

# 2007

# Community Needs Assessment



Community Action Coalition for South Central WI, Inc.

## Profile of Needs for Waukesha County



COMMUNITY ACTION COALITION  
FOR SOUTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN, INC.

Questions or Comments?

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## Waukesha County

There were 64 respondents in Waukesha County who participated in the 2007 Needs Assessment, thus responses must be reviewed carefully and only in the aggregate. By comparison, there were 62 respondents in Jefferson County and 178 participants in Dane County.

### 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 Waukesha County (6):

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Services Provided to Low-Income</b>
Hebron House	housing, case management
Mental Health Association of Waukesha	mental health services & support
Mukwonago Food Pantry	food
Saratoga Height Senior Nutrition	food and meals
Salvation Army Waukesha	Shelter, food, youth programming
Women's Center	shelter, support services for women

#### 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.

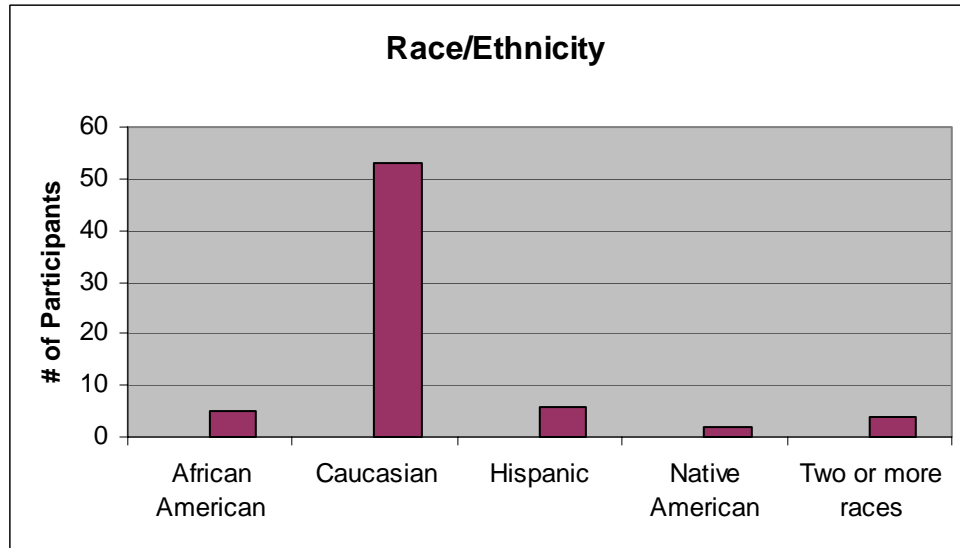
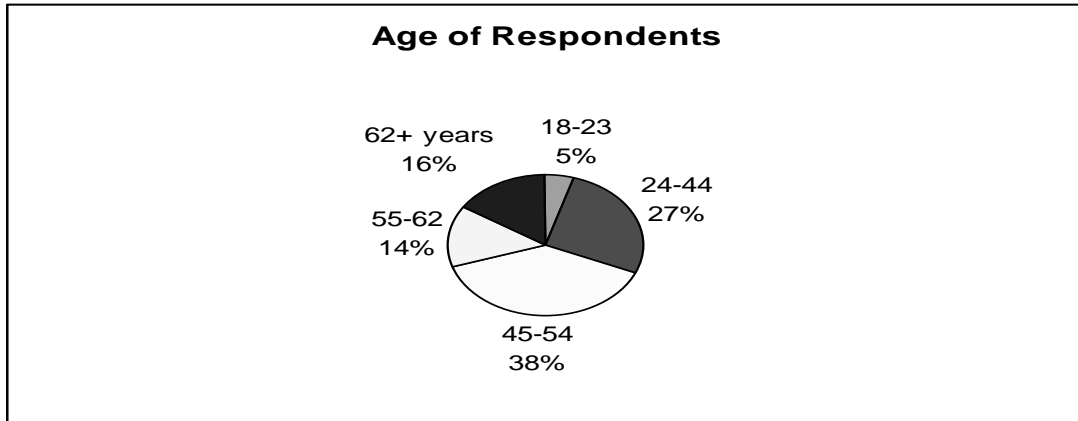
## **Results & Analysis**

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 percentages below add up to over 100% because some participants selected more than one answer.

84 % identified themselves as Caucasian  
10% identified themselves as Hispanic/ Latino  
8% identified themselves as African-American  
3% identified themselves as Native American  
6% identified themselves as two or more races

- Respondents were 60% female and 40% male.
- 42% (27 of 64) of those who participated in Waukesha County have a physical disability.

## Housing & Housing Assistance

- 73% have rented in the last 12 months.
- 72% report they know their rights as a tenant
- 36% said they were in danger of being evicted because they had received an eviction notice or had been late in making rent payments
- 38% said they needed housing assistance

<b>Waukesha Housing</b>	<b>Score of Agreement (SA)</b>	<b>Score of Disagreement (SD)</b>	<b>Test (SA + SD)</b>	<b>Final Rank</b>
In winter the cost of my gas/electric bills makes it hard for me to afford my other basic needs	138	-63	75	1
Cannot afford to pay security deposit and first month's rent all at one time	106	-47	59	2
I could have avoided eviction if I had received a short-term rent subsidy	81	-66	15	3
I could have avoided eviction if I had received assistance with one month's rent	82	-69	13	4
I have been in danger of losing my phone services	96	-88	8	5
I could have used mediation to resolve a disagreement with my landlord	63	-93	-30	6
I want to buy a house but need help with down payment or closing costs	56	-141	-85	7

### Ranking of housing-related services

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**

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 Waukesha County Top Five Needs / Areas Related to Housing**

- #1 Individuals need help with gas or 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 One month’s rent is needed to help households avoid eviction.
- #5 Individuals need assistance in order to maintain their phone service

### Safe & Affordable Housing

- 89% reported that their housing was located near their job, a grocery store, school or other needed service
- 72% of respondents reporting finding housing that was affordable, decent and safe.
- 65% of respondents rated their current housing situation favorably, selecting either “very adequate” (23%) or “adequate” (42%)
- Of respondents with a physical disability, 52% (14 of 27) reported that they have been able to find handicap accessible housing

### Phone Service and Utilities

- 48 of 64 respondents (75%) said they currently have telephone service
- 55% of respondents said they have had trouble paying his/her telephone bill in the last 12 months
- 56% of respondents said they have had a utility bill in the last 12 months, and 73% of those who had a bill, 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**

48% of respondents (31 of 64) said they had been homeless at some point in their life.

68% of those who had experienced homelessness at any time in their lives had been homeless in the past two years, and 61% of those were currently homeless (19 respondents).

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

Unemployment	71%
Eviction	58%
Low wages	52%
Health problems	42%
Need for better budgeting	32%
Alcohol/ Drugs	29%
Landlord refusal	26%
Domestic Violence	23%
Family conflicts	16%
Under employed	16%
A household member recently released from incarceration	16%

There were 19 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):

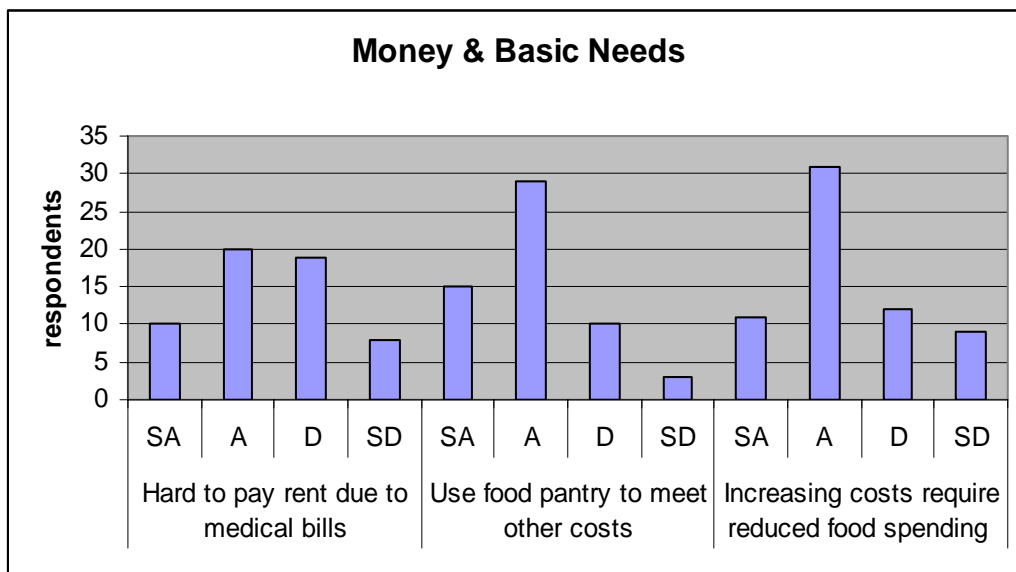
- #1 - More affordable housing – circled 17 times
- #2 - Financial Assistance – circled 15 times
- #3 - Employment / jobs – circled 14 times
- #4 - Alcohol/Drug Treatment – circled 5 times
- #5 - Case Management – circled 5 times

**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 with the statement “I have enough money to meet my basic needs,” **48%** 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:*

53% of respondents 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...*

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

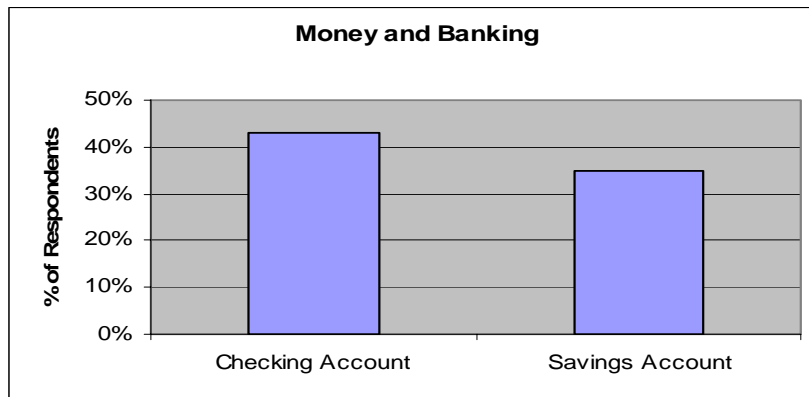
*Cutting corners in household budgets...spending less money on food*

66% 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*

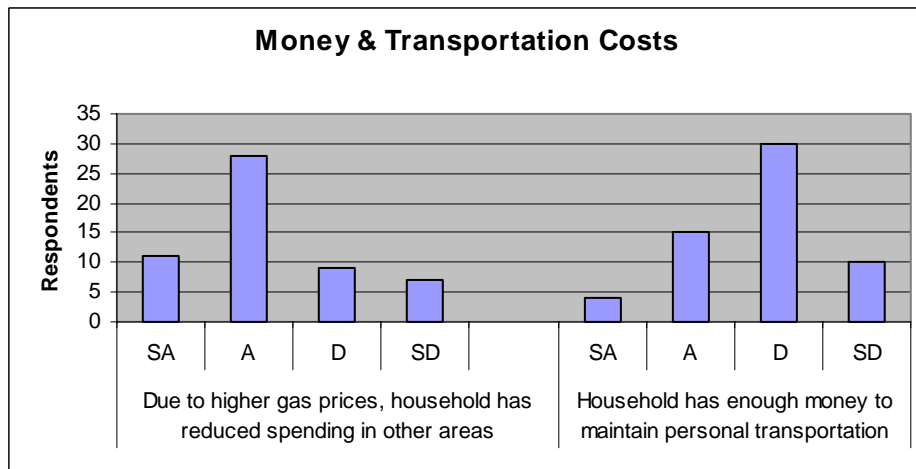
9 of 64 respondents (14%) indicated that they currently owe money to a PayDay Loan or similar lending store. Almost all (8 of 9) reported that they use a PayDay Loan or similar lending store five or more time per year.

### Money Management & Finances



- 43% have checking accounts and 35% have a savings account
- 51% agreed that they would benefit from attending a class on how to use their money better

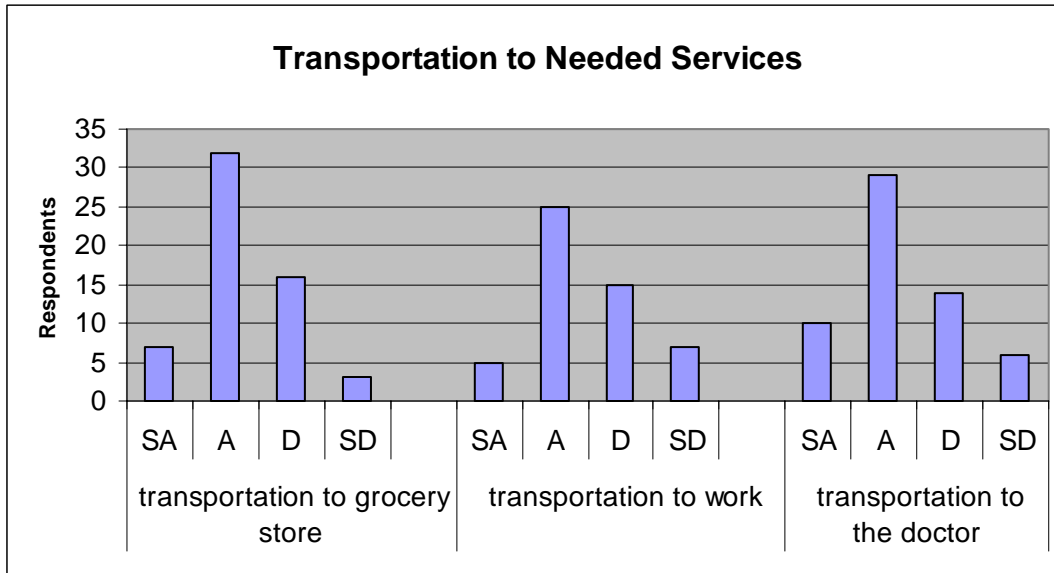
*Money as it relates to transportation*



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

- 71% agree or strongly agree that due to higher gas prices, their household has reduced expenses in other areas.
- 32% agree or strongly agree that they have enough money to maintain personal transportation.

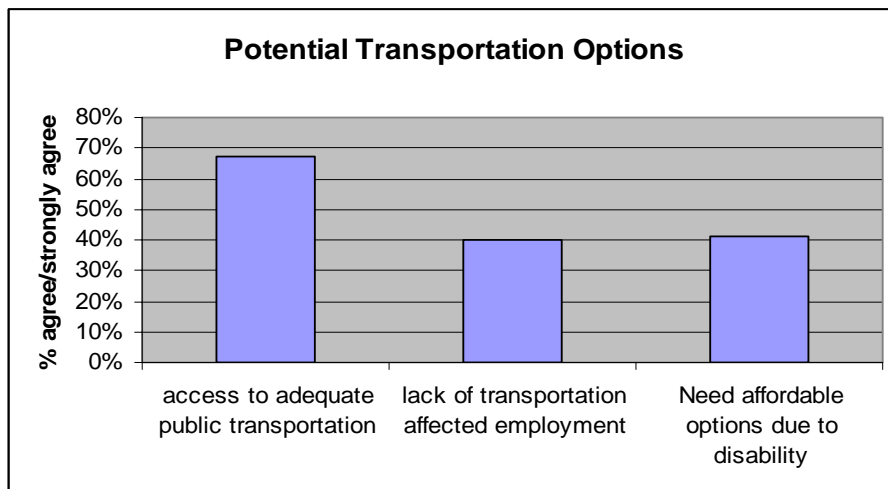
### Transportation Overview



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

The majority of respondents have dependable transportation to the grocery store (66%), to work (58%) and to the doctor (66%).

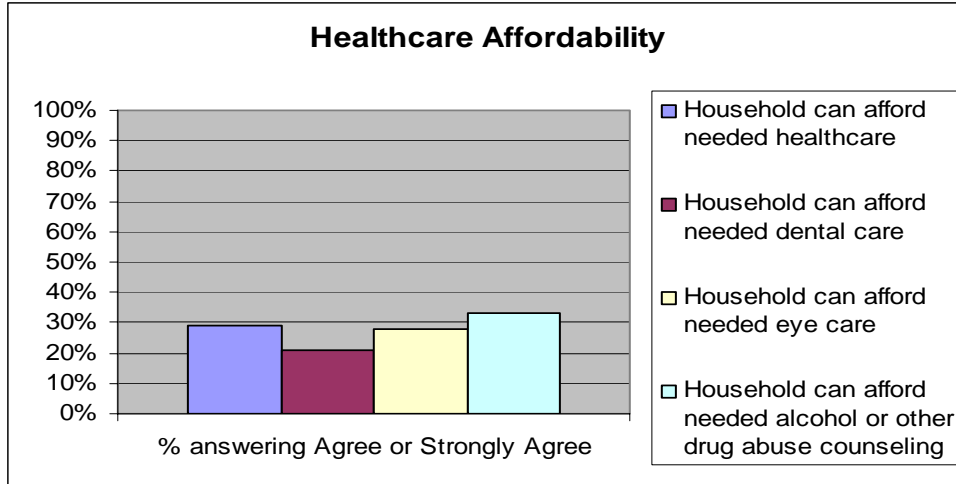
Also of note, 68% of respondents do NOT feel that they have enough money to maintain personal transportation.



According to the above chart:

- 67% have access to adequate public transportation
- 40% feel that a lack of transportation affected their employment
- 41% needed affordable transportation options due to a disability. 42% reported having a physical disability.

### Healthcare



29% of households could afford needed healthcare.

21% of households could afford needed dental care.

28% of households could afford needed eye care.

33% of households could afford needed alcohol or other drug abuse counseling.

### Employment & Education Overview

Of the 64 respondents in Waukesha County:

- 75% reported they were unemployed
- 13% reported they were employed full-time
- 13% reported they were employed part-time

59% said they have not been able to find jobs with affordable, if any, health care.

62% said they need more education or training to get a better job.

### In Waukesha County Top Needs / Areas Related to Education/Training

#1 – 62% need education and/or training to get a better job

#2 – 52% need help learning how to use a computer

#3 – 47% would benefit from attending a class on how to better use their money

## Summary

This summary is based on 64 respondents who took CAC's survey in Waukesha 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 City of Waukesha.

Half of all renters were in danger of being evicted and thus there is a corresponding need for housing assistance. However, the majority (72%) reported they had been able to find housing that was affordable, decent and safe. The top housing needs are assistance with utility bills during the winter, rent/security deposit assistance and short-term rent subsidies for those facing eviction.

Unemployment, eviction, low wages and health problems were top reasons for homelessness. More affordable housing, financial assistance and employment are needed to address homelessness. Respondents are struggling to meet basic needs due to medical bills (53%) and other increasing costs, which have required cutting food budgets (66%), but using food pantries have helped (69%).

68% do not have enough money to maintain personal transportation. However, 67% have adequate access to public transportation and the majority has dependable transportation to the grocery store, work and the doctor. 40% believe that their lack of transportation affected their employment. A relatively high percentage of Waukesha county residents reported a physical disability (42%), which accounts for 41% needing affordable transportation options for a household member with a disability. Of note, 15 of the 64 respondents lived in a senior living facility.

There is a high rate of unemployment (75%), which is consistent with the high rate of disability. Top education and training needs are education and training to get a better job (62%), developing computer skills (52%) and taking a money management class (47%). Only a small percent (15%) currently owe money to a cash advance store. About 2/3 of respondents could not afford the healthcare, dental care, eye care, or alcohol or other drug abuse counseling they need.

We welcome your comments and feedback.

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