

Big Sandy Area Community Action Program

Community

Needs

Assessment

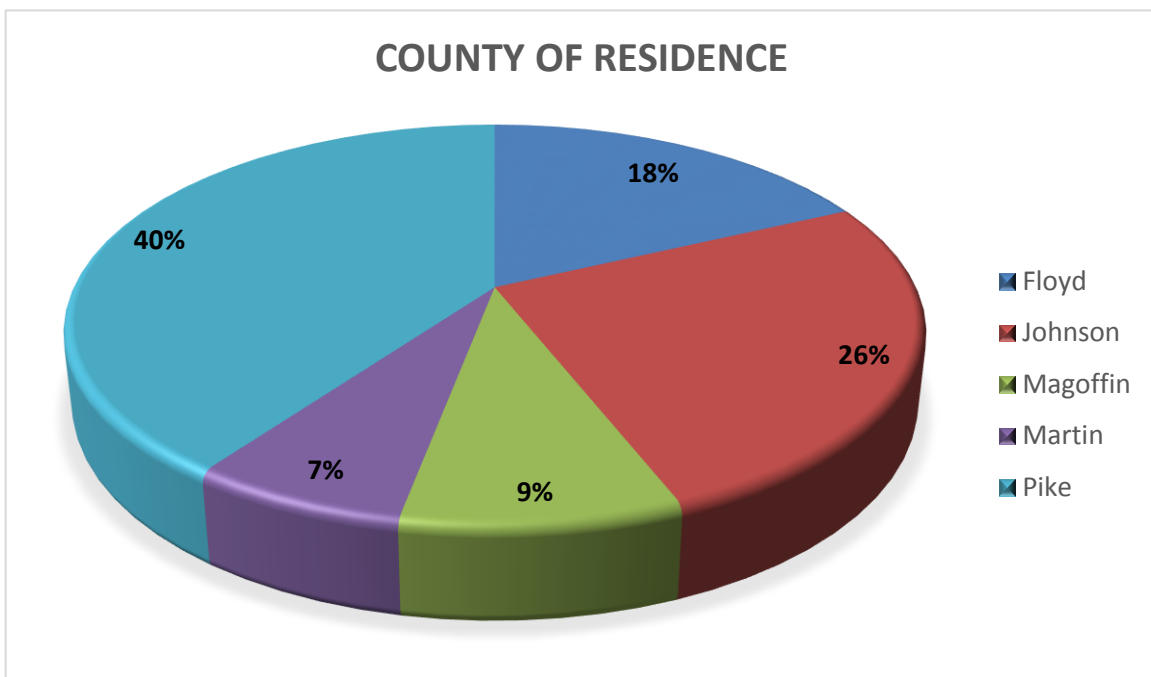
2019



Needs Reported Through BSACAP Needs Assessment Survey

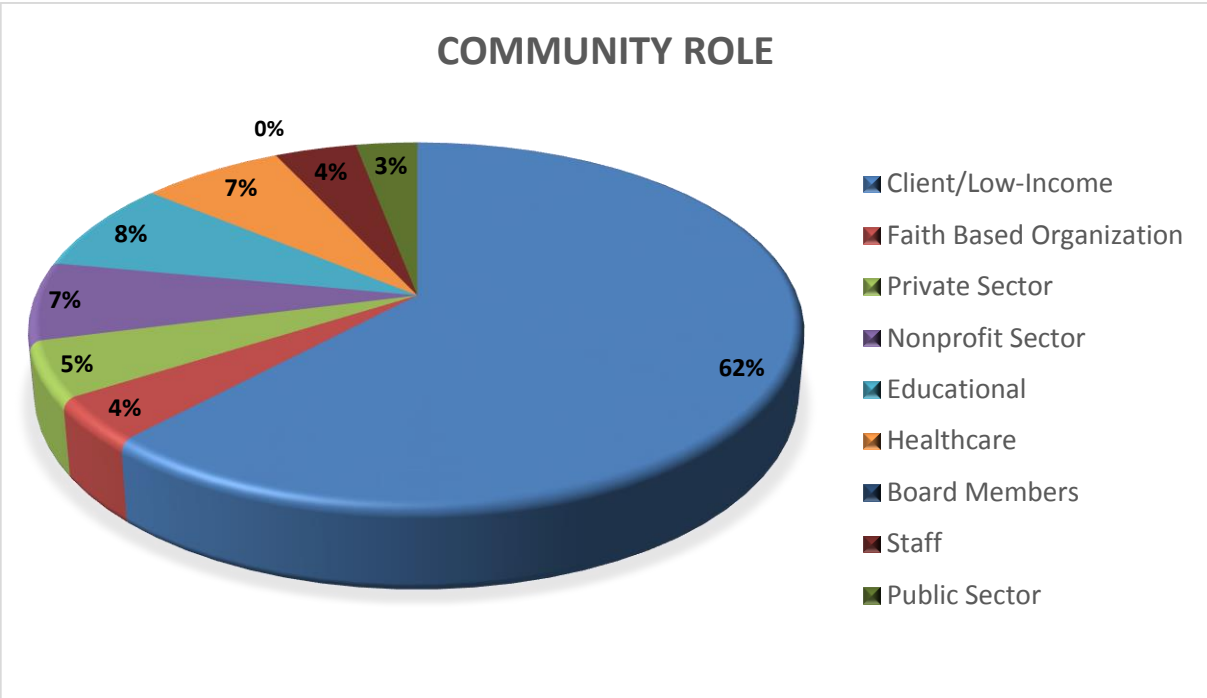
The annual needs assessment process was conducted by the Big Sandy Area Community Action Program from November 2018 to March 2019. Raw data was gathered from 265 respondents using Agency assessment survey forms. In order to compile a comprehensive and accurate community cross section, assessment forms were distributed to community members throughout the five-county service region.

The complete results, as well as a list of locations that the surveys were conducted can be found in the appendices. The survey results were compiled and tallied after respondents completed the survey while in the presence of BSACAP staff. As proven by the responses, the needs for services that assist the impoverished are great.



The graph above indicates the survey responses by county. As indicated, Pike County had the largest number of responses, but surveys roughly aligned with the population distributed throughout the BSACAP service area.

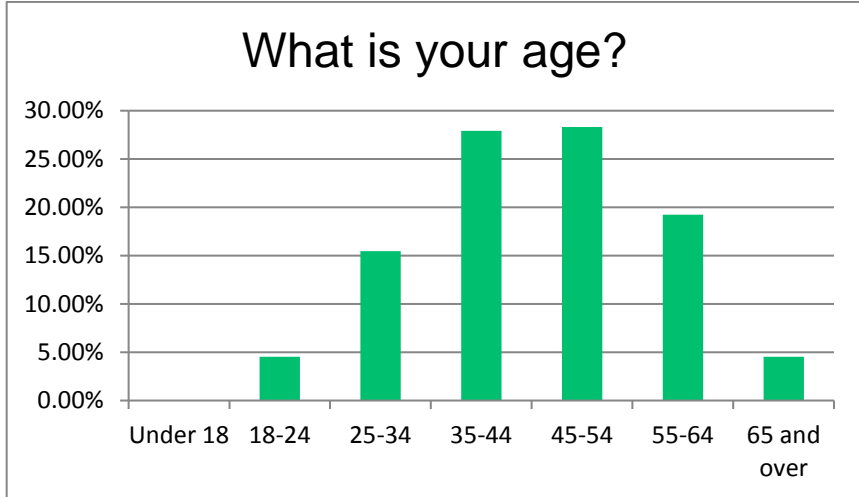
Assessments were completed by low-income representatives, individual program participants, local service providers, and members of the private sector.



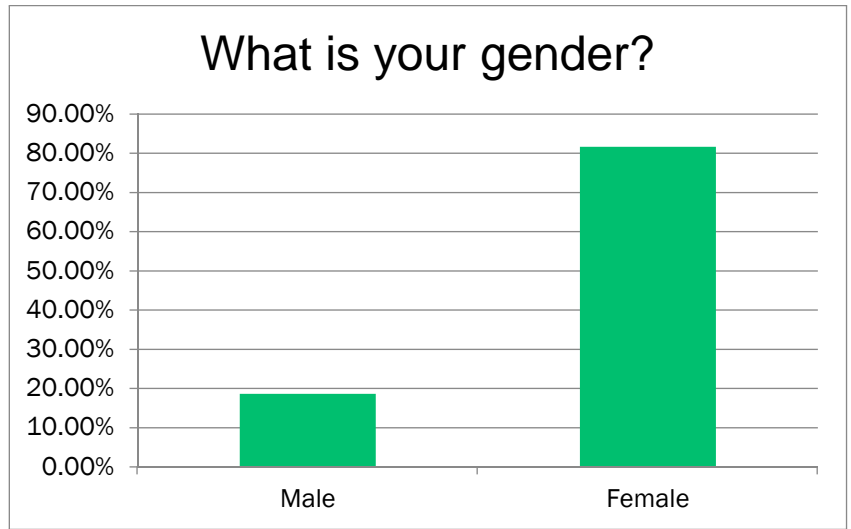
The graph above indicates the category of community member that respondents felt they most represented. Nearly two-thirds of respondents came directly from our clients or members of the low-income community. Little over one-third came from representatives of the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

Demographic Information

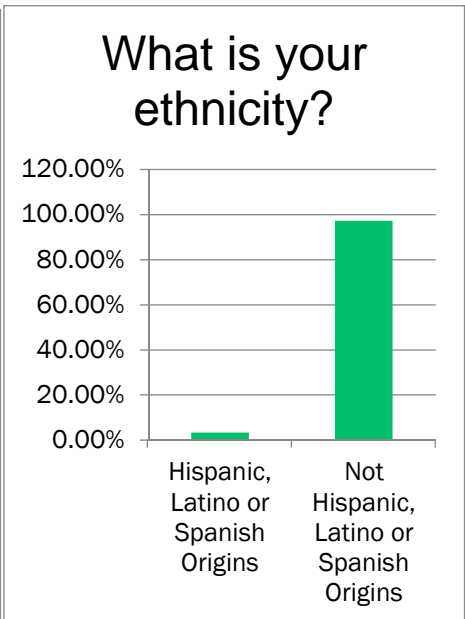
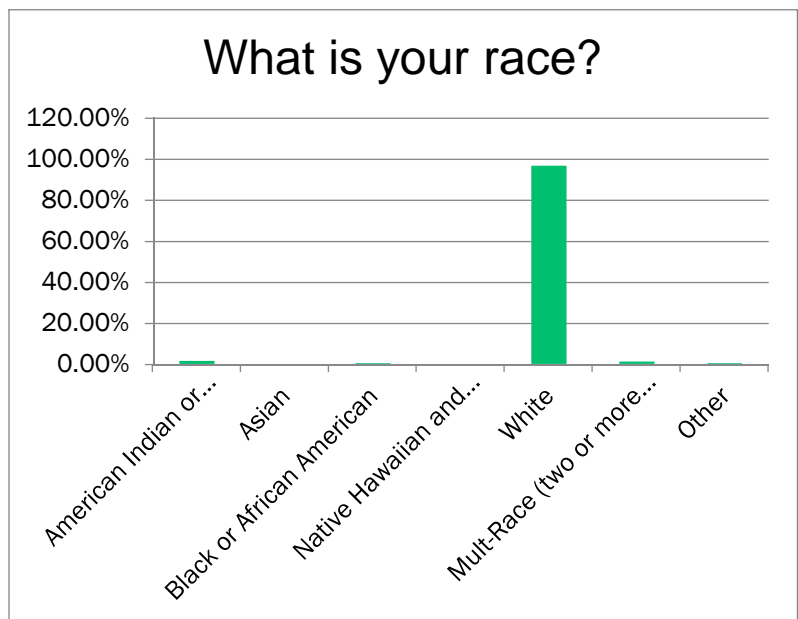
Respondents were asked several questions regarding their demographic categorization, including age, gender, race, ethnicity, education, and military status.



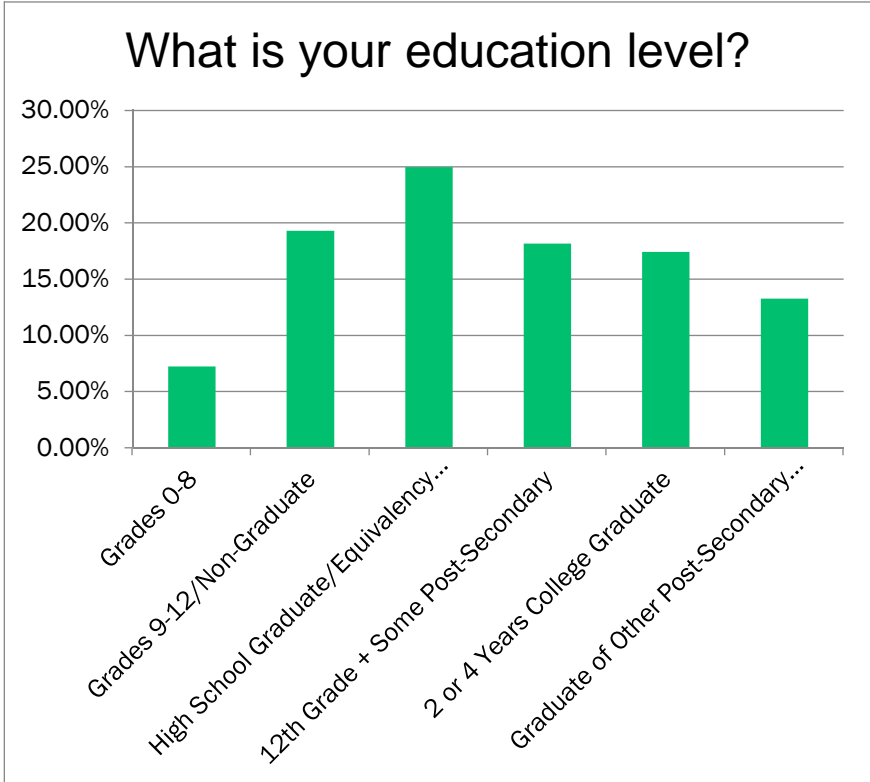
As the graph above indicates, 56% of respondents were middle-aged, between 35 and 54 years of age. Thus the responses to the survey are largely from people who are in the “sandwich generation”, people in their prime working years who may be caring both for children and aging parents. The second highest number of responses came from those age 55 and older who are nearing or have entered retirement age. The fewest number of responses came from those age 34 and younger.



As the graph above indicates, the respondents were split nearly 80/20, female to male. This number largely reflects the gender disparity in social service workers and clients we serve, particularly within programs funded through the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG).



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



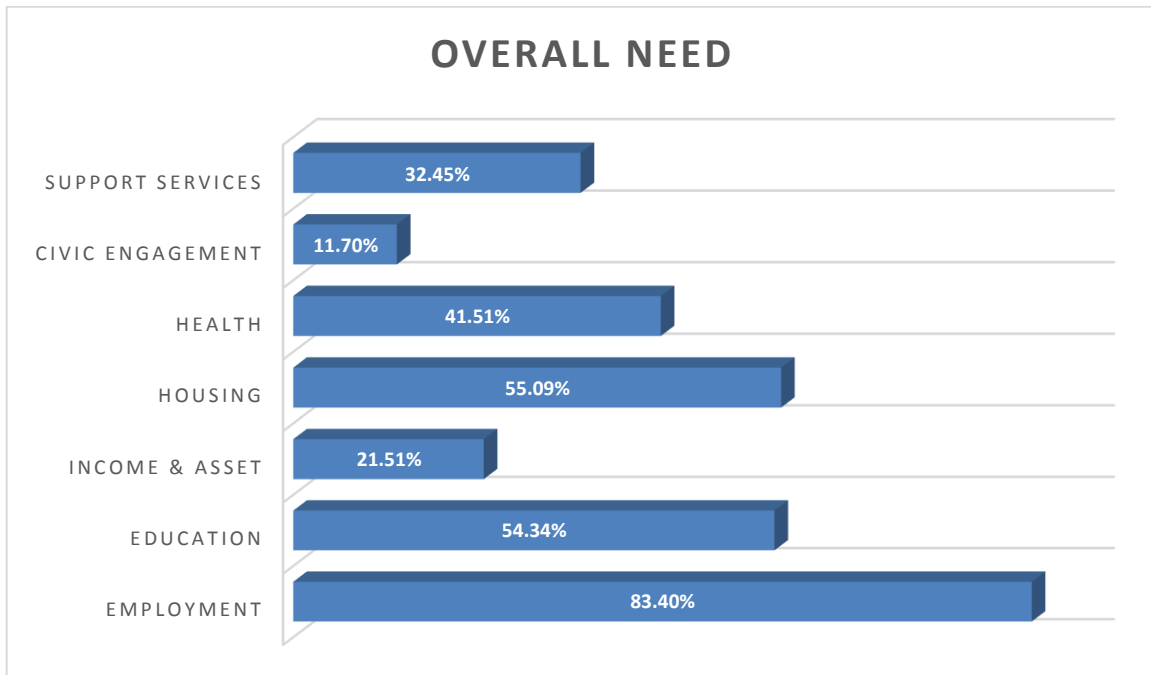
As the chart above indicates, while nearly a quarter of respondents have their high school diploma or equivalent, just over a quarter of respondents either did not attend or did not complete high school. Just under 20% of respondents have attended but not completed some post-secondary education, while 30% completed a two or four-year degree course or higher.

The survey was completed by one military veteran this year, so any attempt to glean information about the needs of local veterans or active service members from this particular survey would be unreliable. However, the survey does indicate a need on the part of the agency to conduct outreach to current and former military members and to form stronger 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 pie chart below indicates what the community ranks as the most important services needed. The results were used to

rank the agency’s top priorities in the SFY 2019-2020 Plan and Budget Proposal.



Employment was identified as the most needed service in the 2019 Community Needs Assessment with 83% of respondents marking it as a top priority, followed by housing, education, health, support services, income and asset building, and civic engagement.

Overall Needs Assessment Results 2017, 2018, 2019

	2017	2018	2019
Rank 1	Health	Health	Employment
Rank 2	Housing	Employment	Housing
Rank 3	Employment	Education	Education
Rank 4	Emergency Services	Housing	Health
Rank 5	Education	Income and Asset	Support Services

Please note that a different scoring system was used in 2017 and 2018. Previously, respondents were asked to rank all service areas in order of their need and overall rank was determined by the number of points each category received. In 2019, respondents were asked only to mark the top three needs, but in no particular order.

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

Employment was ranked as the top need among survey respondents. Within the service area of employment, barriers to self-sufficiency rose to the top of list of concerns. Chief

among those concerns was that the area is in need of more jobs with better pay and benefits.

Employment

Rank	Need	Percent of Total Responses
1	More Jobs with Better Pay & Benefits	68%
2	Affordable Transportation	52%
3	Affordable Childcare	44%
4	Improved Work Readiness Skills	40%
5	More Training for the Jobs Available	39%
6	Increased Knowledge of Available Employment Resources	27%
7	Early Reinforcement of Values	23%
8	Affordable Adult Daycare	6%
9	Other	1%

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 a number of 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 is able to 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 in order to ensure that businesses that open in the area have what they need to succeed.

Unfortunately, the majority of new businesses in the area do not offer a living wage or benefits and recently two major economic development projects involving new businesses failed to provide significant results due to business leadership decision making.

The BSACAP service area is predominately rural with mean commute times for workers between 23 and 37 minutes, according to recent census data, and virtually no public transportation. 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.

The second highest ranked service category in 2019 was housing.

Housing

Rank	Need	Percent of Total Responses
1	Grants for Home Ownership & Home Rehabilitation	48%
2	Rental Assistance Programs	43%
3	Community Supports for Homeless Families	39%
4	Free Home Repair Programs	37%
5	Security/Utility Deposit Program	35%
6	Income-Based Rentals for Seniors & the Disabled	34%
7	Services that Reduce Energy Costs	34%
8	Counseling for Homeowners	28%
9	Other	2%

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.

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 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, show that between 2011 and 2015, an average of 60% of renters in the BSACAP service area were housing burdened, meaning that the household income is not sufficient to afford the average cost of rent plus utilities, without having to spend 30 percent or more of their income on those costs. The housing burden reached 75% of renters in Martin County alone. There are only two emergency shelters in the five county service area

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.

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.

The Community Needs Assessment data showed that education ranked as the third highest need among those surveyed.

Education

Rank	Need	Percent of Total Responses
1	More Parents Involved in Student's Education	53%
2	Accessible Counseling to Prepare for College or Technical School	47%
3	Increased Knowledge of Available Educational Resources	47%
4	Affordable Childcare Options	44%
5	Pre-School/School Readiness Skills	37%
6	More Certificate/Degree Programs Offered Locally	36%
7	Affordable Transportation	34%
8	Other	3%

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. The fourth highest ranked concern in 2019 by survey respondents was health.

Health

Rank	Need	Percent of Total Responses
1	Payment Assistance for Adult Dental, Hearing, & Vision Services	57%
2	Access to Affordable Comprehensive (or Primary) Healthcare Services	39%
3	Affordable Transportation	32%
4	More Community Focus on Preventative Healthcare	31%
5	Increasing the Community's Knowledge of Available Health Resources	29%
6	More Knowledge of Available Food Resources	24%
7	More Education on Maintaining Personal Hygiene	23%
8	More Assistance/Resources for Victims of Domestic Violence	22%
9	More Emphasis on Reinforcing Healthy Eating Habits	14%
10	More Emphasis on Early Childhood Nutrition Education	12%
11	More Nutritional Counseling (free, one-on-one)	12%
12	More Assistance/Resources for Victims of Elder Abuse	4%
13	Other	3%

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, and others. The agency also assists clients with accessing the Kentucky Vision Project year-round and makes referrals via Benefind and the Kentucky Health Benefit Exchange.

The Big Sandy Valley, and indeed the majority of eastern Kentucky counties, reports high rates of obesity, smoking, and lack of exercise, along with a need for chronic disease management. The County Health Rankings report for 2019 found that Floyd County is ranked 114th in the state. In addition, of the 120 Kentucky counties, Martin County ranked 109th; Pike County ranked 101th; Johnson County, 99th; and Magoffin County,

97th.

The fifth priority for the agency, according to the survey results, was the need for support services.

Rank	Need	Percent of Total Responses
1	Meal Programs	40%
2	Elderly Services	35%
3	Substance Abuse Resources	34%
4	Transportation Services	31%
5	Youth Services	29%
6	Life Skills Programs & Services	29%
7	Disabled Services	29%
8	Child Support	25%
9	Legal Services	23%
10	Sexual/Emotional/Physical Abuse Services	17%
11	Senior Centers	3%
12	In-Home Services - Seniors	2%
13	Other	2%

BSACAP uses the Emergency Food & Shelter 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 Feeding America shows that an average of 20% of the area’s population is food insecure. According to data provided by the Kentucky Youth Advocates’ 2018 County Data Book, an average of 28% of children across the service area live in food insecure homes.

The agency’s SCSEP program assists people ages 55 and over to enter or re-enter the workforce. Referrals are also made to 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. 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.

Income and asset building was found to be the sixth priority for the agency.

Income & Asset Building

Rank	Need	Percent of Total Responses
1	Increasing the Community's Knowledge of Available Mainstream Financial Resources	49%
2	More Access to Low Interest Loans	49%
3	Anonymous and Confidential Budget Counseling	48%
4	More Education on How to Build Assets	45%
5	Information on How to Access Financial Resources	45%
6	Information on How to Access Free Credit Counseling	45%
7	Anonymous and Confidential Savings Counseling	39%
8	Other	1%

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. Agency staff, trained by representatives from the Internal Revenue Service, electronically complete and file income tax returns.

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. five payday lenders in a town with a population of 4,203) 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.

Civic Engagement was found to be the seventh priority among those surveyed.

Civic Engagement

Rank	Need	Percent of Total Responses
1	Increasing the Community’s Skills and Knowledge for Leadership Development	88%
2	More Education on How to Join Neighborhood Associations, Community Boards, Advisory Groups or Similar Organizations	85%
3	More Knowledge on Civic Activities	77%
4	More Citizenship Classes	47%
5	Other	3%

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. 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.

Why Community Action is Important

The final question on the 2019 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 responses in the respondents’ own words.

- The Big Sandy Community Action helped my wife find a job in the Senior program.
- To help pay electric bills in the winter months
- To help me find a job so I can pay bills

- For help finding ways to get around the area to pay bills. Transportation
- Outside of the winter months when LIHEAP is active I am unaware of services provided.
- lack of education and employment
- I was recently disabled and am appalled at lack of resources in this area, even in terms of the counties in this area, pike county is the largest yet has the least resources, currently only bs community action offers weatherization while other counties have churches or other programs
- A lot of people can't afford and try to just make it without them a lot of us wouldn't
- Organizing area organizations and agencies.
- Resources linkage and supportive assistance/programs for low income population.
- To help people find jobs that pay a fair wage.
- We lost a lot of our coal mining jobs. People don't have the money they did have.
- The poor and children need all of the help they can get. The elderly also need more in home assistance that is affordable or free.
- Everyone is on drugs
- Poverty and substance abuse
- To help make my life manageable. It is a tough world and everybody needs help at some point. Thank you.

Initial Conclusions

- CSBG staff must expand on the resource guide, which is currently in process and keep it up to date. Referrals to proper agencies will assist our clients in having all of their needs met including those that are outside the purview of the agency.
- More agencies and community officials must be encouraged to attend interagency meetings in order 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 must work toward finding more program funding so that a greater number of people can be served.