

2007

Community Needs Assessment

Community Action Coalition for South Central WI, Inc.

Profile of Needs for Jefferson County



COMMUNITY ACTION COALITION
FOR SOUTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN, INC.

Questions or Comments?

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Jefferson County

There were 62 respondents in Jefferson County who participated in the 2007 Needs Assessment. By comparison, there were 64 respondents in Waukesha County and 178 respondents in Dane County. Due to the limited number of respondents in Jefferson County, it is important to not draw any firm conclusions about responses and to review data in the aggregate as much as possible. In addition, not all 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 administer the surveys if an agency was not able to designate an employee who would take responsibility for survey collection.

Partner Agencies in Jefferson County (4):

Agency	Services Provided to low-income
Counseling Center of Watertown	Mental health counseling / support
Jefferson Senior Center	Meals, services for seniors
Waterloo Outreach	Outreach services
Workforce Development Center	Job development, social services
Highland Apartments *	(in Dodge County but low-income individuals from Watertown live there)

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.

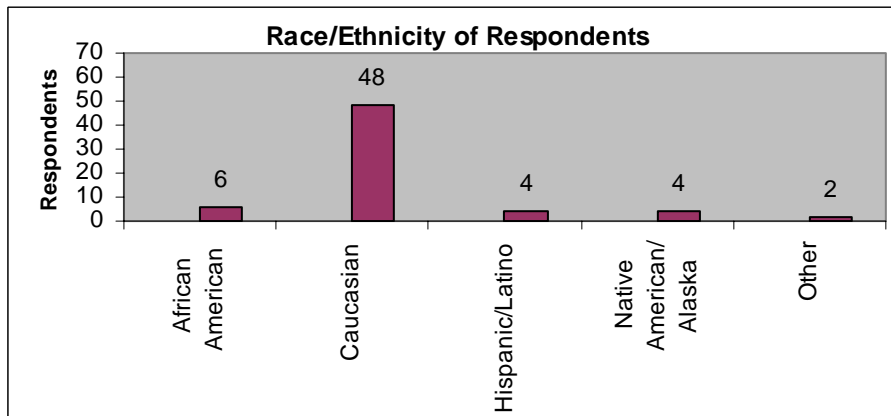
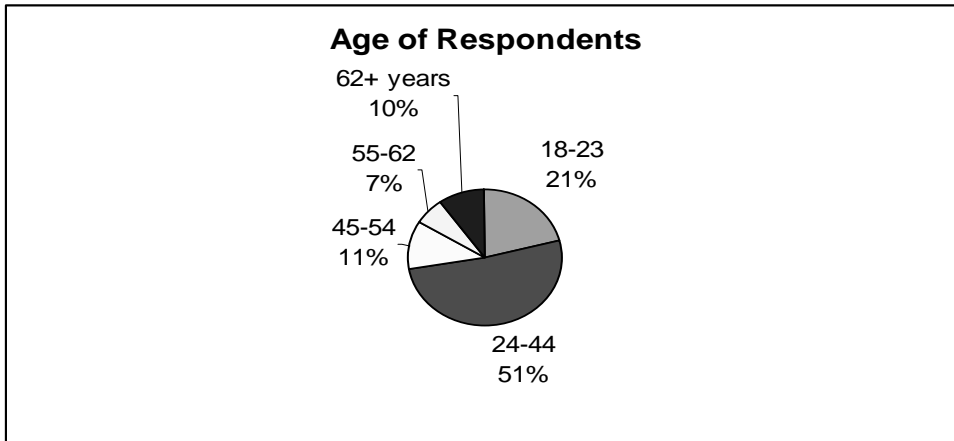
Results & Analysis

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



75% of respondents identified themselves as Caucasian
 9% of respondents identified themselves as African-American
 6% of respondents identified themselves as Hispanic
 6% of respondents identified themselves as Native American

24% (15 of 62) of those who participated in Jefferson County have a physical disability.
 Jefferson County respondents were 65% female and 35% male.

Housing & Housing Assistance

- 73% have rented in the last 12 months
- 70% report knowing their rights as a tenant
- 48% households reported being in danger of being evicted because they had received an eviction notice or have been late in making rent payments
- 57% said they needed housing assistance

Jefferson Housing	Score of Agreement (SA)	Score of Disagreement (SD)	Test (SA + SD)	Final Rank
In winter the cost of my gas/electric bills makes it hard for me to afford my other basic needs	169	-37	132	1
cannot afford to pay security deposit and first month's rent all at one time	128	-29	99	2
I could have avoided eviction if I had received a short-term rent subsidy	91	-53	38	3
I have been in danger of losing my phone services	112	-95	17	4
I could have avoided eviction if I had received assistance with one month's rent	66	-77	-11	5
I want to buy a house but need help with down payment or closing costs	76	-117	-41	6
I could have used mediation to resolve a disagreement with my landlord	46	-109	-63	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 Jefferson County Top Five Needs / Areas Related to Housing

- #1 Individuals need help with gas/electric bills during winter in order to afford other basic needs
- #2 Individuals cannot afford to pay security deposit and first month’s rent all at one time
- #3 Short-term rent subsidies are valuable for those facing eviction
- #4 Individuals need assistance in order to maintain their phone service
- #5 One month’s rent is needed to help households avoid eviction.

Safe & Affordable Housing

- 58% report that their housing is located near their job, a grocery store, school or other needed services
- 70% reported finding household that was affordable, decent and safe
- 62% rated their current housing situation favorably, selecting “adequate” (42%) or “very adequate” (20%)
- Only 33% (5 of 15) of people with a physical disability said they could find handicap accessible housing.

Phone Service and Utilities

- 77% reported currently having telephone service
- 65% reported having difficulty paying their telephone bills in the last 12 months
- 82% reported having a utility bill in the last 12 months, and 69% 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

42% of respondents (26 of 62) said they had been homeless at some point in their life.

54% of those who had experienced homelessness at any time in their lives had been homeless in the past two years, and 50% of those who had experienced homelessness in the last two years *were currently homeless* (7 respondents).

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

Unemployment	69%
Low wages	44%
Need for better budgeting	30%
Health problems	26%
Eviction	22%
Landlord refusal	22%
Family conflicts	22%
Lost job due to sick child	15%
Under employed	15%

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

There were 8 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):

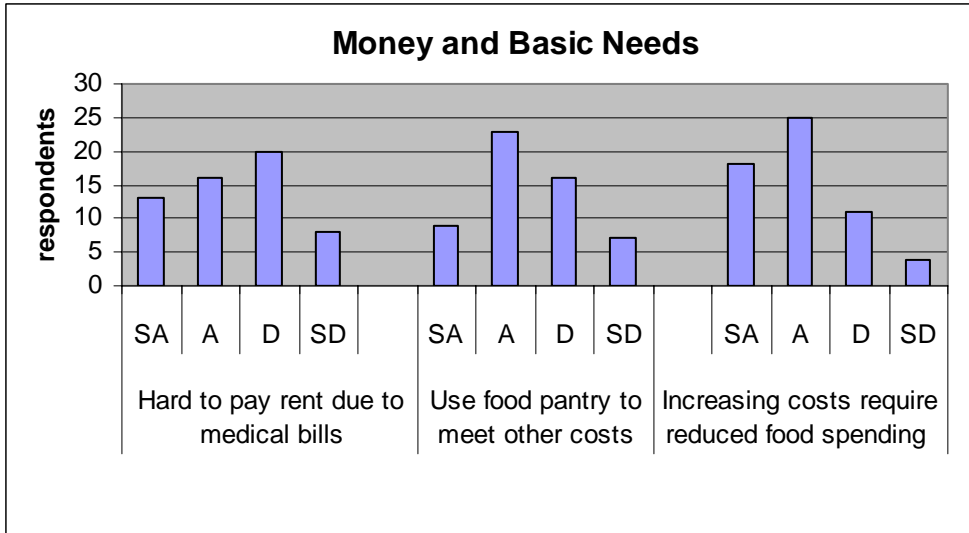
- #1 - Employment / jobs – circled 6 times
- #2 - More affordable housing – circled 5 times
- #3 - Financial Assistance – circled 4 times
- #4 - Case management services – circled 2 times
- #4 - Medical treatment – circled 2 times

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," 71% of 62 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.



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

Summary of the table above and other financial issues:

Medical bills and money:

51% agree (“strongly agree” or “agree”) that medical bills have made it hard for them to pay rent and meet basic needs.

Food pantries and money...

51% agree (“strongly agree” or “agree”) that going to a food pantry has allowed more money toward other bills such as rent.

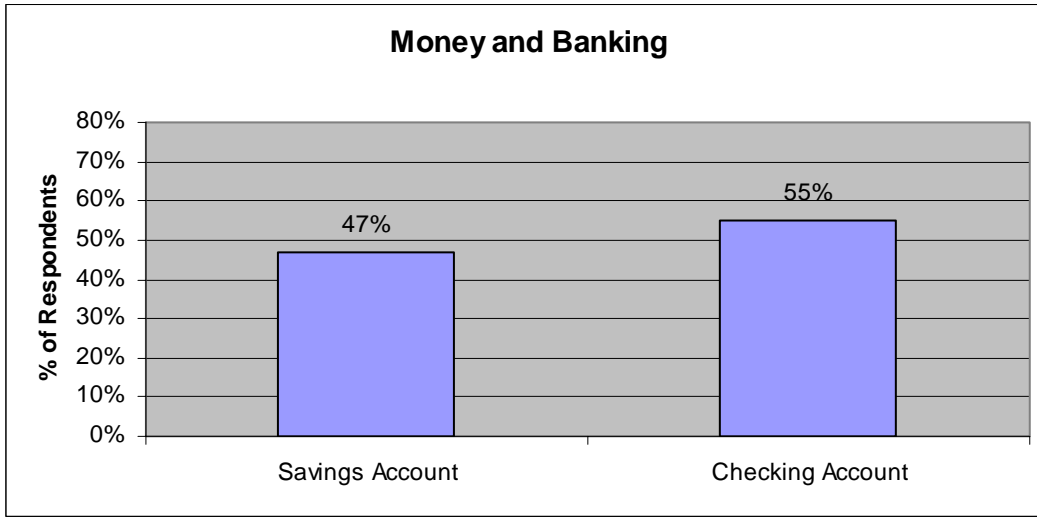
Cutting corners in household budgets...spending less money on food

69% 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

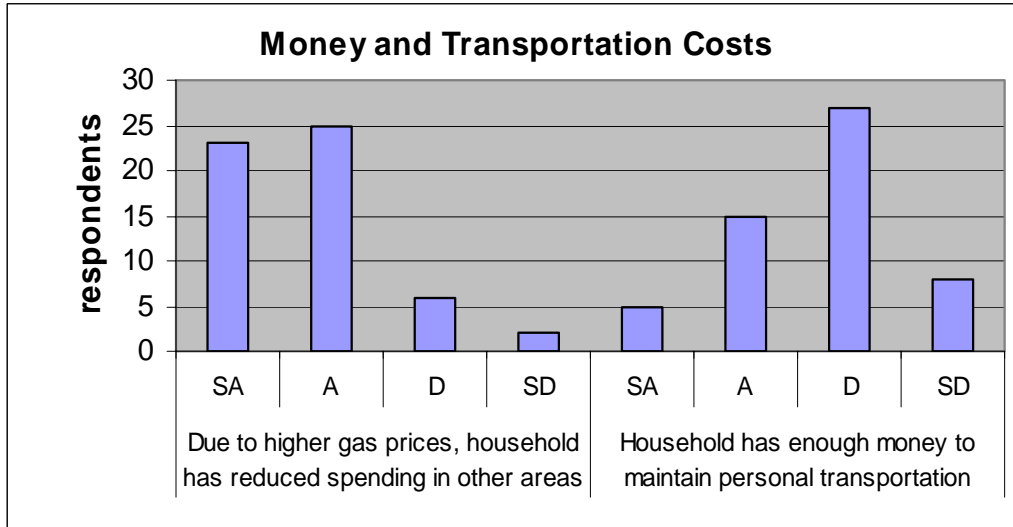
- 17% reported that they use a PayDay Loan or similar money-lending store five or more time per year.
- 26% indicated that they currently owe money to a PayDay Loan or similar lending store.

Money Management & Finances



- 55% have checking account and 47% have a savings account
- 51% agreed that they would benefit from attending a class on how to use money better

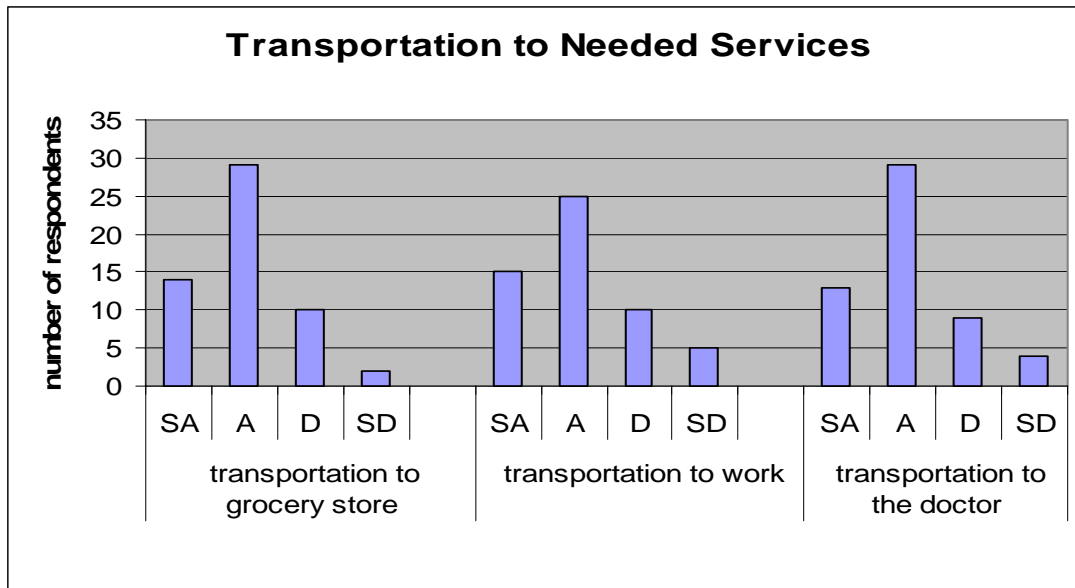
Money as it relates to transportation



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

- 86% agree or strongly agree that due to higher gas prices, their household has reduced expenses in other areas.
- 36% 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

The majority of respondents have dependable transportation to work, grocery stores and the doctor (as indicated by the bars for SA “strongly agree” and A “agree”)

However, as shown in the chart under “Financial Overview,” 56% of respondents do NOT feel that they have enough money to maintain his/her personal transportation.

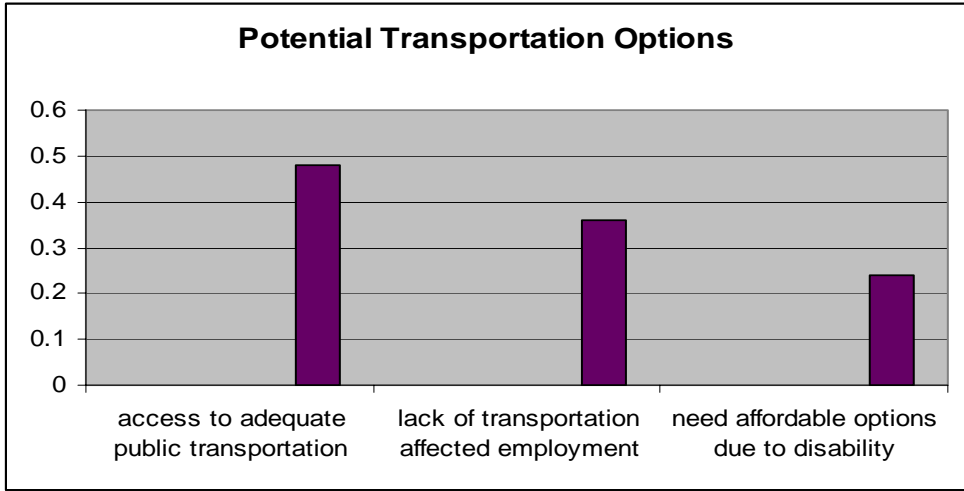
Public Transportation

- 48% of respondents indicated that their household has access to adequate public transportation.
- 52% of respondents indicated that their household does not have access to adequate public transportation.

In a smaller sample of 25 respondents, 64% (16 of 25) said they did not feel there was a need for public transportation.

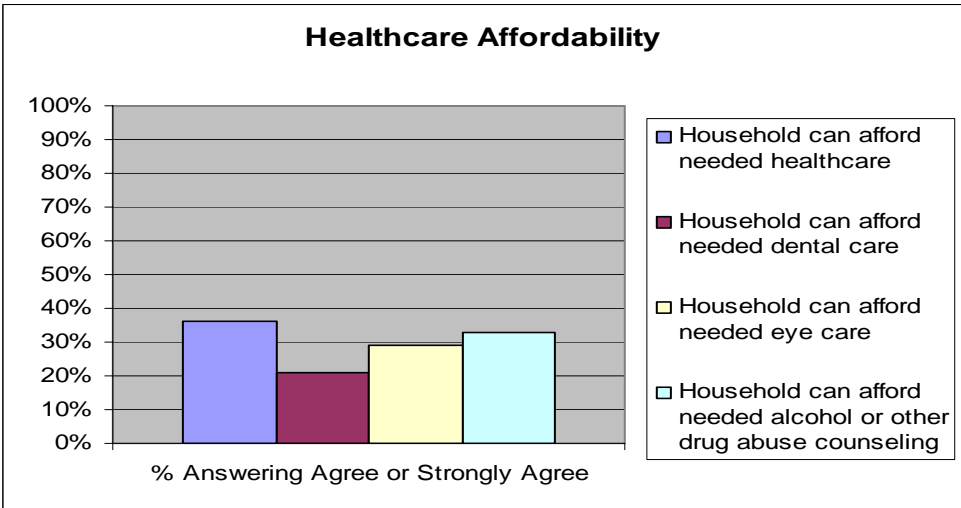
Respondents were asked what kinds of public transportation would be most helpful for themselves or someone they know. They were asked to circle one option. The 25 respondents (of 62) answers are presented in the following chart:

Type of public transportation	Number of responses
Bus	7
Van/ Shuttle Service	8
Ride Share Program	8
Carpool	3
Taxis	7
Other	1



According to this chart, 48% stated they have adequate access to public transportation. The majority (64%) of respondents do NOT feel that maintaining employment is related to their lack of transportation. In addition, 24% needed affordable transportation options for a household member with a disability (26% reported having a disability).

Healthcare



29% of household could afford healthcare they needed
 21% of household could afford the dental care they needed
 28% of household could afford the eye care they needed
 33% of household could afford the alcohol or other drug abuse counseling they needed

Employment & Education Overview

Of the 62 respondents in Jefferson County:

- 53% indicated they were unemployed
- 27% said they were employed full-time
- 19% said they were employed part-time

53% said they have not been able to find jobs with affordable, if any, health care

62% of respondents said they need more education/ training to get a better job

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

#1 – 70% need more education and/or training to get a better job

#2 – 51% would benefit from attending a class on how to better use their money

#3 – 47% would like business development training and/or financial assistance to start a small business.

Summary

This summary is based on 62 respondents who took CAC's survey in Jefferson County. While CAC is confident that the results shared in this brief report reflect the needs of low-income individuals, we remind the reader to not draw firm conclusions about the entire County because the sample size was small and the respondents were primarily from the cities of Jefferson and Watertown.

Nearly half of all renters (48%) were in danger of being evicted and thus there is a corresponding need for housing assistance (57%). However, the majority (70%) reported they had been able to find housing that was affordable, decent and safe. The top housing needs are utility (gas, electric) assistance in winter, rent/security deposit assistance, and short-term rent subsidies for those facing eviction.

Top reasons for homelessness were unemployment, low wages, a need for better budgeting and health problems. Employment, more affordable housing and financial assistance are needed to address homelessness. Respondents are struggling to meet basic needs due to medical bills (51%) and other increasing costs, which has required most households to cut food budgets (69%), but using food pantries have helped (51%).

64% do not have enough money to maintain personal transportation. Surprisingly, 48% report that they have adequate access to public transportation. There is no public bus service in Jefferson County, but only taxi services which operate within larger communities. Despite the lack of widely available public transportation, the majority of respondents report having adequate transportation to the grocery store (85%), to work (73%) and to the doctor (76%). 36% believe that their lack of transportation affected their employment. 25% of Jefferson County respondents reported a physical disability, which accounts for a 24% needing affordable transportation options for a household member with a disability.

53% of respondents are unemployed. Top education and training needs are: more education and/or training to get a better job (70%), a class on better using money (51%) and business development training and/or financial assistance to start a small business (47%). 27% of respondents owe money to a cash advance store. The majority of respondents **can not** afford the healthcare (71%), dental care (79%), eye care (72%), or alcohol or other drug abuse counseling (67%) they need.

We welcome your comments and feedback.

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