

2007

Community Needs Assessment

Community Action Coalition for South Central WI, Inc.

Profile of Needs For Dane County



COMMUNITY ACTION COALITION
FOR SOUTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN, INC.

Questions or Comments?

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Dane County

There were 178 respondents in Dane County who participated in the 2007 Needs Assessment. By comparison, there were 62 participants from Jefferson County and 64 from Waukesha County. Not all 178 Dane County respondents answered every question.

Methodology

Survey

CAC designed and implemented a survey instrument in English to be completed by low-income individuals in Dane, Jefferson and Waukesha counties. The surveys were distributed primarily through a network of partner agencies in each county that worked directly with low-income individuals. Each person who completed a survey (the respondent) was given a \$10 gift card to either PDQ, Kwik Trip, Pick 'N Save or Piggly Wiggly.

CAC set a goal of collecting 350 surveys; 200 surveys in Dane County, 75 in Waukesha County and 75 in Jefferson County. The surveys were distributed to partner agencies and collected within a three-week time frame, beginning August 25, 2007 and finishing on September 15, 2007

Partner Agencies

Each partner agency that agreed to participate in the 2007 Needs Assessment was given orientation materials describing how to administer the survey; how to answer any questions from a respondent; and how to document and distribute the gift cards. CAC also offered to be available to administer the surveys if an agency was not able to designate an employee who would take responsibility for survey collection.

Participating Partner agencies in Dane County (14):

Agency	Services provided to low-income
Domestic Abuse Intervention Services	Shelter for singles and families
East Madison Community Center	Neighborhood center for children, youth and families
Hope House (Dane County Parent Council)	Housing for families
Independent Living	Housing for seniors
Interfaith Hospitality Network	Shelter for families
Middleton Outreach Ministry	Food and financial assistance
Movin' Out	Housing for people with disabilities
Porchlight	Housing – permanent, trans., shelter
Seton House	Housing for women
Salvation Army	Shelter, food, youth programming
Tenant Resource Center	Tenant information
Wexford Community Center	Services which promote well being
Veteran's Hospital	Services, medical care for veterans
YWCA	Single women's program 2 nd chance apartment program

Secondary Research

CAC also used secondary research as part of the 2007 Needs Assessment. A full bibliography is included with this report.

Limitations

- CAC did not use a true statistical approach to select a sample for the 2007 Needs Assessment. Instead, CAC used a “convenience sample” (UW Survey Center, Key Findings, 2007, p. 6). Due to the relational nature and network of community partners, it is important to note that some respondents who were asked to participate may have been more easily influenced to participate and answer “favorably” due to the relationship with the service provider.
- CAC did not directly administer or supervise the survey collection process with the majority of participating partner agencies. Therefore, it is difficult to determine if a respondent clearly understood all questions on the survey or if he/she felt like there was someone available to provide adequate answers. In addition, it is difficult to determine how a partner agency selected a respondent to participate and whether or not those who were more accessible, literate, independent, agreeable were asked to participate.
- The survey was only available in English. Therefore, any respondents who wanted to participate in the Needs Assessment in their own primary language needed someone to translate.

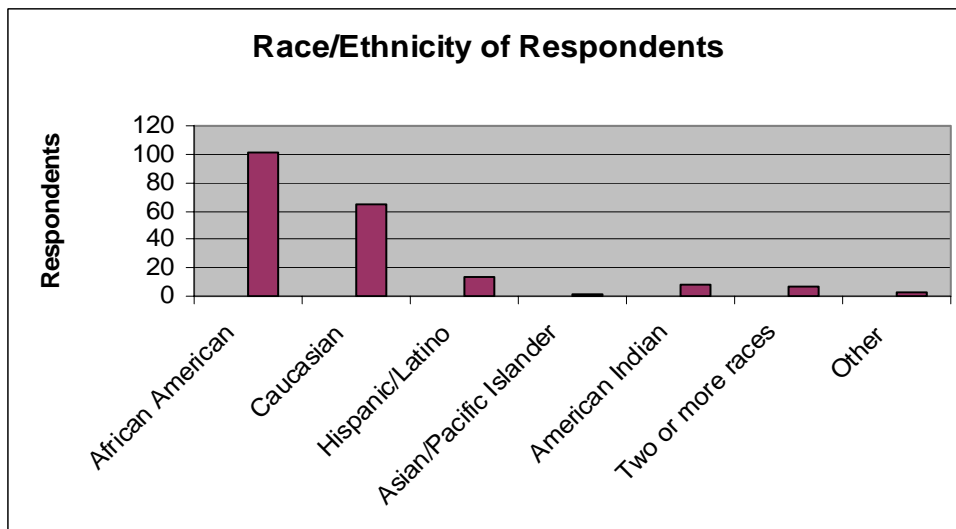
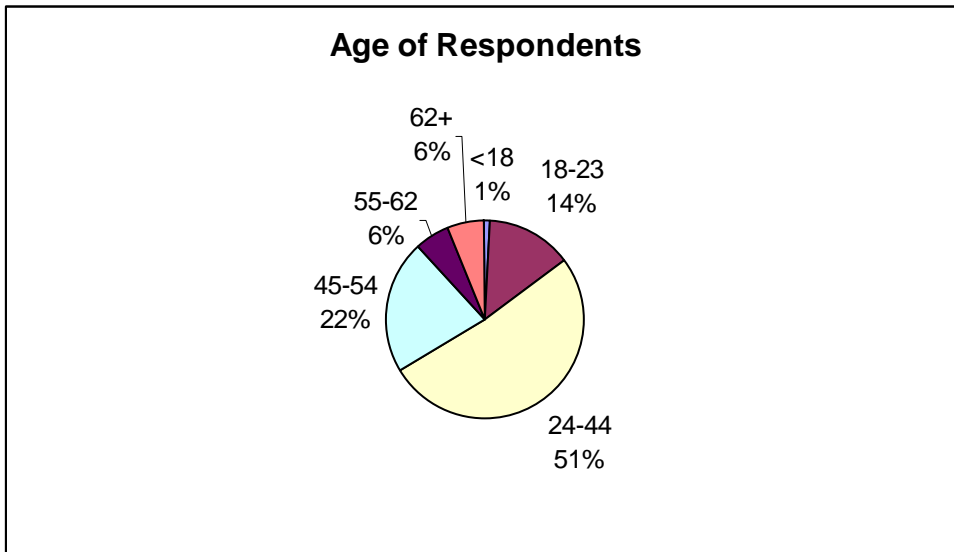
Results & Analysis

For the purposes of using the key findings of the 2007 Needs Assessment to address program development, funding priorities or any significant changes that may occur in CAC’s strategic direction, CAC narrowed its focus on five key areas. These five key areas, listed below, were determined by strategic goals developed over the last two years, and a review of CAC current programming:

- ❖ Housing and Housing Assistance
- ❖ Homelessness and Services Targeted to Homeless Individuals
- ❖ Meeting Basic Needs: Food, Health, Transportation
- ❖ Money Management
- ❖ Education & Training

The Needs Assessment survey also included questions related to needs of seniors, needs of children & youth, accessibility of services and quality of life. However, these areas will only be described as they relate to the five areas outlined above.

Demographic Information



Note – the following percentages add up to 102% because some participants circled more than one answer.

- 51% identified themselves as African American
- 4% identified themselves as American Indian or Alaskan Native.
- 1% identified themselves as Asian or Pacific Islander
- 33% identified themselves as Caucasian
- 7% identified themselves as Hispanic
- 4% selected the “Other” category
- 2% identified as two or more races

- 30% (52 of 173) of those who participated in Dane County have a physical disability
- Respondents were 74% female and 26% male

Housing & Housing Assistance

- 78% have rented in the last 12 months
- 70% report knowing their rights as a tenant
- 55% have been endanger of being evicted because they had received an eviction notice or have been late in making rent payment
- 75% need housing assistance

Dane Housing	Score of Agreement (SA)	Score of Disagreement (SD)	Test (SA + SD)	Final Rank
cannot afford to pay security deposit and first month's rent all at one time	384	-57	327	1
In winter the cost of my gas/electric bills makes it hard for me to afford my other basic needs	361	-231	130	2
I could have avoided eviction if I had received a short-term rent subsidy	278	-173	105	3
I could have avoided eviction if I had received assistance with one month's rent	260	-182	78	4
I want to buy a house but need help with down payment or closing costs	258	-329	-71	5
I have been in danger of losing my phone services	243	-343	-100	6
I could have used mediation to resolve a disagreement with my landlord	174	-281	-107	7

High “positive” scores meant there were a greater number of positive responses to that statement
 Low “negative” scores meant there was fewer numbers of negative responses to that statement

Analysis of Scores and Ranking (see chart above)

Depending on the how the statement was worded, the respondent could either respond affirmatively (“strongly agree” or “agree”) or negatively (“strongly disagree” or “disagree”) to convey a need in this particular area. Thus, CAC assigned a value for each of the four types of agreement (SA, A, SD, D) and then multiplied that value by the number of responses to that statement. Final ranking was determined by looking at wording of the statement and the mathematical difference between the positive score or negative score.

In Dane County Top Five Needs / Areas Related to Housing

- #1 Individuals cannot afford to pay security deposit and first month’s rent all at one time
- #2 Individuals need help with gas/electric bills during winter in order to afford other basic needs
- #3 Short-term rent subsidies are valuable for those facing eviction
- #4 One month’s rent is needed to help households avoid eviction.
- #5 Individuals would like to buy a house but need help with down payment or closing costs

Safe & Affordable Housing

- 43% reported that their housing was located near their job, a grocery store, school or other needed service
- 53% had found housing that was affordable, decent and safe.
- 34% rated their current housing situation favorably, selecting either “very adequate” (14%) or “adequate” (20%)
- Only 41% of people with a physical disability said they could find handicap accessible housing.

Phone Service and Utilities

- 66% currently have telephone service
- 57% have had trouble paying their telephone bill in the last 12 months
- 61% reported having a utility bill in the last 12 months, and 76% of those had not paid their bill (or had been late in paying) at least one time in the last 12 months

Homeless and Services Targeted to Individuals who are Experiencing Homelessness

78% (135 of 174 respondents) said they had been homeless at some point in their life.

69% of those who had experienced homelessness at any time in their lives had been homeless in the past two years, and 60% of those who had experienced homelessness in the last two years *were currently homeless* (56 respondents).

It is important to note that the major reasons why homelessness occurred are (31 respondents answered this section):

Unemployment	64%
Low wages	42%
Need for better budgeting	41%
Health problems	36%
Eviction	31%
Landlord refusal	30%
Family conflicts	30%
Under employed	26%
Domestic Violence	18%
Alcohol or Drug Abuse	17%

It is also important to note that issues with landlords, including evictions (court proceedings) are cited as major reason why homelessness occurred.

There were 56 respondents who were *currently homeless* at the time of taking the survey. The following services were identified as ways they thought they could find housing (they could circle all that applied):

#1 - More affordable housing – circled 49 times

#2 - Financial Assistance – circled 39 times

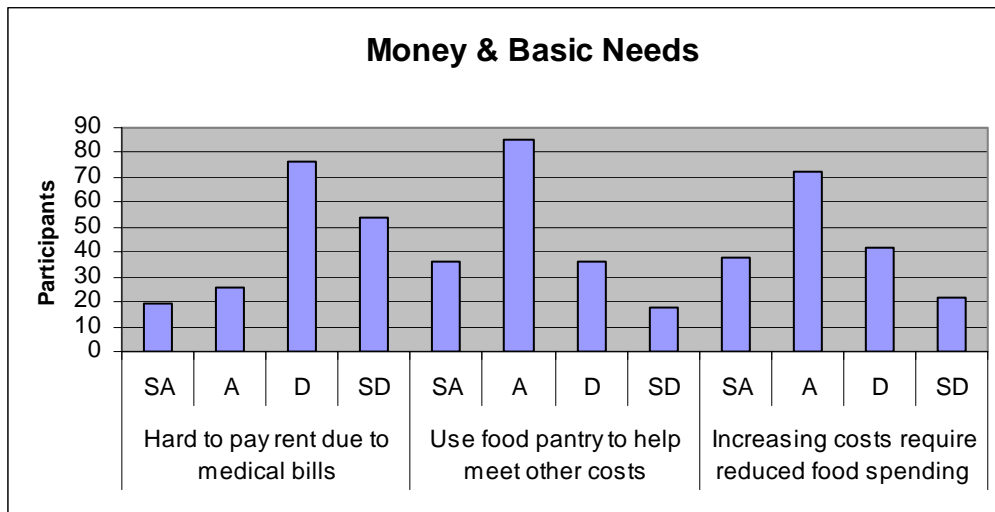
- #3 - Employment / jobs – circled 38 times
- #4 - Case management services – circled 29 times
- #5 - Medical treatment – circled 11 times
- #5 - Medical treatment – circled 11 times
- #6 - Alcohol or Drug Treatment – circled 9 times

Meeting Basic Needs (Finances, Transportation, Healthcare)

Throughout the survey, CAC asked questions related to respondents’ ability to afford and/or have access to the means to meet their basic needs such as food, transportation, health care and income. This section summarizes respondents’ basic needs in relation to income.

Not enough money...

When respondents were asked to rank their level of agreement to the statement “I have enough money to meet my basic needs,” 70% of 172 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.



SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree and SD = Strongly Disagree

Summary of this table and other financial issues:

Medical bills and money:

26% of respondents agree (“strongly agree” or “agree”) that medical bills have made it hard for them to pay rent and basic needs.

Food pantries and money...

69% of respondents agree (“strongly agree” or “agree”) that going to a food pantry has allowed more money toward other bills such as rent.

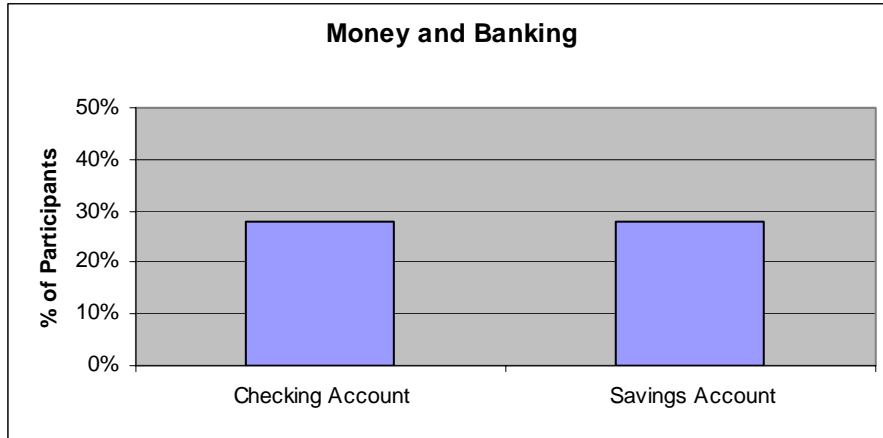
Cutting corners in household budgets...spending less money on food

63% of respondents agree (“strongly agree” or “agree”) that they have reduced money that they spend on food due to other increasing expenses.

Supplementing income with cash advance loans

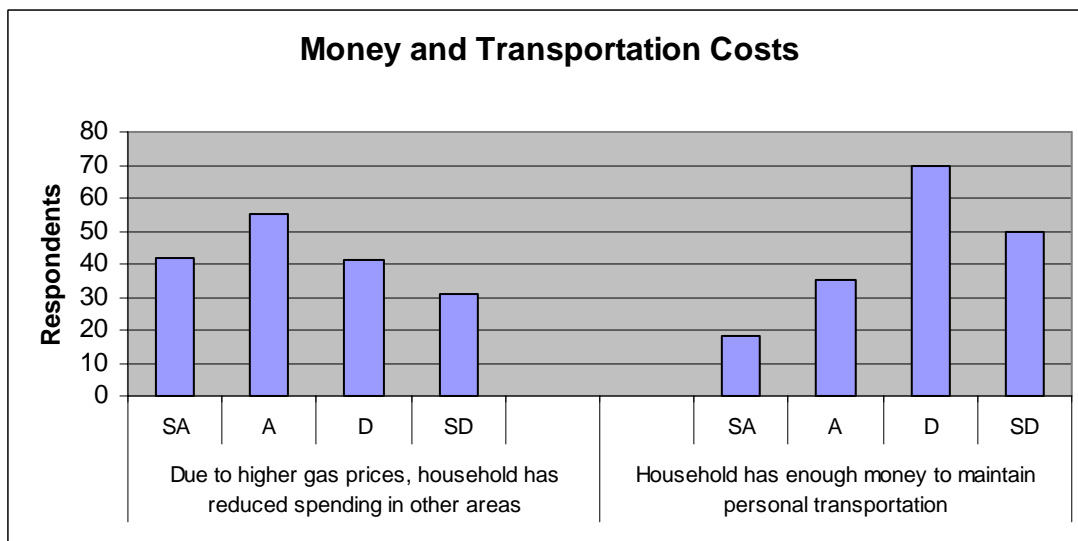
- 17% of respondents reported that they use a PayDay Loan or similar lending store five or more time per year.
- 21% (36 of 171 respondents) indicated that they currently owe money to a PayDay Loan or similar lending store.

Money Management & Finances



- 28% have checking account and 28% have a savings account
- 58% agreed that they would benefit from attending a class on how to use their money better

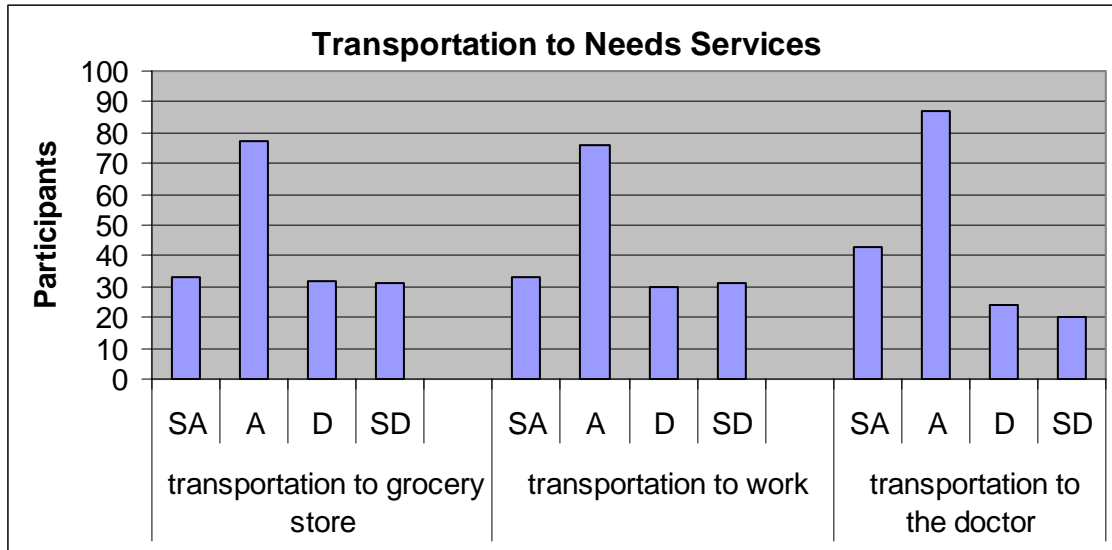
Money as it relates to transportation



SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree and SD = Strongly Disagree

- 57% agree or strongly agree that due to higher gas prices, their household has reduced expenses in other areas.
- 31% agree or strongly agree that they have enough money to maintain personal transportation.

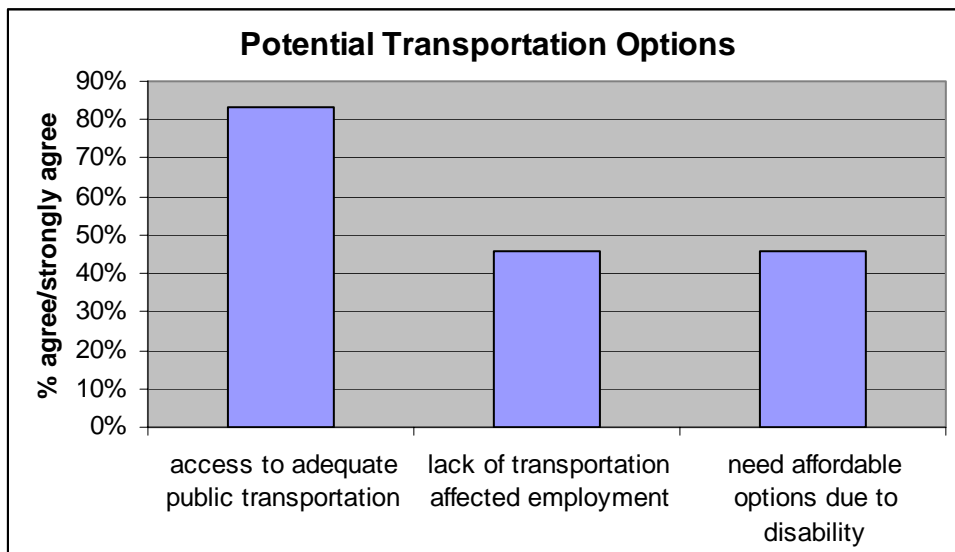
Transportation Overview



SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree and SD = Strongly Disagree

For the most part, it appears that respondents have dependable transportation to work, grocery stores and the doctor (as indicated by the bars for SA “strongly agree” and A “agree”)

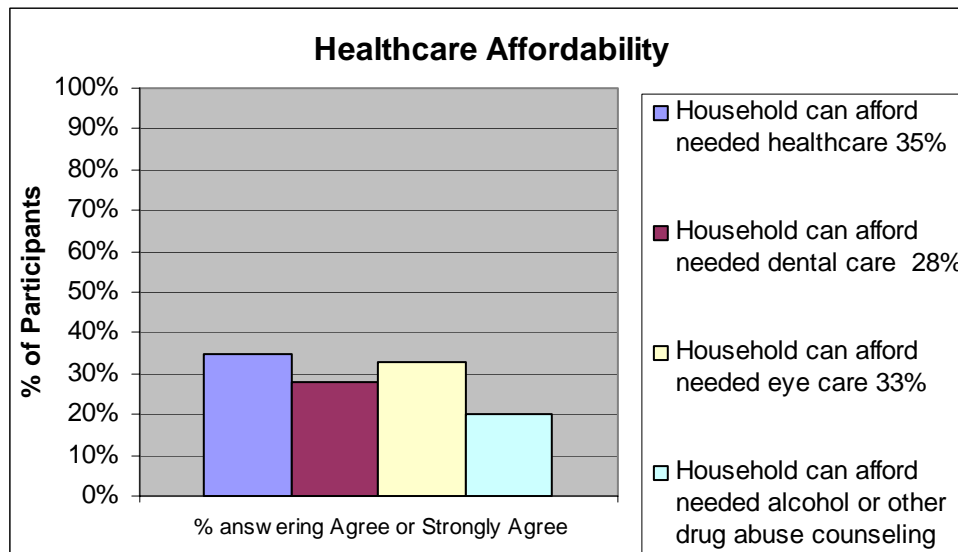
Also of note, 69% of respondents do NOT feel that they have enough money to maintain personal transportation.



According to this chart:

- 83% of respondents have access to adequate public transportation
- 46% of respondents feel that a lack of transportation affected their employment
- 46% of respondents reported needing affordable transportation options due to a disability.
30% of respondents reported having a physical disability.

Healthcare



35% of households reported they could afford needed healthcare.

28% of households reported they could afford needed dental care.

33% of households reported they could afford needed eye care.

20% of household reported they could afford needed alcohol or other drug abuse counseling.

Employment & Education Overview

Of the 178 respondents in Dane County:

- 66% indicated they were unemployed
- 16% said they were employed full-time
- 28% said they were employed part-time

61% said they have not been able to find jobs with affordable, if any, health care

71% of respondents said they need more education/ training to get a better job

In Dane County Top Needs / Areas Related to Education/Training

#1 – 71% need education and/or training to get a better job

#2 – 58% would benefit from attending a class on how to better use their money

#3 – 57% report they would benefit from receiving business development training and/or financial assistance to start a small business

Summary

Compared to the other counties (Jefferson and Waukesha) in CAC's 2007 Needs Assessment, there were a large number of respondents (178) in Dane County. Nonetheless, it is important to bear in mind that a convenience sample was used and, in Dane County, the sample was primarily drawn from homeless services providers. Also, respondents were from the City of Madison and therefore the need of people living in other Dane urban areas, in addition to rural areas, may be different than the needs of identified by CAC's Needs Assessment.

55% of all renters were in danger of being evicted and 75% reported a need for housing assistance. Correspondingly, only 53% were able to find housing that was affordable, decent and safe. The top housing needs are rent/security deposit assistance, utility (gas, electric) bill assistance during the winter and short-term rent subsidies for those facing eviction.

Unemployment, low wages, a need for better budgeting and health problems were top reasons for homelessness. More affordable housing, financial assistance and employment and case management services are needed to address homelessness. 63% report that they have reduced money that they spend on food due to other increasing expenses but 69% said that going to food pantries has allowed more money to go toward other bills such as rent. 26% of respondents report that medical bills have made it hard to pay rent and meet other basic needs.

69% do not have enough money to maintain personal transportation. However, 83% have adequate access to public transportation and most respondents have dependable transportation to work (64%) and the doctor (75%), but few have transportation to the grocery store (56%). 46% believe that their lack of transportation affected their employment. 30% report a physical disability, while 46% needed affordable transportation options for a household member (him or herself or another) with a disability.

66% of respondents were unemployment. Top education and training needs are: education and/or training to get a better job (71%), a class on how to better use money (58%) and business development training and/or financial assistance to start a small business. 21% currently owe money to a cash advance store. Most respondents **can not** afford the healthcare (65%), dental care (72%), eye care (67%) or alcohol or other drug abuse counseling (80%) they need.

We welcome your comments and feedback.

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