Community Needs Assessment 2025

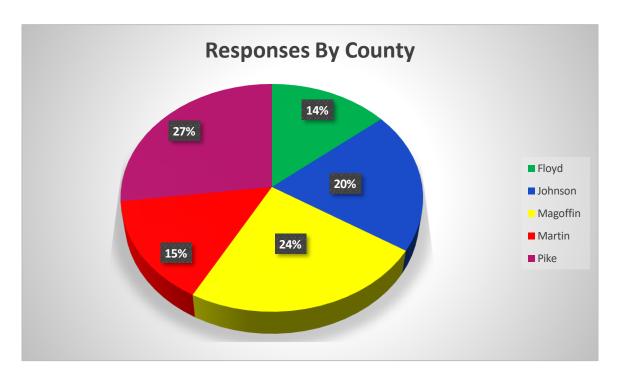


Needs Reported Through BSACAP Needs Assessment Survey

The Big Sandy Area Community Action Program conducted the annual needs assessment process from August 2024 to March 2025. Raw data was gathered from **1166** respondents using Agency assessment survey forms. To compile a comprehensive and accurate community cross-section, assessment forms were distributed to community members throughout the five-county service region.

The complete results, as well as a list of locations where the surveys were conducted, can be found in the appendices. The survey was available online or completed in the presence of staff at the local service offices. The results were compiled and tallied. As proven by the responses, the need for services that assist the impoverished is great.

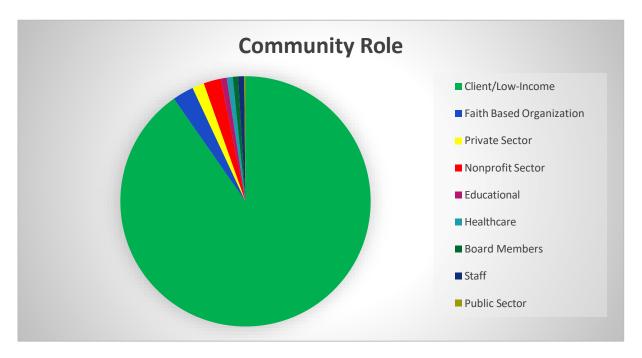
With Kentucky having one of the highest national poverty levels, the survey results will help us align programs to assist individuals and families living in poverty.



The graph above indicates the survey responses by county. As indicated, Pike County had the largest number of responses. We find this year that survey responses varied by county whereas the past years roughly aligned with the population distributed throughout the BSACAP.

Assessments were completed by low-income representatives, individual program

participants, faith-based organization representatives, local service providers, community partners, educational institution staff, members of the board, and members of both the private and the public sector.



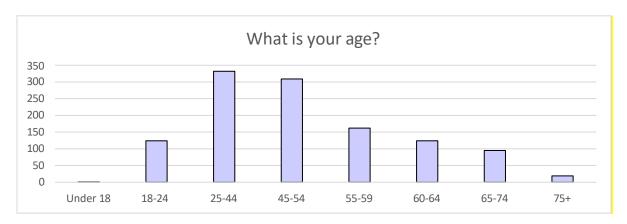
The graph above indicates the category of community member that respondents felt they most represented. A large portion of the respondents this year, 90.31%, came directly from our clients or members of the low-income community. Less than one-third came from representatives of the health, education, public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately <u>27%</u> of the population we serve in the Big Sandy Area are living in poverty. This is higher than both the state and the national poverty levels. This information is shown in the table below.

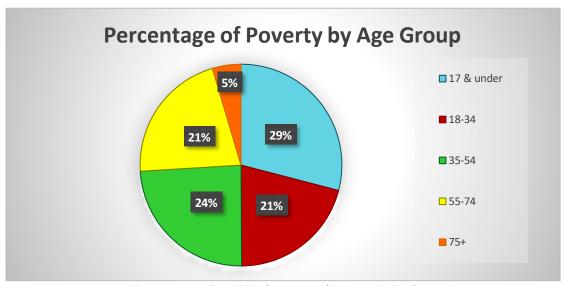
Report Area	Total Population	Population in Poverty	Percentage of Population in Poverty
Report Location	140,215	37,749	26.9%
Floyd County, KY	35,942	9,524	26.5%
Johnson County, KY	22,680	5,670	25%
Magoffin County, KY	11,637	3,398	29.2%
Martin County, KY	11,287	5,429	48.1%
Pike County, KY	58,669	13,728	23.4%
Kentucky	4,505,836	738,957	16.4%
United States	331,464,948	36,792,609	11.1%

Demographic Information

Respondents were asked several questions regarding their demographic categorization, including age, gender, race, ethnicity, education, and military status.



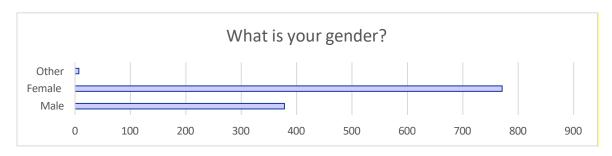
As the graph above indicates, over 54% of respondents were middle-aged, between 25 and 54 years of age. Thus, the responses to the survey are largely from people who are in their prime working years who may be caring both for children and aging parents. The next highest number of responses came from those age 55-59 who are nearing or have entered retirement age. Aside from age group 75+ with only 19 responses, the fewest number of responses came from those under age 18 with only 1 response.



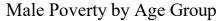
Data Source: DATA USA: Big Sandy Area Development District, datausa.io

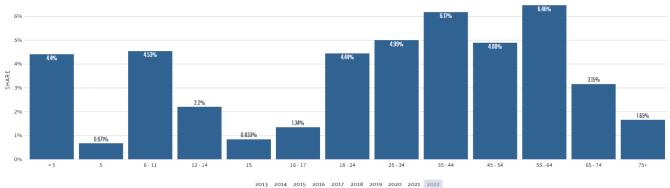
The graph above shows the percentage of the population living below the poverty line by age groups in the Big Sandy Area. A total of 139,368 people lives in the 1,979.6 square mile report area defined for this assessment according to the American Community Survey 2023. The population density for this area, estimated at 69.2 persons per square mile, is less than the

national average population density of 98 per square mile.



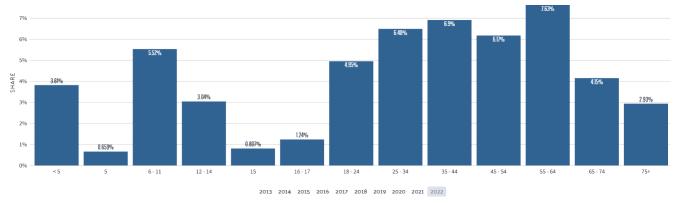
As the graph above indicates, the majority of respondents of the 2024 Community Needs Assessment were female. This number suggests a potential gender bias in the Community Needs Assessment survey participation and could indicate that community needs resonate more with women than other genders.





Data USA. DATAUSA: Big Sandy Area Development District. datausa.io.

Female Poverty by Age Group



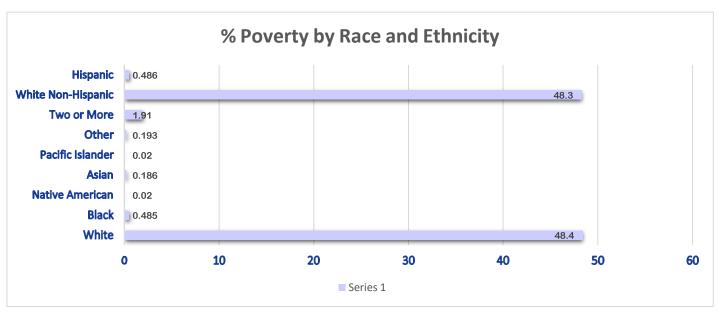
Data USA. DATAUSA: Big Sandy Area Development District. datausa.io.

According to data from the Census Bureau, the graphs above identify residents in the Big Sandy Area living in poverty by gender and age group. The largest demographic living in poverty are females between the ages of 55 and 64 at 7.63%. The smallest demographic living in poverty are females with an age of 5 at 0.659%. Overall, adult females have a slightly higher population

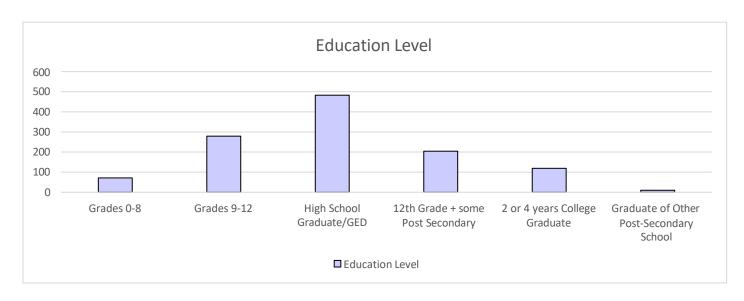
in poverty than males. This could also be indicative as to the cause of the gender bias for the Community Needs Assessment survey participation.

The results of the questions regarding race and ethnicity indicate that the vast majority of respondents in our area were White, Non-Hispanic or Latino people, which reflects local demographic information showing that the BSACAP service area is approximately 97% White and more than 99% Non-Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origins.

The graphs below show the poverty level averages by race and ethnicity. Chart showing race is also compared to state levels of poverty by race. You can see from the charts that the poverty by race aligns with the demographic information above.



Data USA. DATAUSA: Big Sandy Area Development District. datausa.io

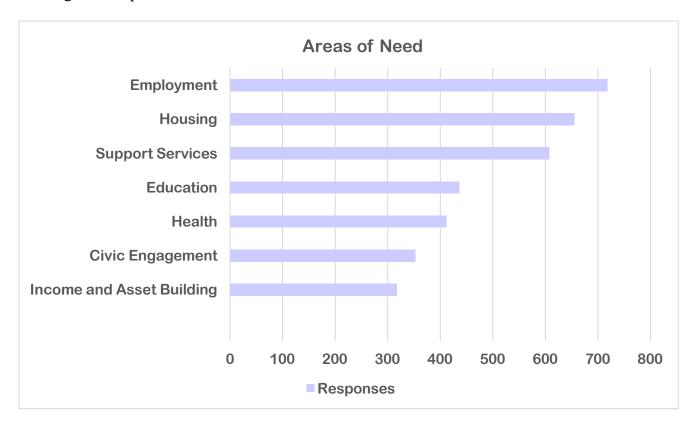


As the chart above indicates, while nearly 42% of respondents have their high school diploma or equivalent, another 30% of respondents either did not attend or did not complete high school. Just over 15% of respondents have attended but not completed some post-secondary education, while 10% completed a two or four-year degree course or higher. BSACAP did have 1% of the respondents to the Community Needs Assessment that were Graduates of Other Post-Secondary Schools.

The survey was completed by 23 military veterans this year and 0 active military. This number has decreased since last years' responses, but we still have a long way from having reliable data for our area regarding veterans. These survey response results do indicate a need on the part of the agency to conduct outreach to current and former military members and to continue strengthen the partnerships with local veterans' service programs.

Areas of Need

Respondents were asked to mark their top three most important needs (in no particular order) among the agency's planning areas: health, employment, education, housing, income and asset building, support services, and civic engagement. The chart below indicates what the community ranks as the most important services needed. This data is extremely helpful to the agency when deciding next steps.



Employment was identified as the most needed service in the 2024 Community Needs Assessment with nearly 62% of respondents marking it as a top priority, followed by housing, support services, education, health, civic engagement, and income and asset building.

Overall Needs Assessment Results 2020 through 2024

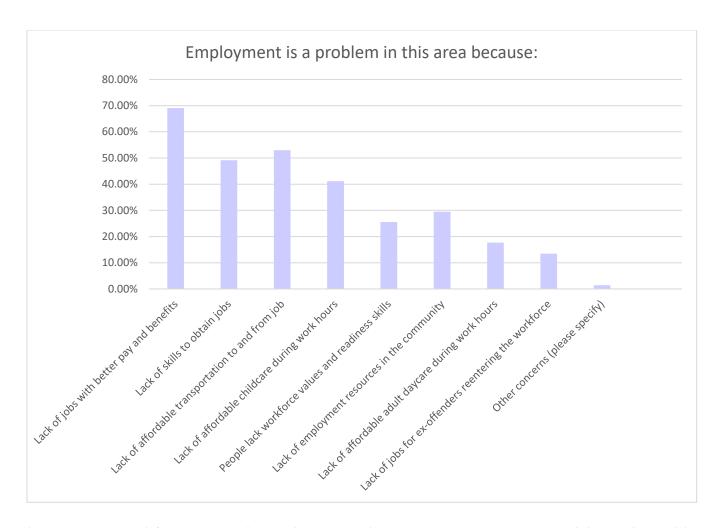
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Rank 1	Employment	Employment	Employment	Employment	Employment
Rank 2	Housing	Housing	Housing	Housing	Housing
Rank 3	Education	Education	Education	Education	Support Services
Rank 4	Health	Income & Asset Building	Income & Asset Building	Support Services	Education
Rank 5	Income & Asset Building	Health	Health	Health	Health

In 2020 through 2024, respondents were asked only to mark the top three needs, but in no order. Please see the chart above for needs ranked.

Respondents were then asked to mark their top three concerns among several subcategories within each service area to determine the aspects of each area respondents find most challenging to overcome.

EMPLOYMENT

Employment was ranked as the top need among survey respondents. **The Big Sandy Area Community Action Program considers Employment to be a <u>community-level</u> need. Within the service area of employment, barriers to self-sufficiency rose to the top of list of concerns. Chief among those concerns was that our community needed more jobs with better pay and benefits. Other top concerns by respondents were that the area needs more training for the types of jobs available in the area as well as affordable childcare during work hours and affordable transportation to and from work and the need to improve the workforce readiness skills of people who are able to work.**



The agency's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program participates in a wide variety of economic development initiatives in partnership with other local service organizations in addition to several other job seeker services. The agency acts as the area's One- Stop Operator meaning that comprehensive workforce services and support services can be accessed at our local offices. The agency also hosts an annual East Kentucky Workforce Partners Conference in order to allow all area organizations to improve communication and work toward common goals. BSACAP's local county offices are Kentucky Career Center Jobsight Affiliated Access Points. The individual centers provide job seekers access to services carried out by a wide network of partners operating within one physical location.

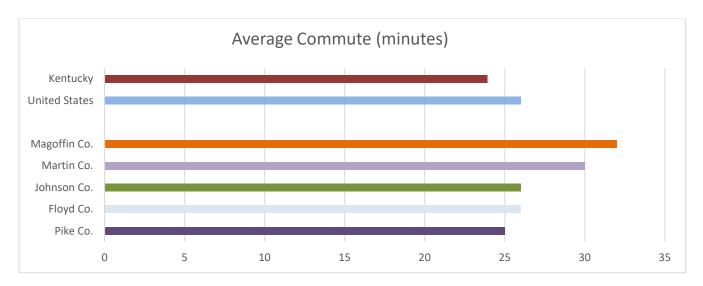
Staff operate in conjunction with the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (EKCEP), local Offices of Employment and Training, Vocational Rehabilitation, and others, as well as serve with the local Work Ready Community initiatives. The agency also has an Employer Account Representative who acts as a liaison between the private sector and the nonprofit sector. The Employer Account Representative can coordinate employer needs with agency services such as creating incumbent worker trainings, job fairs, vetting and hiring of employees, connections to economic development projects, and more to ensure that businesses that open in the area have what they need to succeed.

Unfortunately, most new businesses in the area do not offer a living wage or benefits. The chart below shows the median annual income for households in the Big Sandy Area based on data from the US Census Bureau. On average, residents in the Big Sandy Area annually earn approximately \$24,000 lower than the state average and approximately \$41,000 lower than the national average. According to the US Census Bureau data for 2023, Kentucky is ranked 5th of the 50 states with highest poverty rates, following only 4 other states (Mississippi, Louisiana, New Mexico, and West Virginia) with higher poverty levels. Many people move out of the Big Sandy Area to obtain employment elsewhere.

	Floyd County	Johnson County	Magoffin County	Martin County	Pike County	Kentucky	United States
Average Annual Income per Household	\$41,582	\$43,014	\$33,632	\$46,185	\$42,179	\$61,118	\$77,719

The Big Sandy Area Community Action Program's service area is predominately rural with a mean commute time for workers of 27.8 minutes, according to recent census data, and virtually no public transportation. The graph below indicates the average daily commute for the Floyd, Johnson, Magoffin, Martin, and Pike counties as well as the state average.

Without a reliable personal vehicle and the ability to afford repairs, employment is difficult to maintain. Similarly, lack of affordable childcare options prevents many from entering or remaining in the workforce, especially the working poor. During the global pandemic in the previous few years, unemployment increased and many in our area lost vehicles due to lack of payment. In addition to other barriers, recent flooding has left households without transportation.



Transportation remains a top concern for respondents of the Community Needs Assessment for Big Sandy Area Community Action Program when trying to find employment. Within the

service area, over 11% of the total number of households do not have a motor vehicle. This is higher than both the state level at 7% and the national level at 6%.

HOUSING

The second highest ranked service category in 2024 according to the Community Needs Assessment was **Housing**. **The Big Sandy Area Community Action Program considers Housing to be a <u>community-level</u> need.** Nearly 56% of respondents to the Community Needs Assessment considered Housing to be in the top three overall needs of the community.

Rank	Need	Responses
1	Families need affordable housing	75.90%
2	Lower costs for rent/utility deposits	69.13%
3	More subsidized housing	46.57%
4	Access to home repairs that reduce energy costs	44.68%
5	More income-based housing for disabled and seniors	28.13%
6	Community support for homeless families	24.27%
7	Access to housing for ex-offenders	10.63%

BSACAP operates a housing program that provides rental and utility assistance with funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development in the form of Tenant-Based Rental Assistance and Emergency Solutions grant monies. The program is financially exhausted nearly as soon as funds are available and always maintains a waitlist. These two programs assist clients in alleviating the cost of rental costs in the form of rent payments, security deposits, utility deposits, and utility allowances.

According to Census data for Kentucky for 2023, roughly 42.2% of all renter households were cost-burdened, meaning households are spending at least 50% of their income on housing. Approximately 69% of households with income between 20k – 35k are spending more than 30% of their income on housing, and 24.3% of households with the same income spend more than 50% on housing. Between 2022 and 2023, there has been virtually no change in income in Kentucky, however the cost of rent continues to rise. The median rent increased to \$929 in 2023 from \$891 in 2022. This rising cost continues to burden families in Kentucky and families nationwide.

The agency also operates the Weatherization Assistance Program and the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, both of which aim to reduce the burden of utility costs. The Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program also helps reduce the burden of utility costs. In addition to strengthening our referrals to home repair groups, the agency could benefit from assisting with financial education and pathways to homeownership for low-income people.

There are currently four emergency shelters in the five-county service area. Two of these are homeless shelters that house 45 individuals each and the other two are emergency shelters for women and children escaping sexual assault or domestic violence that house even less. Of these 4 shelters, 3 are in the same county leaving the other 4 counties that are served by BSACAP with low options for homeless individuals or families. Partnerships with local churches continue to help BSACAP assist some homeless families in the area. Searching for partners that will assist homeless families through community support is another way we can accomplish this.

As we see a greater number of our senior population fall into the range of poverty, we are also seeing a greater need for home repair and home accessibility programs.

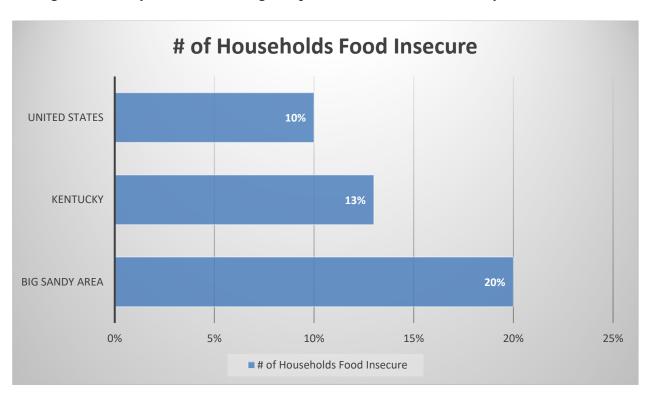
SUPPORT SERVICES

Support Services was found to be the second priority for the agency. The Big Sandy Area Community Action Program considers Support Services to be a <u>family-level</u> need.

Support Services

Rank	Need	Responses
1	Access to emergency financial assistance	47.94%
2	Youth Programs	37.39%
3	Meal Programs	37.14%
4	Access to disaster recovery services	32.08%
5	Transportation services	28.99%
6	Life skills (budgeting/bills paying)	19.55%
7	Elderly services	19.21%
8	Child support referrals	16.72%
9	Disabled services	11.75%
10	Access to substance abuse resources	11.23%
11	Legal services	9.09%
12	In-home services for seniors	7.80%
13	Senior centers	7.55%
14	Access to sexual/emotional/physical abuse services	7.29%
15	In-home services	5.83%

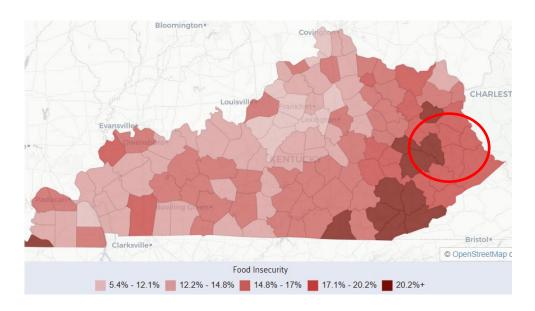
BSACAP uses the Emergency Food & Shelter Program to provide financial assistance to local food banks and makes referrals to area food banks, community meals, and the USDA's summer feeding program in which local schools participate. Data gathered by County Health Rankings & Roadmaps shows that roughly 20% of our service area lacks adequate access to food. This is higher than the state and national average of Kentucky at 13% and the United States at 10%. In 2023, Magoffin County had the third highest prevalence of food insecurity at 25.1%.

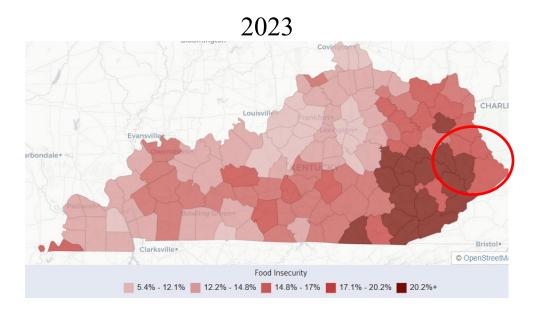


According to data provided by the Kentucky Youth Advocates' 2022 County Data Book, an average of 44% of children live in low-income homes and nearly 16% of children across the service area live in food insecure homes. This is a 2% increase from the previous year's data at 14% of children in the area living in a food insecure home. According to the USDA's latest Household Food Insecurity in the United States report, 662,660 people in Kentucky are struggling with hunger. The graph below shows that 20% of the population in the Big Sandy Area face hunger and compares it to the 13% of Kentucky and the national level of 12%.

The images below from Data USA show the difference in food insecurity for our service area in 2020 compared to 2023. We can see that the prevalence of food insecurity in Kentucky is on the rise.

2020





The agency's SCSEP program assists people aged 55 and over to enter or re-enter the workforce. Referrals are also made to the Big Sandy Area Development District which manages several services for the elderly designed to help them stay in their homes and remain as independent as possible.

It is widely known that central Appalachia and eastern Kentucky is in the heart of the nation's prescription drug abuse (opioid and other) epidemic, and that the manufacture and distribution of methamphetamine is prevalent. The agency's WIOA currently runs the Opportunity Youth Program. This program targets youth ages 18-24 who have been involved in the criminal justice

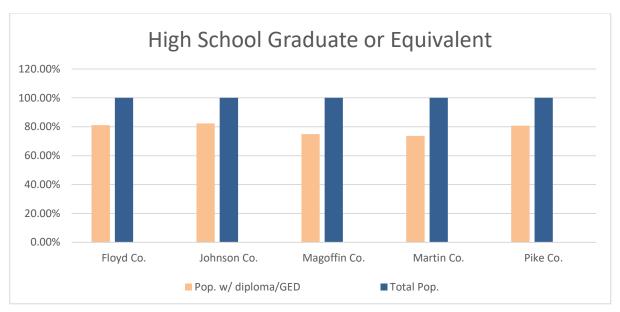
system by providing mentorship, educational opportunities, one-on-one job and career counseling to help them recover from their mistakes. Providing targeted assistance to families suffering from substance abuse through drug-free housing, employment of ex-convicts, and programs for child victims of parental substance abuse can be ways that we engage with the community on these issues.

EDUCATION

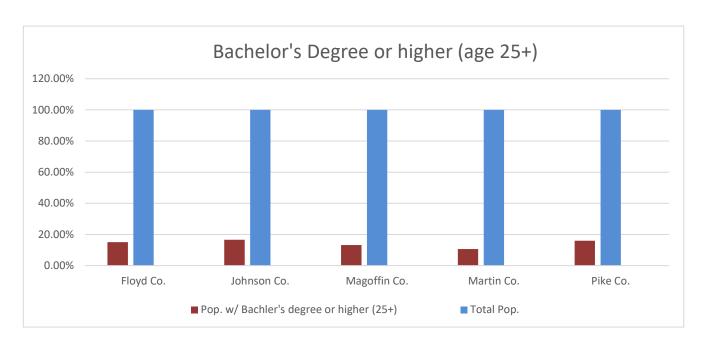
The Community Needs Assessment data showed that **Education** ranked fourth among those surveyed. **Education is deemed a** *family-level* **need for Big Sandy Area Community Action Program.**

Rank	NEED	Responses
1	Affordable transportation to and from school	58.40%
2	Affordable high-quality childcare	52.49%
3	More education resources in the community	43.48%
4	Way to attain high school diploma/GED	38.08%
5	More post-secondary education (vocational skills/college education)	36.79%
6	Resources to help children become school ready	34.65%
7	More certificate/degree programs offered locally	33.79%
8	Other concerns	2.32%

You can see in the chart above that our community felt the top needs in Education were more accessible transportation to and from school, affordable childcare, access to education resources in the community, ability to earn diploma/GED in addition to accessibility to post-secondary education, among other needs.



The graph above shows the population, per county, that has a high school diploma or equivalent versus the total population. Roughly 82% of the Big Sandy Area has a diploma or equivalent according to US Census Bureau data. This is lower than the state and national average with Kentucky at 89.5% and the United States at 89.8%.



The graph above shows the population age 25 years or older, per county, that has a bachelor's degree or higher versus the total population. Roughly 17% of the Big Sandy Area age 25 or older has a bachelor's degree or higher according to US Census Bureau data. This is lower than the national average with Kentucky at 27.9% and the United States at 36.2%.

All BSACAP programs have an educational component. The WIOA program connects people with colleges and trade schools, assists with paperwork and technical assistance, and offers financial assistance with tuition, required books and tools, test fees, and travel. The Head Start program not only addresses the needs of early childhood but offers financial assistance to parents and teachers who wish to further their education or obtain early childhood credentials. The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) assists participants with earning their GED and offers computer and customer service training. The CSBG program offers workshops on going back to school, scholarships, and financial assistance.

While graduation rates are on the rise, roughly a quarter of the area's population is without their high school diploma or GED. Of those able to attend, many people believe they cannot afford higher education and are unaware of the financial aid available to them. Additionally, there is a need for trade work and trade school to be incorporated into "college and career ready" discussions. The agency must continue to find ways to share knowledge of educational opportunities and best practices for parenting.

HEALTH

The fifth highest ranked concern in 2024 by survey respondents to the Community Needs Assessment survey was **Health**. The Big Sandy Area Community Action Program considers this to be a <u>family-level</u> need.

Health

Rank	Need	Responses
1	Access to programs that help pay for adult dental, hearing, and/or vision services	63.12%
2	Access to affordable transportation for healthcare services, groceries, and/or food pantries	56.78%
3	More affordable comprehensive health care services	50.51%
4	Increased community focus on preventative healthcare	47.68%
5	More health resources in the community	29.25%
6	Access to nutrition education	18.78%
7	More resources for victims of elderly abuse	17.32%
8	More resources for victims of domestic violence	15.87%

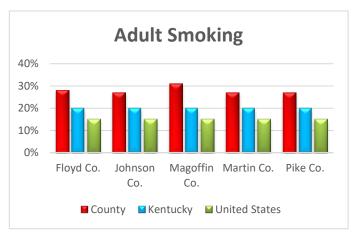
The agency's CSBG program offers yearly Community Health Fairs in our service counties. The Community Health Fairs offer free preventative health screenings such as dental screenings, Hepatitis A vaccinations, A1C tests, EKGs, cholesterol, blood pressure, school physicals, and others. This allows CSBG staff to work with community partners from health agencies such as the county health departments and medical clinics in the area. The agency also assists clients with accessing the Kentucky Vision Project year-round to help residents obtain assistance with eye exams and prescription eyeglasses.

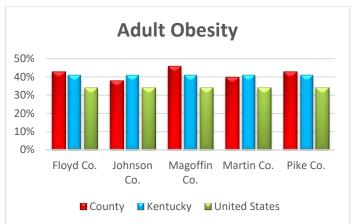
The agency addresses mental and physical well-being in its monthly workshops. Workshops provide opportunities for clients to come into the local service offices or to community partners to interact socially. The agency also promotes good nutrition with its Garden Seed Program each year. The Garden Seed Program provides vouchers for garden seeds, plants, and fertilizer to allow families to raise and preserve nutritious foods. Follow-up to the Garden Seed program included classes providing education to people in the community on how to preserve items that were grown in the garden.

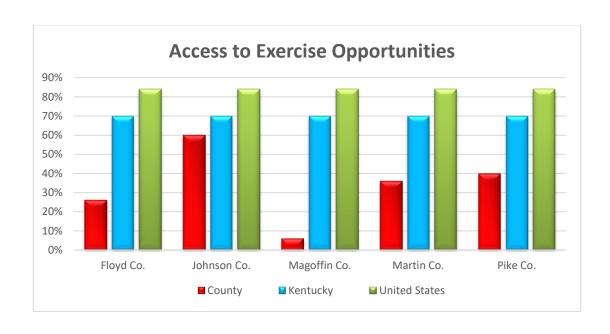
With additional CARES funding, the agency created a 5-county resource guide to assist the community with resources from agency partners, many of whom are in the health field. This guide is used to reach out to partners to assist the community with health care concerns not covered by the agency.

The Big Sandy area, and the majority of eastern Kentucky, report high rates of smoking, obesity and lack of exercise. The County Health Rankings-Kentucky report for 2023 reports that all five counties in our service area are near the bottom of the rankings list. Out of 120 counties, Floyd County ranks 108th, Johnson County ranks 99th, Magoffin County ranks 114th, Martin County ranks at 98th, and Pike County ranks 100th. These rankings are based off metrics such as quality of life, health behaviors, clinical care, in addition to other factors.

The graphs below show how each of the counties we service compare to state and national average for adult smoking, adult obesity, and access to exercise opportunities.



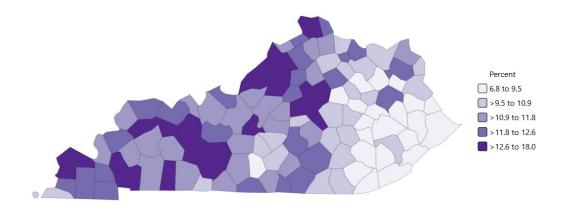




Uninsured Population (18-64 years)

	Uninsured (People)	Uninsured (%)	Rank with US (of 3133 counties)
Floyd County	647	8.6%	37 th
Johnson County	413	9.2	74 th
Magoffin County	250	9.3%	81 st
Martin County	173	8.4%	29 th
Pike County	962	9.0%	56 th
Kentucky	69,900	12.2%	8 th
United States	6,849,291	20.7%	

As shown in the table above, according to 2022 data from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, the Big Sandy area's uninsured population makes up slightly less than 10% of the area's total population. Health insurance coverage promotes positive health outcomes by increasing the use of health care services. Uninsured people will often rely on emergency rooms to receive care only when needed. According to data from America's Health Rankings, uninsured adults have far worse health outcomes than their insured counterparts. This includes higher rates of mortality and premature death, inadequate access to preventative services, and higher rates of cancer mortality.



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic Engagement was found to be the sixth priority among those surveyed. Civic Engagement is deemed by Big Sandy Area Community Action Program to be an <u>agency-level</u> need but has continued to rank last in the seven domain categories.

Rank	Need	Responses
1	Leadership development for seniors	78.30%
2	Leadership development for youth	72.90%
3	Increased education on how to join community associations, board, groups, and organizations	62.44%
4	Increased youth programs/activities	48.97%
5	Access to citizenship classes	35.68%

The Big Sandy Area Community Action Program strives for community participation in all programs administered by the Agency, and realizes the importance of Civic Engagement, identified as the seventh priority. Customers are informed about and invited to volunteer in the Agency and are elected or invited to participate on Agency boards, policy councils, or advisory committees. The interagency meetings coordinated by BSACAP provide valuable linkages to faith- and community-based organizations across the area. Staff from education based and

health-based organizations are also part of the interagency meetings. BSACAP encourages customer suggestions and participation in the Agency's community needs assessment process.

Finding opportunities for low-income people to have a stake their communities is critical to the success of the area as it could provide a significant portion of the population with a say in decision-making and an understanding of how political changes affect their lives, along with empowering them to speak out on behalf of their communities' needs.

INCOME & ASSET BUILDING

The seventh priority for the agency, according to the Community Needs Assessment survey results, was Income & Asset Building. The Big Sandy Area Community Action Program considers Health to be a family-level need.

Income & Asset Building

Rank	Need	Responses
1	Access to education on how to budget assets	89.71%
2	Access to free financial counseling resources/services	75.64%
3	Increase use of Earned Income Tax Credit	66.21%
4	More available mainstream financial resources	65.78%
5	Other	2.66%

In addition to CSBG workshops regarding budgeting and financial health, through an agreement with the Social Security Administration, the Agency receives Social Security and Supplemental Security Income checks for referred clients through the Social Security Representative Payee Program.

Cyclical and generational poverty have plagued eastern Kentucky for decades. Many families struggle to maintain subsistence levels of income and assets, so future planning has been difficult for most to envision. The area is also serviced by a large number of predatory "payday" lenders (i.e. seven payday lenders in a town with a population of 4,312 (2023 data) which trap people in a repayment cycle that is difficult for them to break. Clients need education on how to make the most of a small income and potential pathways to

homeownership and savings.

Assisting clients with information regarding financial opportunities for low-income people is something the agency must research further. Several federal programs are available through HUD and the USDA that provide pathways to homeownership for the working poor, for instance, and such information should be disseminated to agency clients. The Big Sandy Area Community Action Program does have strong relationships with both partners and often gives referrals to people looking for assistance in this area.

Why Community Action is Important

The final question on the 2024 Community Needs Assessment Survey was "What do you think is the most important reason you or your community needs Community Action?" Below is a cross-section of some of the responses collected in the respondents' own words.

- "To help us survive"
- "Because it help the people with low income pay some of the bills"
- "To Help people in need"
- "To help to pay for necessities like water and heat"
- "It is the only agency that helps with utility bills"
- "To help those that struggle"
- "It is a blessing"
- "To give people the help they need"
- "High electric bills"
- "Rental assistance"
- "To help those not able to meet their basic needs"
- "To help families with utilities and other programs"
- "To make ends meet"

Key Findings and Initial Conclusions

- More agencies and community officials must be encouraged to attend interagency meetings to build stronger communication about available resources, which can be shared with those in need at even more entry points into the system.
- The agency needs to conduct outreach to current and former military members and to form stronger partnerships with local veterans' service programs.

- The agency needs to work on finding transportation opportunities for the area.
- The agency must continue to work toward finding more program funding/grant opportunities so that a greater number of people can be served.
- While the agency currently works with partners to provide vision services the area, we need to look for further options and build strong partnerships to assist people with health services including dental and hearing services.
- The agency must continue to work toward getting more parents involved in student's education.
- The agency needs to look for ways to provide financial education and pathways to homeownership for low-income people, especially seniors.