate to strategic planning:

- **Standard 1.1** The organization demonstrates low-income individuals' participation in its activities.

- **Standard 1.2** The organization analyzes information collected directly from low-income individuals as part of the community assessment.

- **Standard 1.3** The organization has a systematic approach for collecting, analyzing, and reporting customer satisfaction data to the governing board.

- **Standard 4.1** The governing board has reviewed the organization's mission statement within the past 5 years and assured that: 1) the mission addresses poverty; and 2) The organization's programs and services are in alignment with the mission.
- **Standard 4.3** The organization's Community Action plan and strategic plan document the continuous use of the full Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) cycle or comparable system (assessment, planning, implementation, achievement of results, and evaluation). In addition, the organization documents having used the services of a ROMA-certified trainer (or equivalent) to assist in implementation.
- **Standard 9.3** The organization has presented to the governing board for review or action, at least within the past 12 months, an analysis of the agency's outcomes and any operational or strategic program adjustments and improvements identified as necessary.

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Within the National standards, Strategic Planning should include reviewing the agency Community Assessment's which requires the following:

- **Standard 3.1** The Organization conducted a Community Assessment and issued a report within the past 3 years. (Refer to Pages 38-48)
- **Standard 3.2** As part of the Community Assessment, the Organization collects and includes current data specific to poverty and its prevalence related to gender, age, and race/ethnicity for their service area(s).
- **Standard 3.3** The Organization collects and analyzes both qualitative and quantitative data on its geographic service area(s) in the Community Assessment.
  - ✓ ***Qualitative****:* this includes focus groups, interviews, community forums, etc.
  - ✓ ***Quantitative***: this is numeric information, e.g. Census data, program counts, demographic information, and other statistical sources.

Basing decisions on data is important as it provides key information leaders need to prioritize and create strategic plan goals. To make the right choices, they need internal data (e.g. current and projected budget, customer satisfaction reports), research on the external environment (e.g. political, social and economic factors) and data from internal stakeholders (e.g. front-line staff, program managers) and external stakeholders (e.g. community members, key partners). Information from outside stakeholders ensure the agency is doing the right things to serve the community; while information from inside stakeholders ensure the agency has the right structure, processes and people to carry out its mission.

https://communityactionpartnership.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/A- Comprehensive-Guide-to-Community-Action-Strategic-Planning-Final-1.pdf

# OHCAC NEEDS ASSESSMENT
January 2018
(Completed by OHCAC)

Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission (OHCAC) is in North Central Ohio with our clients living in Marion, Morrow, and Crawford Counties. The 1,211.68 square miles are comprised of 142,215 citizens living in 54.18% Urban Population and 45.82% Rural Population with Morrow County having the largest Rural Population at 88.84%. Our Rural Population is comprised of under the Age of 18, with 22.23% or 31,614 citizens, 18-64 at 60.1% or 85,471 citizens and 17.67% being 65+ or 25,129 citizens. Our rural population is comprised of 97.82% White citizens as well as 1.04% Multiple Race, 0.40% African American, 0.32% Asian, 0.26% Some Other Race, 0.13% Native American/Alaska Native, and 0.03% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Males make up 51.05% of our total population.

The U.S. Census Department defines Urban as an area comprised of a densely settled core of census tracts and/or census blocks that meet minimum population density requirements and/or land use requirements. The Census Bureau identifies two types of urban areas: Urbanized Areas of 50,000 or more people and Urban Clusters of at least 2,500 and less than 50,000 people. None of the three counties we serve through OHCAC encompass an Urbanized Area but do include a few Urban Clusters. For that reason, there are no Urban statistics available because we service Rural communities.

Ohio Heartland Community Action Commission (OHCAC) conducted a needs assessment during August and September of 2017, reaching out to the five sectors: public, private, faith based, educational and community based. Examples of public sector is Mayor Scott Schertzer, examples of private sector is Interim Health Care of Ohio, examples of faith based is Galion Alliance Church, examples of educational is Gilead Christian School and examples of community based is Salvation Army. Surveyed clients represented sixty-four different towns/cities and thirty-eight different Zip Codes. OHCAC clients were surveyed and given a list of possible needs, as well as an opportunity to list any other needs, and asked to rate items currently needed on a scale of one to five, with five being most needed. An example of the survey is attached to this assessment. The results of the three county surveys are compiled to produce a guide for prioritization of agency efforts.

The results of the three county surveys are as follows:

MARION COUNTY
In Marion County seventy-seven community partners, including service agencies, elected officials, etc., and clients were surveyed and asked to prioritize the needs for services in the community, from Least Needed to Most Needed. The top results for Most Needed were Access to Alcohol/Substance Abuse Treatment with 49%, Access to Mental Health Treatment and Improved Rental Housing Conditions tying with 43% each and Access to Dental Services; Assistance with Prescriptions and Safe & Affordable Rental Housing with 40% each.

Marion County's population estimate as of July 1, 2016 was 65,096 citizens with 11,847 or 18.2% living in poverty. The median household income for 2015 was $42,966.

Of the 65,096 citizens in Marion County, 51,682 are 18 years of age or older and it is estimated that 9,871 or 19.1% drink alcohol excessively. Final 2016 overdose deaths show 28 citizens passed away ranking our county 11th in the state.

There are 71 Mental Health Providers in Marion County working out to 1 for every 925.7 citizens. There are 8,831 Medicare fees for services participants in Marion County with 2,065 or 23.4% suffering from depression with an average of 1% increase in diagnosis since 2010.

In 2015 there were 39 dentists in Marion County to service all our citizens however 12,208 or 23.7% total adults went without a recent dental examination, which has led to 10,861 adults having poor dental health meaning they have had six or more of their permanent teeth removed due to tooth decay, gum disease, or infection. Citizens without health insurance, under the age of 65 is 7.5% which could be contributing to the lack of dental care.

In Marion County there are only 1,128 HUD assisted housing units or 4% of the 27,756 total housing units for the county. Of those units 583 are Housing Choice Voucher units, 460 are Project-Based Section 8 units, 76 are Section 202 units or supportive housing for the elderly and 9 are Section 811 units or supportive housing for persons with disabilities.

The total renter-occupied housing units in Marion County is 13,672. The average age for all homes built in Marion County is 57 years with 49.84% being built before 1960. Of the 27,756 total housing units in Marion County 27.88% have one or more substandard housing condition. Substandard housing includes the following conditions:

1) lacking complete plumbing facilities-hot and cold running water, a flushing toilet and a bathtub or shower-of which 51 units do not

2) lacking complete kitchen facilities-a sink with a faucet, a stove or range and a refrigerator-of which 2,171 units do not

3) with 1.01 or more occupants per room of which 356 units do,

4) selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income greater than 30%, of which there are 3,052 households and

5) gross rent as a percentage of household income greater than 30%, of which there are 3,818 households.

Average rent for Marion County from 2011-2015 was $693.

On average in the State of Ohio in 2016 a citizen over the age of 65 filled 24.1 prescriptions per year, while citizens age 19-64 filled 15.5 prescriptions per year and children age 0-18 filled 4.9 per year. The average prescription drug cost in the State of Ohio for 2016 was $13.95 equating to any average annual cost for a citizen over the age of 65 of $336.20. The average monthly Social Security benefit for 2017 is $1,342 equaling $16,104 per year, meaning that prescription drug costs account on average to 2% of a senior's annual income. With 7.5% of Ohio citizens under the age of 65 without health insurance coming up with an average of $216.23 per year to fill their prescriptions is very difficult.

Marion County rationale for OHCAC Services:

OHCAC has established a working partnership with service agencies to ensure that clients are receiving access to all community resources.

Regular Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is a program offered directly from the Ohio Development Services Agency. Customers may receive a one-time credit or voucher to their main heating source. From July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017 RHEAP helped 2,578 households.

Winter Crisis Program (WCP) is a program designed for a one-time payment for utility bills, bulk fuels, coal, wood or wood pellets. The customer must be income eligible and either have a disconnection notice, be without heating services, or have less than a 10-day supply of bulk fuel. From November 1, 2016 to April 15, 2017 WCP helped 1,357 households.

Summer Crisis Program (SCP) is a program designed for a one-time payment on your electric bill. Eligibility Requirements are: a member of the household who would medically benefit from assistance verified by a licensed physician or registered nurse practitioner, or seniors age 60 and over who meet the 2017 Poverty Income Guidelines. From July 1, 2017 to September 15, 2017 SCP helped 222 households.

Columbia Gas Fuel Funds (CGFF) is a program designed for a one-time payment on Columbia Gas bills for income eligible clients. In 2017 CGFF helped 101 households.

First Energy Fuel Funds (FEFF) is program designed for a one-time payment on Ohio Edison bills for income eligible clients. In 2017 FEFF helped 85 households.

Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N) is a program designed for a one-time payment on AEP bills for income eligible clients. In 2017 N2N helped 35 households in Marion, Morrow and Crawford Counties.

Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) helps Ohioans manage their energy costs year-round to avoid disconnection. The program allows participants to pay a percentage of their gross income toward their utility bills, instead of the total amount of current charges. The payment is based on a percentage of the household gross income. From July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017 PIPP helped 3,339 households.

The Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) assists clients once a year with rental assistance. In 2016 and early 2017 we helped 15 households, for a total of 35 individuals, with emergency rental assistance, with an average rent of $487.27.

The Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP) provides financial and technical assistance in the rehabilitation and weatherization of low-income owner occupied and renter occupied housing. In 2016 OHCAC HWAP weatherized 64 homes in Marion, Morrow and Crawford Counties.

Electric Partnership Program (EPP) is a program through the State of Ohio that provides services to clients with regulated utilities, such as AEP and First Energy, with replacement of non-energy efficient appliances and light bulbs. In 2016 EPP helped 75 homes in Marion and Crawford Counties.

AEP has their own program that provides the same energy measurements as EPP but is for only AEP clients. In 2016 AEP helped 53 homes in Marion and Crawford Counties.

Community Connections through First Energy also provides energy measurements like EPP for only First Energy clients. In 2016 Community Connections helped 65 homes in Marion and Crawford Counties.

Warm Choice through Columbia Gas also provides energy measurements for only Columbia Gas customers. In 2016 Warm Choice helped 2 homes in Marion County.

Ohio Fuel Funds (OFF) is program designed for a one-time payment on Ohio Edison bills for income eligible clients. In 2016 OFF helped 565 households in Marion, Crawford and Morrow Counties.

Comments and Concerns from our Marion County surveyed clients included: "Many of above needs are being met by other agencies. I caution OHCAC not to duplicate these but assist those agencies; More assistance for medicine. Seniors cannot afford medicine. Alcohol & Drug, Mental Health Ed & Prevention; Help and assistance with water bills; Assistance in finding jobs for recovering addicts/felons rehabilitated. They start hanging with the old crowd because no one will hire them and give them
a fresh start; Detox facility in Marion for women and children; All the needs listed above are so important; Transportation; Is there any way I could get help with transportation; I think they do the best they can and Preschool funding.

MORROW COUNTY

Sixty-six community partners were surveyed in Morrow County. The top results for Most Needed were Safe and Affordable Rental Housing with 47%, Energy Assistance and Homelessness Prevention/Shelters with 44% each, Employment and Work Experience with 42%, Improved Rental Housing Conditions; Access to Food and Clothing and Access to Mental Health Treatment with 41% each.

Morrow County's population estimate as of July 1, 2016 was 35,036 citizens with 3,959 or 11.3% living in poverty. The median household income in 2015 dollars was $51,993.

The total renter-occupied housing units in Morrow County is 4,958. The average age for all homes built in Morrow County is 38 years with 31.27% being built before 1960. Of the 14,085 total housing units in Morrow County 26.31% have one or more substandard housing condition. Substandard housing includes the following conditions:

1) lacking complete plumbing facilities-hot and cold running water, a flushing toilet and a bathtub or shower-of which 140 units do not

2) lacking complete kitchen facilities-a sink with a faucet, a stove or range and a refrigerator-of which 880 units do not

3) with 1.01 or more occupants per room of which 245 units do,

4) selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income greater than 30%, of which there are 2,215 households and

5) gross rent as a percentage of household income greater than 30%, of which there are 1,042 households.

Average rent for Morrow County from 2011-2015 was $677.

Morrow Metropolitan Housing currently has 7 families on the waitlist with 5 of the families having children in the household and 3 of the families having a disability in the household. Currently the waitlist is closed and is not receiving any new applicants, with an average wait time of 2-4 years. Morrow County Metropolitan Housing is currently helping 93 families on the Housing Choice Voucher Program with 30 of the families having children in the household and an average annual adjusted income of $13,200. (Collected from email with Morrow County Metropolitan Housing Authority on September 26, 2017).

In Morrow County there are only 233 HUD assisted housing units or 1.6% of the 14,085 total housing units for the county. Of those units 103 are Housing Choice Voucher units, 54 are Project-Based Section 8 units, 52 are Section 202 units or supportive housing for the elderly and 24 are Section 811 units or supportive housing for persons with disabilities.

In August 2017 the unemployment rate in Morrow County was 4.7% however the issues are not the number of jobs available, but the extent to which a citizen of the county must go to get a job. The mean travel time to work for workers 16 years of age and older is 30.1 minutes and 719 households do not own a motor vehicle equaling 5.66%. There is no public transportation within the county. High School Graduation rate within the county is 93.2% however only 22.75% of the population age 25 or older have an associate degree or higher and only 13.88% of the population age 25 or older have a bachelor's degree or higher, meaning they don't have the qualifications to meet the demanding job market that is available. The average weekly benefit as of June 2017 was $343 working out to a yearly salary of $17,836 which for a family of 4 works out to less than 75% of the 2017 Federal Poverty Level.

Food insecurity refers to USDA's measure of lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods. Food-insecure households are not necessarily food insecure all the time. Food insecurity may reflect a household's need to make trade-offs between important basic needs, such as housing or medical bills, and purchasing nutritionally adequate foods. In Morrow County 11.9% or 4,150 of its citizens reported food insecurity, according to Feeding America in 2015. Thirty-four percent of Morrow County citizens are above the 185% poverty guidelines for other Nutrition Programs, 13% are between the 130%-185% guideline and 53% are below the SNAP threshold of 130%. Students receiving free/reduced lunches in Morrow County accounted for 2,407 or 45.11% of the 5,336-student population. As of August 31, 2017, there were 3,983 SNAP recipients of which 1,627 or 40.8% were children.

There are 17 Mental Health Providers in Morrow County working out to 1 for every 2,067.8 citizens. There are 3,033 Medicare fees for services participants in Morrow County with 599 or 19.7% suffering from depression.

Morrow County Job and Family Services Prevention, Retention and Contingency (PRC) Program assisted 13 Families with an eviction notice on their rent. PRC assisted the employment process by providing: 73 families with car repairs, 18 individuals were assisted with transportation to and from employment, 403 gasoline vouchers were given out, 8 individuals were assisted with getting a background check for new employment, 51 Individuals were given Wal-Mart vouchers to purchase items needed to start new employment, 5 Families were assisted with car insurance down payments, 6 Individuals were assisted with getting tags/registrations/license fees to be able to get to employment. Energy Assistance was provided to 36 families to stop utility disconnect for electric,

gas, or water in 2016. (Collected from email with Morrow County Job and Family Services on September 27, 2017).

Currently there is not a Homeless Shelter located within Morrow County. Citizens are often referred to Marion County's Homeless Shelters which are currently at full capacity.

Morrow County rationale for OHCAC Services:

OHCAC has established a working partnership with service agencies to ensure that clients are receiving access to all community resources.

Regular Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is a program offered directly from the Ohio Development Services Agency. Customers may receive a one-time credit or voucher to their main heating source. From July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017 RHEAP helped 1,115 households.

Winter Crisis Program (WCP) is a program designed for a one-time payment for utility bills, bulk fuels, coal, wood or wood pellets. The customer must be income eligible and either have a disconnection notice, be without heating services, or have less than a 10-day supply of bulk fuel. From November 1, 2016 to April 15, 2017 WCP helped 778 households.

Summer Crisis Program (SCP) is a program designed for a one-time payment on your electric bill. Eligibility Requirements are: a member of the household who would medically benefit from assistance verified by a licensed physician or registered nurse practitioner, or seniors age 60 and over who meet the 2017 Poverty Income Guidelines. From July 1, 2017 to September 15, 2017 SCP helped 207

Columbia Gas Fuel Funds (CGFF) is a program designed for a one-time payment on Columbia Gas bills for income eligible clients. In 2017 CGFF helped 21 households.

First Energy Fuel Funds (FEFF) is program designed for a one-time payment on Ohio Edison bills for income eligible clients. In 2017 FEFF helped 15 households.

Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N) is a program designed for a one-time payment on AEP bills for income eligible clients. In 2017 N2N helped 35 households in Marion, Morrow and Crawford Counties.

Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) helps Ohioans manage their energy costs year-round to avoid disconnection. The program allows participants to pay a percentage of their gross income toward their utility bills, instead of the total amount of current charges. The payment is based on a percentage of the household gross income. From July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017 PIPP helped 1,416 households.

The Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP) provides financial and technical assistance in the rehabilitation and weatherization of low-income owner occupied and renter occupied housing. In 2016 OHCAC HWAP weatherized 64 homes in Marion, Morrow and Crawford Counties.

Ohio Fuel Funds (OFF) is program designed for a one-time payment on Ohio Edison bills for income eligible clients. In 2016 OFF helped 565 households in Marion, Crawford and Morrow Counties.

Morrow County offers an Emergency Food Pantry & Personal Needs Pantry (PNP), for items that cannot be purchased with SNAP benefits, through which, as of August 31, 2017, they have helped 176

families with Emergency Food and 191 families with PNP and have received $6,431 in food donations from area businesses. In 2016 the Food Pantry and PNP provided Emergency Food to 339 families and 370 families received PNP products. The Morrow County office received $34,379 in food and personal needs donations from area businesses.

Comments and Concerns from our Morrow County surveyed clients included: "After school programming; Affordable Housing, Affordable Day Care; Bed Bug Eradication; Ohio Heartland Community Action does not have to do this by themselves but partner with agencies who do/take on their roles; More low-income housing. More job training for high school students; Rent assistance, food pantry assistance M-F and Sat; Help with property taxes for disabled and seniors with low and fixed incomes; Reduced taxes for disable and seniors and those who have lost jobs due to cuts, shut downs and business moving. Services to address if resources are available: Financial aid for stay at home moms with young children where father is working, and child care is not affordable. Also, can have young children home with a parent to preserve families. Help with needed dental services, Medicaid or Medicare does not cover. Encourage those in charge to promote Gainful employment to come to the area; All these options are great needs in Morrow County but unless the basics are covered so I only highlighted the basics below. Work Readiness Preparation Programs; Helping people how to budget money; We have no shelter(s) available for those facing homelessness in our county. Access to safe and affordable rental housing; My answers are based on what is available in the Mt. Gilead area. Lots of help in all areas is needed in the outlying communities. Programs are needed to engage, educate and occupy teens in Morrow Co. They are our next adults and right now most of them wander listlessly getting into trouble or hold up playing video games when they should be learning life skills and social interaction. There is nothing productive for them to do in Morrow Co. We need more employment opportunities in Morrow Co. that pay enough to sustain a family. Some that pay more than minimum wage. There is plenty of teen employment but little middle-class adult employment; Few job opportunities for those without a college degree, and if there are jobs, they are minimum wage jobs."

CRAWFORD COUNTY

In Crawford County thirty-two community partners, including service agencies, elected officials, etc., and clients were surveyed and asked to prioritize the needs for services in the community, from Least Needed to Most Needed. The top results for Most Needed were Improved Rental Housing Conditions with 78%, Improved Owner-Occupied Housing Conditions and Homelessness Prevention/Shelters with 75% each, and Employment and Work Experience and Access to Alcohol/Substance Abuse Treatment with 72% each.

Crawford County's population estimate as of July 1, 2016 was 42,083 citizens with 6,944 or 16.5% living in poverty. The median household income in 2015 dollars was $40,795.

The median year that housing structures were built in Crawford County is 1957 with 47.14% of them being built before 1960. Of those homes that were built before 1960, 56.95% are owner occupied and 46.12% are renter occupied. The median age of the housing in Crawford County along with the housing cost burden causes 25.8% or 4,591 of the homes to be considered substandard housing units. Substandard housing includes the following conditions:

1) lacking complete plumbing facilities-hot and cold running water, a flushing toilet and a bathtub or shower-of which 38 units do not

2) lacking complete kitchen facilities-a sink with a faucet, a stove or range and a refrigerator-of which 1,285 units do not

3) with 1.01 or more occupants per room of which 132 units do,

4) selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income greater than 30%, of which there are 2,401 households and

5) gross rent as a percentage of household income greater than 30%, of which there are 2,190 households.

Average rent for Crawford County from 2011-2015 was $631.

In Crawford County there are only 852 HUD assisted housing units or 4% of the 19,948 total housing units for the county. Of those units 326 are Housing Choice Voucher units, 471 are Project-Based Section 8 units, 40 are Section 202 units or supportive housing for the elderly and 15 are Section 811 units or supportive housing for persons with disabilities.

In August 2017 the unemployment rate in Crawford County was 5.6% however the issues are not the number of jobs available, but the extent to which a citizen of the county must go to get a job. The mean travel time to work for workers 16 years of age and older is 21.6 minutes and 1,039 households do not own a motor vehicle equaling 5.84%. There is no public transportation within the county for employment purposes. High School Graduation rate within the county is 90% however only 21.61% of the population age 25 or older have an associate degree or higher and only 12.62% of the population age 25 or older have a bachelor's degree or higher, meaning they don't have the qualifications to meet the demanding job market that is available. The average weekly benefit as of June 2017 was $327 working out to a yearly salary of $17,004 which for a family of 4 works out to less than 75% of the 2017 Federal Poverty Level.

Of the 42,083 citizens in Crawford County, 33,749 are 18 years of age or older and it is estimated that 9,011 or 26.7% drink alcohol excessively. Final 2016 overdose deaths show 8 citizens passed away.

Currently there is not a Homeless Shelter located within Crawford County. Citizens are often referred to Marion or Richland County Homeless Shelters.

Crawford County rationale for OHCAC Services:

OHCAC has established a working partnership with service agencies to ensure that clients are receiving access to all community resources.

Regular Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is a program offered directly from the Ohio Development Services Agency. Customers may receive a one-time credit or voucher to their main heating source. From July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017 RHEAP helped 1,582 households.

Winter Crisis Program (WCP) is a program designed for a one-time payment for utility bills, bulk fuels, coal, wood or wood pellets. The customer must be income eligible and either have a disconnection notice, be without heating services, or have less than a 10-day supply of bulk fuel. From November 1, 2016 to April 15, 2017 WCP helped 873 households.

Summer Crisis Program (SCP) is a program designed for a one-time payment on your electric bill. Eligibility Requirements are: a member of the household who would medically benefit from

assistance verified by a licensed physician or registered nurse practitioner, or seniors age 60 and over who meet the 2017 Poverty Income Guidelines. From July 1, 2017 to September 15, 2017 SCP helped 276 households.

Columbia Gas Fuel Funds (CGFF) is a program designed for a one-time payment on Columbia Gas bills for income eligible clients. In 2017 CGFF helped 41 households.

First Energy Fuel Funds (FEFF) is program designed for a one-time payment on Ohio Edison bills for income eligible clients. In 2017 FEFF helped 5 households.

Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N) is a program designed for a one-time payment on AEP bills for income eligible clients. In 2017 N2N helped 35 households in Marion, Morrow and Crawford Counties.

Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) helps Ohioans manage their energy costs year-round to avoid disconnection. The program allows participants to pay a percentage of their gross income toward their utility bills, instead of the total amount of current charges. The payment is based on a percentage of the household gross income. From July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017 PIPP helped 1,900 households.

The Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP) provides financial and technical assistance in the rehabilitation and weatherization of low-income owner occupied and renter occupied housing. In 2016 OHCAC HWAP weatherized 64 homes in Marion, Morrow and Crawford Counties.

Electric Partnership Program (EPP) is a program through the State of Ohio that provides services to clients with regulated utilities, such as AEP and First Energy, with replacement of non-energy efficient appliances and light bulbs. In 2016 EPP helped 75 homes in Marion and Crawford Counties.

AEP has their own program that provides the same energy measurements as EPP but is for only AEP clients. In 2016 AEP helped 53 homes in Marion and Crawford Counties.

Community Connections through First Energy also provides energy measurements like EPP for only First Energy clients. In 2016 Community Connections helped 65 homes in Marion and Crawford Counties.

Warm Choice through Columbia Gas also provides energy measurements for only Columbia Gas customers. In 2016 Warm Choice helped 1 home in Crawford County.

Ohio Fuel Funds (OFF) is program designed for a one-time payment on Ohio Edison bills for income eligible clients. In 2016 OFF helped 565 households in Marion, Crawford and Morrow Counties.

The OHCAC Crawford Center paid out in 2016 $5,455.00 for rental assistance and as of September 29, 2017 we have paid out $2,192.00.

Comments and Concerns from our Crawford County surveyed clients included: “Access to services. A client told me it takes “An act of Congress” to get an appointment for energy assistance with Community Action; Barriers regarding stigma towards mental health help, bullying & cyberbullying; Financial Education.”

The programs and assistance offered by OHCAC cannot meet every customer's needs. OHCAC County Offices provide intake and referral services for a variety of client needs. They refer clients within Agency programming as well as to outside agencies to ensure that clients have access to all available programs. OHCAC is always willing to cooperate and partner with other agencies. In our service area OHCAC has working relationships with the Salvation Army, Job and Family Services, churches, school systems, for-profit companies, fraternal organizations, foundations, boards, United Ways, Boy Scouts, postal employees, non-profit agencies, Chambers of Commerce, and elected officials. In addition to directly assisting shared customers, some of these groups sponsor food drives, donate funds, and provide space. Those relationships allow the county offices to assist customers in meeting their basic needs and to enjoy a lifestyle that includes safe housing, adequate food, and the means to maintain it. All office staff have an excellent rapport with staff from other agencies. The Executive Director, Deputy Director, and the Marion/Morrow County and Crawford County Center Directors are members of several organizations and boards in Marion, Crawford and Morrow Counties.

OHCAC has always looked for opportunities to expand programming and services to assist low income residents. We believe that Community Action cannot and should not be static.

The agency leaders strive to seek opportunities and develop programming to better our communities. One goal of OHCAC is to assist the customers we serve to improve their situations and expand the resources that are available to them.

Information was also obtained from www.kff.org; U.S. Census Bureau 2016 Quick Facts for Crawford, Marion and Morrow County; Community Commons website; Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Quick View website; Social Security Administration; SearchRx.com and Ohio Homeless Shelter Directory