

Atlantic County Needs Assessment 2019

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PART 1



Executive Summary

The Atlantic County Human Services Advisory Council team members: conducted focus group sessions via Zoom; surveyed residents of Atlantic County; analyzed County profile data/surveys; and information gleaned from the focus groups discussions. The focus groups prioritized the following needs: Housing, Employment and Career, Community Safety, and Parenting Skills Services.

Atlantic County Rankings for basic needs identified the following greater needs: Families with children under age 18 living in poverty; median household income; household income spent on housing; food insecurity; children under 18 without health insurance; median employment rate across the county; cost of transportation; cost of transportation as a percentage of income in NJ; and domestic violence incidents reported to law enforcement.

Further data suggests that in Atlantic County there are 10 municipalities that have families with children living under the age of 18 living in poverty. This poverty profile for Atlantic has increased in the last 5 years.

Annual cost living estimates, median household income, severe cost burden for housing, food insecurity, childcare, unemployment rate have all played a vital role in shaping Atlantic County's current state.

Introduction

Purpose

The N.J. Department of Children and Families is partnering with human services organizations in each county to undertake an assessment of local strengths and needs. The goal of this assessment is to collect the information needed to make sure the right mix of services and activities are available in every county in New Jersey to support families. The findings from the needs assessment can be used to support the development of local recommendations to assist with decision making; the identification of high priority human service needs and barriers to service delivery for New Jersey's communities; the coordination and improvement of services to the Departments' target populations; the planning, funding, coordination and implementation of Department Initiatives.

This statewide approach to county-specific needs assessments aligns with DCF's existing county based continuous quality improvement review cycle, in which each county is evaluated every two years. The findings from the needs assessment will be embedded into the DCF's existing ChildStat process and shared with DCF staff and stakeholders during the county's ChildStat session. ChildStat is a learning, management, and accountability tool used by DCF to support continuous quality improvement, foster a shared sense of accountability and promote system-wide problem solving around critical issues affecting child and family outcomes. A ChildStat session incorporates analysis and interpretation of administrative data to support planning and dialogue between DCF executive management and senior leadership and system partners.

Narrative: In the Words of the County

Atlantic County is home to approximately 270,000 residents. Along with the Hotel/Casino Industry there is an abundance of outdoor activities: beaches, boardwalks, over 35 parks, nature reserves and recreational facilities with trails, boating, camping, surfing, fishing and golf. 3% of all New Jersey residents live in this county. In Atlantic County there are 23 municipalities, 18 police departments, 29 public school districts, 3 charter schools, 22 non-public schools and 2 colleges and Universities. 69% of our residents are white, 19% are Hispanic/Latino, 17% are Black/African American, 9% are Asian, 1% are American Indian/Alaska Native and 7% are other. About 16% of all Atlantic County residents are foreign born and at least one in four speak another language other than English at home. The Cost of living for a two parent, two child family in Atlantic County is \$93,158 per year or \$7,763 per month. The median household income is \$57,514 per year or \$4,793 per month. Atlantic County's unemployment rate was 5.3%. 20% of those families with children under the age of 18 are living in poverty. Of the total residents, 58,004 are under the age of 18. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention there were 198 reports of late or lack of prenatal care in Atlantic County. As of December 2018, approximately 2083 of the children under the age of 18 were without health insurance. Our community resources consist of 107 licensed Childcare Centers, 48 registered in home childcare providers, 16 public libraries, 8 head start programs, 5 family success centers, 3 hospitals and 1 family support organization. Our community food banks are available in areas proportional to the areas with greatest needs: 23 in Atlantic City, 7 in Pleasantville, and 3 in Egg harbor City pre-COVID-19 pandemic.

Needs Assessment Methodology

Quantitative and qualitative data from various sources and stakeholders related to housing, food, health care, community safety, employment and career services, childcare, services for families caring for a child of a relative, behavioral/mental health services for children, behavioral/mental health services for adults, substance use disorder services, domestic violence services, parenting skills services and legal and advocacy services were collected to inform this needs assessment.

County Data Profile

DCF provided a county data profile to the county Human Service Advisory Council (HSAC) to support the HSAC in identifying key topics to be explored in more depth. The data profile consists of the most recently available administrative data related to demographic population and selected indicators of poverty, housing, food security, childcare, health care, transportation, employment, community safety, mental health and substance use. The sources for the data included in the profile include a combination of federal databases. The primary purpose of the county data profiles is to support the HSAC needs assessment team in identifying key areas to prioritize during the focus group data collection efforts.

Approach for Prioritizing Needs

Upon review of the County Data Profile for Atlantic County, the HSAC members observed that the county fell below average in most of the need areas. As the HSAC members were facilitating the focus groups, the focus group participants were read the choices and asked to pick the topics that they felt to be most pertinent for their families and community for the discussion/dialogue portion of the survey. All groups chose 4 topics mostly synonymous with one another. The HSAC will prioritize these topics as priority needs.

The four need areas selected by the county to be the focus areas and primary topics in the qualitative data (e.g. focus groups and key informant interviews) collection included:

- 1.Housing
- 2.Employment and Career
- 3.Community Safety
4. Parenting Skills Services

Focus Groups

In an effort to implement a uniform needs assessment approach across counties to support statewide trend analysis, DCF required HSAC's to conduct a series of focus groups. The purpose of the focus groups was to collect qualitative information to better understand the scope, nature and local context related to addressing community needs that influence families.

Focus groups sessions were scheduled for approximately one and half hours with the first thirty minutes being designated for introductions and survey completion and the remaining hour being designated for the focus group dialogue. In each focus group session, participants were asked to complete a standard survey to gather data about the key topic areas outlined in the aforementioned data profiles. The survey was developed to identify areas of strength and areas in need of improvement related to county-based supports and service array. The survey consists of demographic data and approximately 10 questions related to each of the eleven basic and service needs. Six of the questions are based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

Upon completion of the surveys, the focus group participants were asked to transition into the dialogue component of the session. The dialogue requirement was intended to allow participants to highlight their experiences and perceptions as community members and provide opportunity for a deeper discussion and assessment of top barriers in each area of need. Group members discussed two selected basic and service need priority areas. Facilitators use a structured protocol to explain the purpose, goals, confidentiality and informed consent and objectives of the focus group.

Recruitment.

Atlantic County HSAC members assembled monthly from November 2019 thru February 2020 to review and plan for the process. A powerpoint presentation along with group discussions to help identify the necessary steps and the timeline involved in the DCF Needs Assessment process was used. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Atlantic County HSAC meetings were suspended from March 2020 to October 26th, as a hosting platform was not made available for Atlantic County's Advisory Committees. HSAC Chair, County Representative and HSAC organizing member continued to attend State HSAC meetings to stay informed using other means to attend. Based on time frames presented by DCF and in lieu of platform issues being resolved, a meeting was conducted via Zoom Meetings on October 26th, 2020 with approximately 7 out of the 12 members in attendance. These members became the Needs Assessment Team Leads. These members were presented with an updated Needs Assessment powerpoint to communicate new protocols and precautions for COVID-19 compliance. Updated State HSAC meeting

issues regarding barriers, tips and new timelines were also shared. The 7 members in attendance were asked to select a focus group(s) they felt they could successfully recruit participants as well as host, keeping in mind the COVID-19 mandates and protocols. All focus groups were selected by the 7 HSAC members present. A timeline was created for the 7 members to perform recruitment, hosting and submission of surveys and findings to the Atlantic County HSAC representative. The HSAC members were given the option to facilitate the focus groups themselves or be assigned a facilitator/data collection support person using the other available HSAC team leads. One month was allotted for this process beginning October 26th and ending November 29th, 2020. All surveys and data were to be submitted to the County HSAC representative by that date. Key Informant interviews to be determined post-survey and to be conducted between November 30th and Dec. 4th.

Focus Group Participants. A total of nine focus groups were conducted in this county as part of this needs assessment. These focus groups were conducted from November 17, 2020 to December 14, 2020. There were a total number of 54 participants. The number of participants in each focus group ranged from a minimum of one and a maximum of seven participants. During the focus group sessions, a total of 54 surveys were completed.

Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews were conducted to gather additional feedback from County Human Services Directors and other identified individuals selected by the HSAC's regarding considerations for addressing the needs and concerns that were highlighted in the data profiles and focus group sessions. Facilitators use a structured protocol to explain the purpose, goals and objectives of the focus group.

Recruitment.

Following the conclusion of the focus groups surveys, HSAC team leads turned their attention to considerations for the Key Informant Interviews. The following participants were considered: Freeholders, County Executives, County directors, Atlantic City officials. Given the DCF timeline for completion and submission, team leads made selections based on scheduling availability of the participants during the holiday season; COVID-19 spikes/health related availability; access to the participants regarding COVID-19 mandates and resources available to the team leads to facilitate the interviews. The Family and Community Development Department Head, a County Administrator and two former county Employees were chosen.

Key Informant Interview Participants. A total of four interviews were conducted in this county as part of this needs assessment. The total number of participants included was four. These interviews were conducted from January 4, 2021 to January 8, 2021. There were a total of four surveys completed during the interview sessions.

Participant Demographics

As described in the above sections, both focus group and interview participants completed the needs assessment survey. Below we combine information for all participants to provide an overview of the participant demographics.

Role in the Community (not mutually exclusive)	Number of Participants
County Resident	58
Staff or Volunteer with a Community-Based Organization (e.g., Health and Human Services providers, Planning Board Participants)	4
Staff or Volunteer with a Public Service Organization (e.g., paramedics, fire fighter, police officers, air force, judges)	8
Local Business Owner in the County	1
Community leader and advocate in the county (e.g., hold a volunteer office, clergy, activist)	0
Other	0

Age	Number of Participants
Under 18	2
18-24	7

25-34	10
35-44	9
45-54	12
55-64	10
65 and over	8

Gender	Number of Participants
Female	39
Male	18
Non-binary, third gender/transgender	0
Prefer Not to Say	1
Other	58

Race	Number of Participants
American Indian or Alaska Native	0
Asian	1
Black or African-American	22
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1
White or Caucasian	31
Multi-Race (2 or More of the Previous)	1
Other	2

Ethnicity	Number of Participants
Hispanic, Latino or Spanish Origins	6
No Hispanic Latino or Spanish Origins	45

Education Level	Number of Participants
Grades Preschool-8	0
Grades 9-12-Non-Graduate	7
High School Graduate or GED	5
High School/GED <u>and</u> Some College/Trade	3
2 or 4-Year College/Trade School Graduate	24

Graduate or Other Post-Secondary School	19
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Employment Status	Number of Participants
Employed: Full-Time	28
Employed: Part-Time	11
Unemployed-Looking for Work	8
Unemployed-Not Looking for Work	1
Retired	4
Student	3
Self Employed	1
Unable to Work	2

Years of Community membership	Number of Participants	Range
How many years have you been a member of this community?	58	1-30

Services Accessed by a Household Member within the last 2 Years	Number of Participants
Yes	31
No	26

Household Member History of Involvement with NJ Division of Child Protection and Permanency	Number of Participants
Yes	7
No	48

Participants represented the following municipalities

Absecon, Pleasantville, Egg Harbor Township, Hamilton, Atlantic City, Galloway, Mays Landing, Egg Harbor Township, Linwood, Margate, Buena Boro.

Additional Data Collection Methodologies

2019 Department of Children and Families Child Stat findings for Atlantic County was referenced for demographic data used in the composition of the County Description located Part 1.

PART 2



Key Findings Across Needs

According to the Rutgers University and Department of Children and Families Profile of Family and Community Overview (sec. 0.1, 0.2), Atlantic County fell in the area of greater need in 13 out of the 20 areas when compared to other NJ counties. Above Average in 4 of the areas and average in the remaining two. The top 5 areas of greatest needs were 6.2 Food insecurity, 9.1 Children under the age of 18 without health insurance, 9.5 Percent of children meeting all immunization requirements, 9.1 Children under the age of 18 without health insurance and 12.1 Domestic violence incidents reported to law enforcement. the 4 higher ranking areas were 8.1 Average time of travel to work, 9.7 Reports of late or lack of prenatal care, 15.1 Children receiving special education services, 15.3 Children receiving early intervention services.

According to survey participants regarding the top three basic needs that should be addressed in this county are: Housing, Food, Healthcare, employment and career services. Survey participants ranked the top three specialized needs as Behavioral mental health for children, behavioral mental health for adults, domestic violence and legal advisory services tied for third.

Trends related to Scope Across the basic needs were: Housing was described as a Greater Need. Per the data provided, 23% of households in Atlantic County shared a severe cost burden for housing in 2017. Food insecurity was described as a Greater Need. Per the data provided, there is a 12.7% food insecurity rate in Atlantic County. This is the third highest rate in the state and it is higher than the state average of 9.6% and national average of 12.5%.Atlantic County has the second highest percentage of children under the age of 18 without health insurance. Atlantic County has the 3rd highest cases of domestic violence (4563) of 21 counties reported in NJ per the NJ State Police Annual Domestic Violence Reports, 2016.Employees in Atlantic County are estimated to earn a lower weekly wage than the state average. In this county, the average annual wage has increased slightly between 2016 and 2018. Rutgers University data collection on behalf of the NJ Department of Human Services, 2017 indicates that the median monthly child care cost of center based care by age of child compared with the median household income (by county) was lower than the state average. The highest percentage of children under the age of 18 are between ages 12-17 A determination of the scope of need for behavioral/mental health services for children in the county can be drawn from understanding some of the circumstances that can contribute to Adverse Childhood Experiences/ACEs. 20% of Atlantic County's children live in poverty which is higher than the average for New Jersey 12% and for the United States which is 17%. Behavioral/Mental Health Services for Adults was described as a General Need Area. In Atlantic County, the estimated frequency of mental health distress found is above the state average. and ranks 9th highest with an average of 13.8% compared to the overall NJ state average of 12.1%. Change in suspected overdoses for Atlantic

County was average in the county profile. There was a 12.43% increase in the suspected overdose deaths in Atlantic County between 2016 and 2018. This is the 6th highest among the counties with an increase. Domestic Violence was identified as having a greater need compared to other counties. There were 4,563 violent incidents reported in Atlantic County in 2016. Atlantic County is the third highest county in the state.

According to survey participants, the barriers to services ranked most to least to are: Lack of awareness, waitlists, transportation, too expensive, stigma leads to avoidance, cultural barriers, eligibility, can not contact the service, services do not exist.

Overarching Local Considerations for Addressing NeedsTrends (Differences or Similarities) Across Stakeholders' Perspectives



Need Area: Housing**Status: Prioritized Need Area**

Housing includes the availability of affordable, stable, permanent and acceptable living accommodations. This need area seeks to assess the sufficiency of housing in the county and the degree to which residents are homeless or threatened with eviction, as well as the existence of community supports (e.g., subsidy, vouchers, etc.) and services aimed at ensuring housing for all (e.g., Homelessness Prevention Program, Housing Resource Center, community shelters, County Board of Social Services, Section 8, affordable housing, housing authorities, etc.)

In Atlantic County, 23 percent of households experienced a severe cost burden (50% of income or more is spent on housing) for housing in 2017. This percentage is greater than the percentage for the state of New Jersey (American Community Survey; *see County Data Profile for Additional Source Information*). In 2019 the latest year of data made available in the county profile packet, 26 percent of households experienced at least one of four severe housing problems: 1.) overcrowding determined by high person-per-room, persons-per-bedroom, or unit square footage-per-person; 2) severe cost burden, 3) lack of kitchen facilities, or 4) lack of plumbing facilities (Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy; data compiled by HUD; *see Data Profile for Additional Source Information*).

Need Assessment Key Findings**Summary: Scope of the Need**

Housing was described as a Greater Need. Per the data provided, 23% of households in Atlantic County shared a severe cost burden for housing in 2017. This was the fourth highest percentage when compared to other counties in the state and higher than the state average of 19% at that time. In 2019, 26% of households in Atlantic County shared a severe cost burden for housing. The percentage of households in Atlantic County sharing a severe cost burden for housing has fared the same over time. Members of the community have identified housing as an important need and issue. The data provided did not breakdown the need for housing by subgroup (e.g., age, race, residents of a geographic specific area in the county).

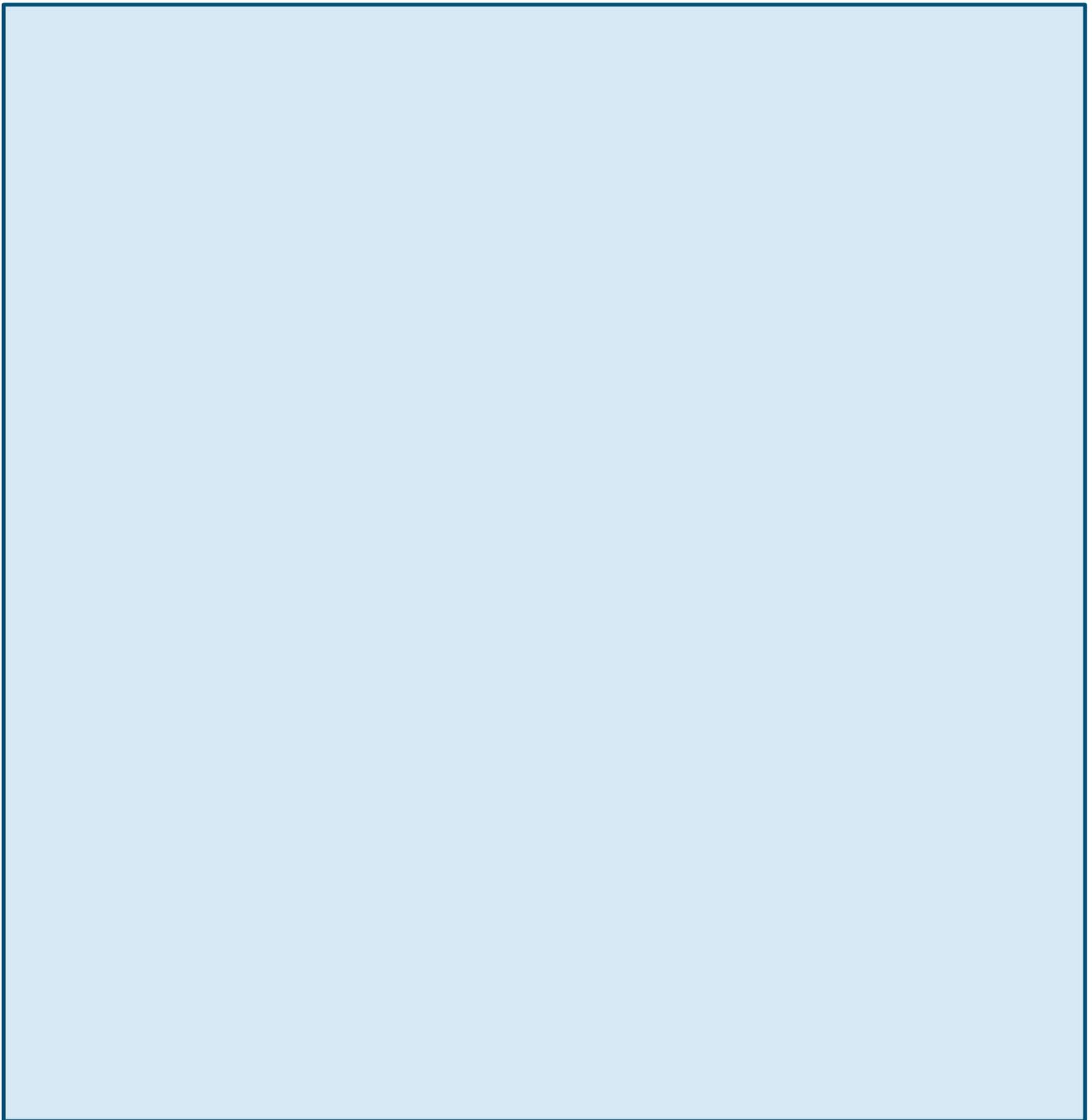
Summary: Nature of the Need

There is a lack of available, affordable housing in Atlantic County. Per the survey results, 22.8% of respondents strongly disagreed that there are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need. Per the survey results, 33.33% of respondents disagreed that there are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need compared to 35.09% of respondents who agree that there are enough services for this need. Although 38.60% of respondents felt that anyone in the county is able to access housing services, 19.30% and 33.33% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that these services are widely advertised and known by the county. Most respondents (42.11%) agreed that housing services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account. Most respondents (45.61% and 43.86% respectively) agreed that facilities that provide housing services are of good quality and staff are well-trained and provide good customer service. Per the survey results, respondents identified the following as barriers: Wait Lists (54.39 %); Transportation (38.06); Lack of awareness of service (40.35%); and Stigma leads to avoidance (33.33%).

Summary: Local Considerations for Addressing the Need for County Prioritized Need Area

Housing was identified as a focus group needs area topic. The county currently provides and has provided a Homelessness Prevention Program as lack of housing and affordable housing has been an issue in Atlantic County . The County Board of Social Services, Section 8 and Family Success Centers are available in the county to help residents with housing services. The City of Atlantic City has a housing authority to assist with this need. Economics and employment seem to be factors that impact housing. Atlantic County economics and employment is supported mostly by the entertainment (casino) industry. Economics and employment have suffered with the closing of many casinos. Per the data provided, the cost of living in Atlantic County for a family of four is \$93,158 with the median income being only \$57,514. Atlantic County has undertaken efforts to diversify its economic base by providing other opportunities for employment and economic growth via the Aviation Park. Support to this effort is also provided by the Atlantic County Improvement Authority and the Atlantic County Economic Alliance.

If applicable: Additional Notable Focus Group Trends for County Prioritized Need Area



Need Area: Survey Results

Item	Total Number of Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Total
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	57	22.8%	33.33%	35.09%	0.00%	8.77%	100%
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	57	10.53%	29.82%	38.60%	5.26%	15.79%	100%
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	57	19.30%	33.33%	29.82%	7.02%	10.53%	100%
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	57	3.51%	31.58%	42.11%	3.51%	19.30%	100%
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	57	0%	5.26%	45.61%	10.53%	38.60%	100%
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	57	10.53%	10.53%	43.86%	7.02%	28.07%	100%

Key Barriers

Barrier	Total Number of Respondents	Number of Times Identified	Percentage of Responses
Wait Lists	57	31	54.39
Services do not exist	57	12	21.05
Transportation	57	22	38.06
Cannot contact the service provider	57	6	10.53
Too expensive	57	11	19.30
Lack of awareness of service	57	23	40.35
Cultural Barriers	57	15	26.32
Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs	57	13	22.81
Stigma Leads to Avoidance	57	19	33.33
Eligibility Requirement (explain below)	57	13	22.81
Other (explain below)	57	14	24.56

Need Area: Food

Status: General Need Area

Food security is the availability and ability to acquire nutritionally adequate and safe foods. This area of need seeks to assess the level to which residents throughout the county have adequate food and the existence of community services and supports to address unmet food needs (e.g., food banks, soup kitchen, local pantry, community-based organization, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), food stamps, Women, Infants, Children (WIC) Supplemental Nutrition Program, etc.)

In **Atlantic County**, the food insecurity rate for households was approximately 12.7 percent in **2017**, the most recent date of available data (U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey and U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service; see *County Data Profile for Additional Source Information*). This percentage is **greater than** the percentage rate for New Jersey.

Need Assessment Key Findings

Summary: Scope of the Need

Food insecurity was described as a Greater Need. Per the data provided, there is a 12.7% food insecurity rate in Atlantic County. This is the third highest rate in the state and it is higher than the state average of 9.6% and national average of 12.5%. The food insecurity rate has dropped slightly from 13.9% in 2015 to 12.7% in 2017, however, the Atlantic County rate has remained higher than the state and national average over time. Members of the community have identified food insecurity as an important need and issue. The data provided did not breakdown the need for food by subgroup (e.g., age, race, residents of a geographic specific area in the county), however, food insecurity is tied to the economic and employment issues in the county. The need has been exacerbated due to the impact of Covid-19 and further loss of employment especially in the entertainment industry.

Summary: Nature of the Need

There is food insecurity in Atlantic County although 50.88% of respondents agreed there are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need. Per the survey results, 49.12% of respondents agree anyone in the county is able to access services and 42.11% agree these services are widely advertised and known by the county. Per the survey results, 43.86% of respondents agree food services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account. Most respondents (68.42% and 64.91% respectively) agreed that facilities that provide food services are of good quality and staff are well-trained and provide good customer service. Per the survey results, respondents identified the following as barriers: Transportation (43.86%); Lack of awareness of service (45.61%); Stigma leads to avoidance (31.58%); and Other (31.58%).

Summary: Local Considerations for Addressing the Need for County Prioritized Need Area

Food was not identified as a focus group need area topic. Atlantic City is considered a food desert as there is no supermarket in the municipality. Residents of Atlantic City have to travel to Absecon, Galloway, Egg Harbor Township, and Ventnor Heights to go to a supermarket. There were plans for a ShopRite in Atlantic City prior to the onset of Covid-19. The following resources are available in Atlantic County to help with food insecurity: food bank; soup kitchens; local pantries; community based organizations; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), food stamps, and Women, Infants, Children Supplemental Nutrition Program (WIC).

If applicable: Additional Notable Focus Group Trends for County Prioritized Need Area



Need Area: Survey Results

Item	Total Number of Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Total
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	57	7.02%	26.32%	50.88%	10.53%	5.26%	100%
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	57	3.51%	33.33%	49.12%	8.77%	5.26%	100%
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	57	5.26%	29.82%	42.11%	12.28%	10.53%	100%
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	57	3.51%	24.56%	43.86%	8.77%	19.30%	100%
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	57	0%	3.51%	68.42%	12.28%	15.79%	100%
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	57	0%	8.77%	64.91%	8.77%	17.54%	100%

Key Barriers

Barrier	Total Number of Respondents	Number of Times Identified	Percentage of Responses
Wait Lists	57	12	21.05
Services do not exist	57	6	10.53
Transportation	57	25	43.86
Cannot contact the service provider	57	6	10.53
Too expensive	57	5	8.77
Lack of awareness of service	57	26	45.61
Cultural Barriers	57	11	19.30
Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs	57	8	14.04
Stigma Leads to Avoidance	57	18	31.58
Eligibility Requirement (explain below)	57	10	17.54
Other (explain below)	57	18	31.58

Need Area: Health Care

Status:General Need Area

Health care service providers deliver medical care, including health promotion, disease prevention and diagnosis and treatment services, to children and adults. This need area seeks to determine the level of residents in the county with health care needs, the availability of insurance coverage, and the existence of community services and supports that address health and wellness (e.g., doctors and clinics, hospitals, Medicaid Services, Home Visiting Programs, Family Success Centers, etc.)

In **Atlantic County** , the estimated proportion of children under 18 years old (minors) with no health insurance coverage was 6.1 percent in 2017. This percentage is **the same as** the estimated percentage of minors with no health insurance for New Jersey in the same year (ACS; see Data Profile for Additional Source Information 9.1 & 9.3).

In Atlantic County in **2018**, there were 198 reports of lack of or no prenatal care. This was a **decrease** of 3 reports from the previous year (Center for Disease Control and Prevention; see *Data Profile for Additional Source Information 9.7*).

Need Assessment Key Findings

Summary: Scope of the Need

Atlantic County has the second highest percentage of children under the age of 18 without health insurance. Members of the community identified health care /health insurance as an issue. Results indicate that over a 5 year span, children without health insurance decreased slightly from 6.2 in 2013 to 6.1 in 2017. However, the county average is higher than the state and US average. Further data suggests that the issue is more prevalent among children that reside in Western Atlantic County (Buena, Buena Vista, Egg Harbor City, Hammonton & Mullica). (County Profile 9.3). For Atlantic County the late or lack of prenatal care reports increased from 185 in 2016 to 198 in 2018. Over 65% of those surveyed felt that healthcare facilities service providers facilities are good quality and 56% felt that staff are well trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.

Summary: Nature of the Need

Needs Area Survey Results for Health Care indicates that over 50% of those surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that facilities that provide services to meet this need are of good quality, and staff are well trained and knowledgeable.

Data suggests that the lack of awareness as well as transportation are barriers to be considered when addressing the issue of children under 18 without healthcare insurance.

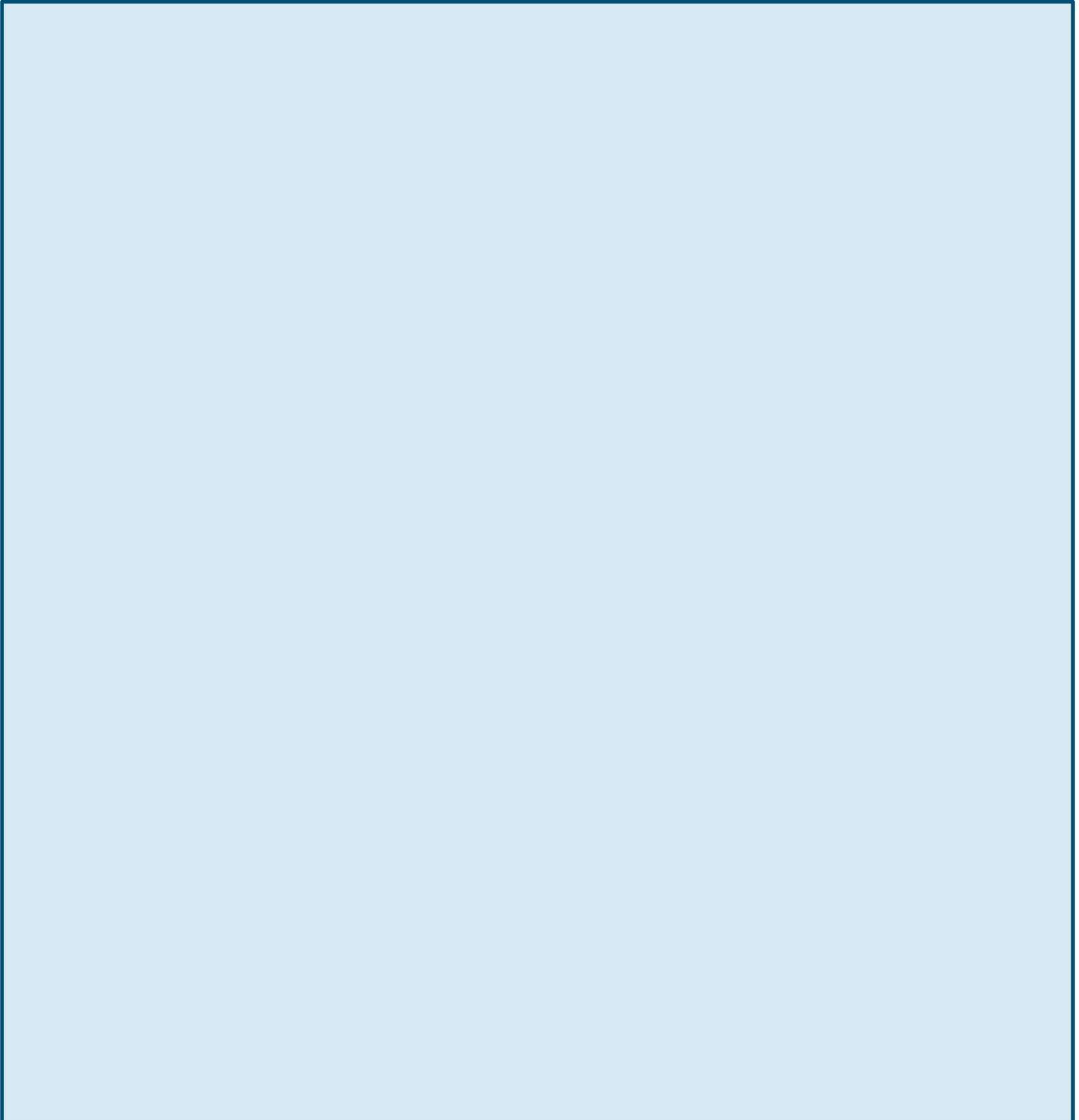
Summary: Local Considerations for Addressing the Need for County Prioritized Need Area

The Atlantic County Board of Social Services (Atlantic County Department of Family & Community Development) administers the NJ FamilyCare and Medicaid programs. NJ FamilyCare provides affordable health insurance to children from birth through 18 years of age whose family income level meets the program's criteria.

Agencies such as AtlantiCare, a Federally Qualified HealthCare Center, Southern Jersey Perinatal Cooperative, Family Success Centers, Southern New Jersey Medical Centers assist customers with completing NJ Family Care and Medicaid applications

Focus group discussions revealed that awareness and education could be barriers to obtaining healthcare services.

If applicable: Additional Notable Focus Group Trends for County Prioritized Need Area



Need Area: Survey Results

Item	Total Number of Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Total
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	57	10.53%	28.07%	47.3%	7.02%	7.02%	100%
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	57	5.26%	36.84%	43.86%	3.51%	10.53%	100%
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	57	5.26%	36.84%	45.61%	5.26%	7.02%	100%
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	57	1.75%	21.05%	42.11%	8.77%	26.32%	100%
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	57	0.00%	3.51%	66.67%	8.77%	21.05%	100%
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	57	1.75%	1.053%	56.14%	8.77%	22.81%	100%

Key Barriers

Barrier	Total Number of Respondents	Number of Times Identified	Percentage of Responses
Wait Lists	57	19	33.33%
Services do not exist	57	6	10.53%
Transportation	57	24	42.11%
Cannot contact the service provider	57	10	17.54%
Too expensive	57	13	22.81%
Lack of awareness of service	57	26	45.61%
Cultural Barriers	57	10	17.54%
Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs	57	9	15.79%
Stigma Leads to Avoidance	57	16	28.07%
Eligibility Requirement (explain below)	57	11	19.30%
Other (explain below)	57	14	24.56%

Need Area: Community Safety

Status: Prioritized Need Area

Community safety is the ability to be and feel safe from crime or violence in one's community and public spaces. This need area seeks to assess the level to which residents throughout the county are safe from crime or violence and the existence of community services and supports to assist residents with being and feeling safe in their community (e.g., local police, DCF's Child Protection and Permanency, Family Success Centers, security companies, neighborhood watch, safe havens, hospitals, etc.)

In Atlantic County there were a total of 984 violent crimes in 2016 and the *violent crime* rate per 1,000 was 1.3 percent (NJ Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of NJ State Police, Uniform Crime Reports, Updated 8/15/19; see Data Profile for Additional Source Information). Of the *non-violent* crimes committed there was a total of 20 arson, 255 motor vehicle theft, 5294 larceny and 1337 burglary in Atlantic County (NJ Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of NJ State Police, Uniform Crime Report, Updated 8/15/19; see *Data Profile for Additional Source Information*).

Need Assessment Key Findings

Summary: Scope of the Need

The NJ Municipal County offense and Demographic Data, 2016 revealed 499 aggravated assaults, 399 robberies, 65 rapes and 21 murders for a total of 984 violent crimes were committed in Atlantic County. Atlantic County has the 3rd highest cases of domestic violence (4563) of 21 counties reported in NJ per the NJ State Police Annual Domestic Violence Reports, 2016. Domestic violence incidents reported by the NJ State Police annual domestic violence reports 2012-2016 shows a decrease in domestic violence incidents from 4811 in 2012 to 4563 in 2016. The NJ State Police define "domestic violence incidents" as inclusive of: homicide, assault, terrorist threats, kidnapping, criminal restraint, false imprisonment, sexual assault, criminal sexual assault, burglary, criminal trespass, harassment & stalking. The Annie E. Casey Kids Count Data using raw data from the NJ Department of Law and Public Safety, Division of NJ State Police, Uniform Crime Reports, 7.13.2018 indicate that Atlantic County juvenile arrest rates per 1,000 was 20 in 2012 and has declined to 12 in 2016. However, this rate remains higher than the State rate of 10.

Summary: Nature of the Need

To meet the need of public safety focus group information suggest that the community relies on the local police departments, service providers (i.e. local women's center), traveling in groups and exhibiting basic street respect.

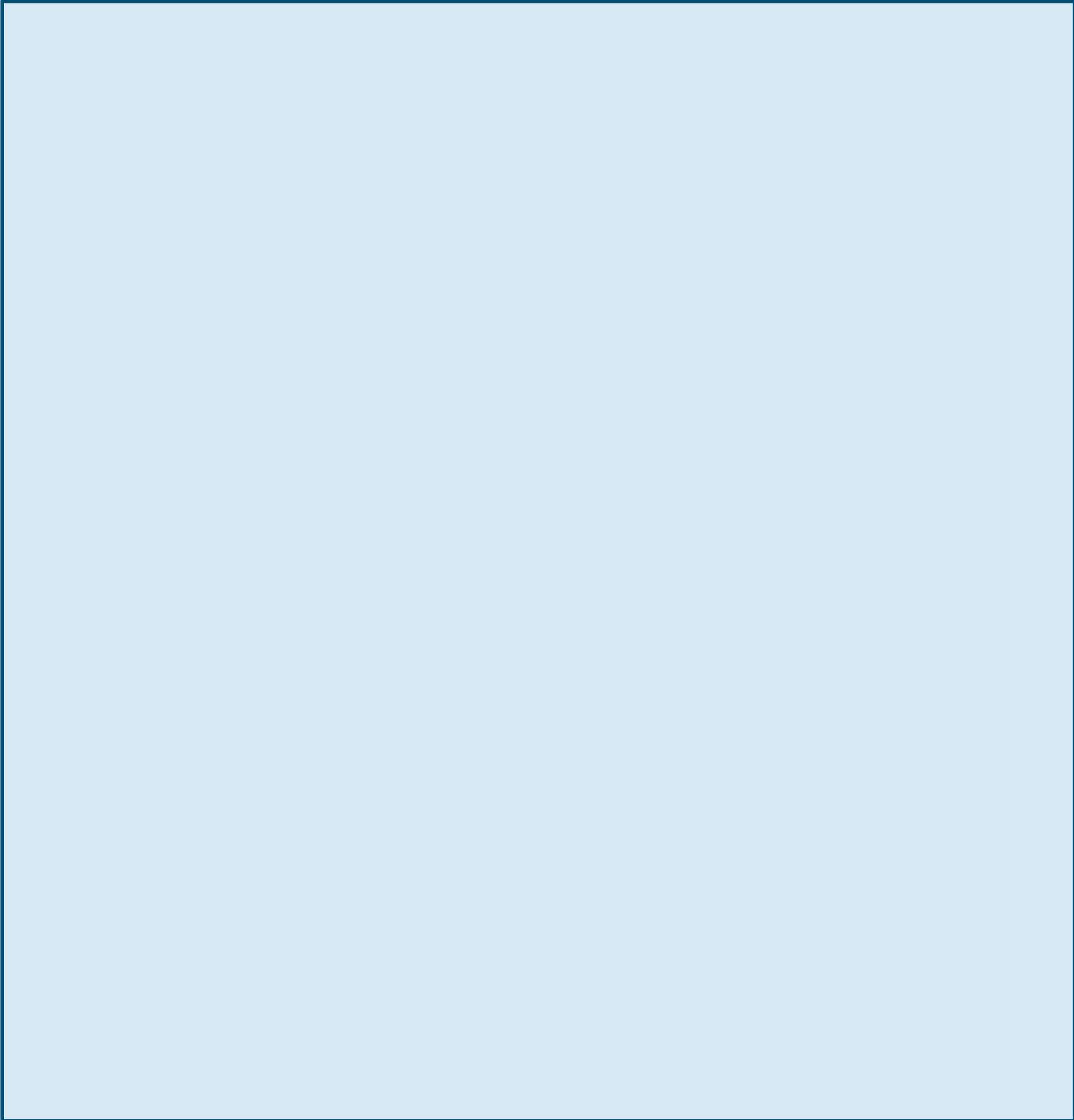
Focus groups participants felt that the following barriers had a negative effect on community safety: poverty, generational poverty, lack of coping skills, addiction, and generational addiction.

The approach to community safety shouldn't be one size fits all it should reflect the community it serves. Those surveyed feel that additional community policing teams are required and additional training of officers would be helpful in reducing violent crime numbers.

Summary: Local Considerations for Addressing the Need for County Prioritized Need Area

Recommendations include additional youth male mentoring programs, substance abuse services that address generational addiction; more job development, training opportunities and employment for residents; addressing individualized needs through counseling & life skills instruction; community policing teams established with community members, residents and law enforcement officers.

Applicable: Additional Notable Focus Group Trends for County Prioritized Need Area



Need Area: Survey Results

Item	Total Number of Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Total
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	56	5.36%	32.14%	35.71 %	7.14%	19.64%	100%
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	56	1.79%	30.36%	42.86 %	3.57%	21.43%	100%
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	56	5.36%	37.50%	32.14 %	5.36%	19.64%	100%
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	56	3.57%	28.57%	35.71 %	8.93%	23.21%	100%
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	56	1.79%	7.14%	50.00 %	3.57%	37.50%	100%
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	56	1.79%	12.50%	51.79 %	1.79%	32.14%	100%

Key Barriers

Barrier	Total Number of Respondents	Number of Times Identified	Percentage of Responses
Wait Lists	56	8	14.29%
Services do not exist	56	7	12.50%
Transportation	56	5	8.93%
Cannot contact the service provider	56	5	8.93%
Too expensive	56	2	3.57%
Lack of awareness of service	56	22	33.29%
Cultural Barriers	56	19	33.93%
Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs	56	7	12.50%
Stigma Leads to Avoidance	56	19	33.93%
Eligibility Requirement (explain below)	56	5	8.93%
Other (explain below)	56	18	32.14%

Need Area: Employment and Career Services**Status: Prioritized Need Area**

Employment is the condition of having paid work or an alternate ability to earn a living. This need area seeks to determine the employment status (e.g., full or part-time, permanent or temporary) of county residents and the employment opportunities within a county, as well as the existence of community services and supports to assist in ensuring employment (e.g., unemployment services, career development, County One-Stop Centers, Family Success Centers, County Board of Social Services, etc.)

Need Assessment Key Findings**Summary: Scope of the Need**

Employees in Atlantic County are estimated to earn a lower weekly wage than the state average. In this county, the average annual wage has increased slightly between 2016 and 2018.

The county's unemployment rate is generally higher than the state rate and tended to follow similar patterns across the year. Atlantic County's median unemployment rate (5.3%) is higher than the state median (4.0%). In Atlantic County, as with each NJ County, men tend to have higher annual incomes than women. Both males and females in Atlantic County tend to have a lower median income than the state average.

Summary: Nature of the Need

There are unemployment issues in Atlantic County due to the casino industry and the recent year of pandemic related employment cutbacks and business shutdowns. Respondents of the survey indicated 48.28% were employed full time. Part time employment is 18.97%. Those unemployed and looking for work is 13.79% while 1.72% are not looking for work. The survey also reported 6.90% of respondents are retired, 5.17% are students, 1.72% are self employed and 3.45% are unable to work.

Summary: Local Considerations for Addressing the Need for County Prioritized Need Area

There are significant unemployment issues in Atlantic County due to downsizing of the casino industry and the recent Covid-19 pandemic related employment cutbacks and business shutdowns. Essential workers continue to provide essential support services to the community.

If applicable: Additional Notable Focus Group Trends for County Prioritized Need Area



Need Area: Survey Results

Item	Total Number of Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Total
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	56	7.14%	25.00%	51.79%	5.36%	10.71%	100%
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	56	5.36%	30.36%	46.43%	5.36%	12.50%	100%
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	56	12.50%	26.79%	37.50%	5.36%	17.86%	100%
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	56	5.36%	23.21%	44.64%	5.36%	21.43%	100%
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	56	1.79%	8.93%	50.00%	3.57%	35.71%	100%
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	56	1.79%	12.50%	50.00%	7.14%	28.57%	100%

Key Barriers

Barrier	Total Number of Respondents	Number of Times Identified	Percentage of Responses
Wait Lists	56	12	21.43%
Services do not exist	56	6	10.71%
Transportation	56	19	33.93%
Cannot contact the service provider	56	7	12.50%
Too expensive	56	1	1.79%
Lack of awareness of service	56	27	48.21%
Cultural Barriers	56	12	21.43%
Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs	56	9	16.07%
Stigma Leads to Avoidance	56	13	23.21%
Eligibility Requirement (explain below)	56	11	19.64%
Other (explain below)	56	21	37.50%

Need Area: CHILD CARE**Status:General Need Area**

Childcare services include agencies that provide care and supervision to children; as well as, before- and after- school care programs. This need area seeks to assess the level to which residents throughout the county need child care and before and after school care and the existence of community services and supports that address the need for childcare (e.g., licensed daycares providers, subsidized and unsubsidized childcare, Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs, Family Success Centers, County Board of Social Services, etc.)

In Atlantic County in 2017 the median monthly center-based child care cost for an infant was less than the median monthly cost for NJ. The median monthly center-based child care cost for a toddler was less than the median monthly cost for NJ. Median monthly center-based child care cost child care cost for Pre-K in Atlantic County was less than the median monthly cost for NJ.

Need Assessment Key Findings**Summary: Scope of the Need**

Rutgers University data collection on behalf of the NJ Department of Human Services, 2017 indicates that the median monthly child care cost of center based care by age of child compared with the median household income (by county) was lower than the state average.

In Atlantic County costs for childcare for infants in 2017 was \$863, toddlers \$740, and pre k \$720 higher than the lowest median cost in NJ.

Summary: Nature of the Need

Survey responders feel that barriers to child care include long wait lists for children to get into daycare, high costs for childcare services as well as lack of awareness of service.

Summary: Local Considerations for Addressing the Need for County Prioritized Need Area

Our community resources consist of 107 licensed Childcare Centers, 48 registered in home childcare providers, 8 head start programs, 5 family success centers and 1 family support organization.

If applicable: Additional Notable Focus Group Trends for County Prioritized Need Area

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Need Area: Survey Results

Item	Total Number of Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Total
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	55	5.45%	21.82%	36.36 %	1.82%	34.55%	100%
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	55	3.64%	23.64%	40.00 %	1.82%	30.91%	100%
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	55	1.82%	32.73%	32.73 %	1.82%	30.91%	100%
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	55	3.64%	16.36%	34.55 %	5.45%	40.00%	100%
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	55	1.82%	7.27%	43.64 %	5.45%	41.82%	100%
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	55	1.82%	10.91%	41.82 %	3.64%	41.82%	100%

Key Barriers

Barrier	Total Number of Respondents	Number of Times Identified	Percentage of Responses
Wait Lists	55	16	29.09%
Services do not exist	55	3	5.45%
Transportation	55	13	23.64%
Cannot contact the service provider	55	4	7.27%
Too expensive	55	19	34.55%
Lack of awareness of service	55	16	29.09%
Cultural Barriers	55	8	14.55%
Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs	55	11	20.00%
Stigma Leads to Avoidance	55	12	21.82%
Eligibility Requirement (explain below)	55	5	9.09%
Other (explain below)	55	18	32.73%

Need Area: Services for Families Caring for a Child of a Relative

Status:General Need Area

Kinship services are support for caregivers who have taken on the responsibility of caring for kin, including financial assistance, support groups, navigation of government benefits and assistance, and more. This need area seeks to assess the level to which residents require kinship services and the existence of community services and supports to support caregivers' ability to care for their kin (e.g., Kinship Navigator Program, DCF's Division of Child Protection and Permanency, Family Success Centers, County Board of Social Services, etc.)

Need Assessment Key Findings

Summary: Scope of the Need

Kinship is identified as a need in Atlantic County. Residents are referred to a list of identified agencies that provide counseling and support services.

Summary: Nature of the Need

Atlantic County residents are referred to the agencies listed below for support services.

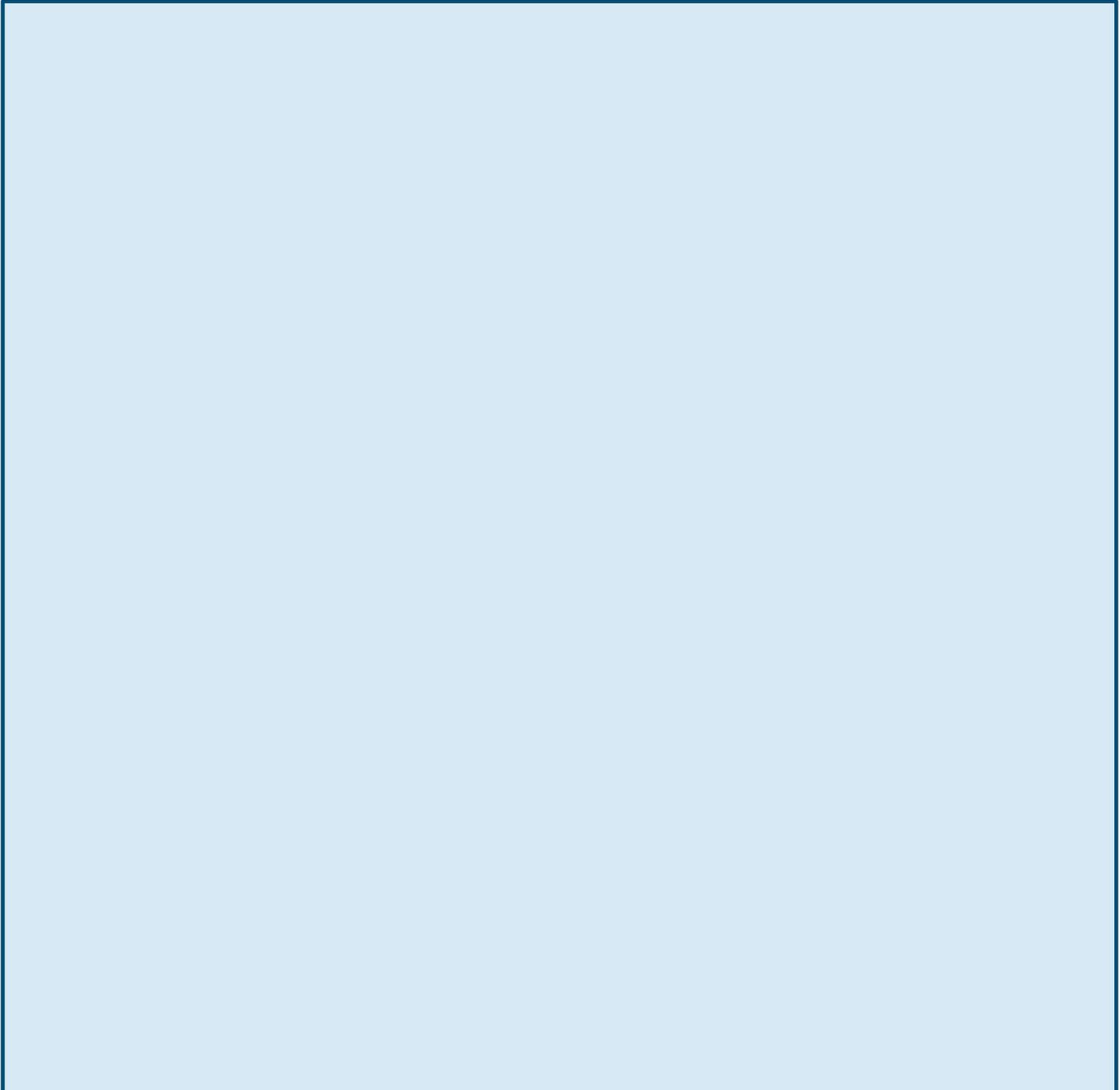
Summary: Local Considerations for Addressing the Need for County Prioritized Need Area

Kinship support is available at the following Atlantic County agencies:

- Solutions to End Poverty Soon (STEPS); housing and utilities
- United Way of Atlantic County and Southeastern PA; Job, health, utilities, and housing
- The ARC of Atlantic County; developmental disabilities
- Center for Family Services; teen center, kinship, and parenting
- Jewish Family Service of Atlantic and Cape May Counties; family counseling, New Day Family Success Center, health, job, and housing
- Intensive Family Support Services; mental health

If applicable: Additional Notable Focus Group Trends for County Prioritized Need Area

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Need Area: Survey Results

Item	Total Number of Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Total
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	54	3.70%	31.48%	24.07 %	5.56%	35.19%	100%
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	54	5.56%	20.73%	29.63 %	5.56%	38.89%	100%
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	54	1.85%	37.04%	25.93 %	3.70%	31.48%	100 %
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	54	5.56%	11.11%	42.59 %	1.85%	38.89%	100%
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	54	1.85%	9.26%	40.74 %	3.70%	44.44%	100%
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	54	1.85%	11.11%	37.04 %	3.70%	46.30%	100%

Key Barriers

Barrier	Total Number of Respondents	Number of Times Identified	Percentage of Responses
Wait Lists	54	11	20.37%
Services do not exist	54	6	11.11%
Transportation	54	10	18.52%
Cannot contact the service provider	54	8	14.81%
Too expensive	54	7	12.96%
Lack of awareness of service	54	20	37.04%
Cultural Barriers	54	9	16.67%
Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs	54	9	16.67%
Stigma Leads to Avoidance	54	9	16.67%
Eligibility Requirement (explain below)	54	9	16.67%
Other (explain below)	54	18	33.33%

Need Area: Behavioral/Mental Health Services for Children

Status:General Need Area

Child behavioral/mental health services are services designed to assess, address and support the emotional, psychological and social well-being of children. This need area seeks to assess the level to which children throughout the county have behavioral/mental health disorders, their ability to cope and function, and the existence of community services and supports to address children's behavioral/mental health needs (e.g., hospitals, in/out-patient therapy, individualized counseling, medication management, PerformCare, DCF's Children's System of Care, Family Support Organizations, etc.)

Need Assessment Key Findings

Summary: Scope of the Need

Behavioral/Mental Health for Children was described as a General Need Area. Per the data provided, Atlantic County has fewer children under the age of 18 than 14 other counties(2017) The highest percentage of children under the age of 18 are between ages 12-17 A determination of the scope of need for behavioral/mental health services for children in the county can be drawn from understanding some of the circumstances that can contribute to Adverse Childhood Experiences/ACEs. 20% of Atlantic County's children live in poverty which is higher than the average for New Jersey 12% and for the United States which is 17%. The Atlantic County Service Needs and Basic Needs profiles which were provided showed greater need due not only to poverty and unemployment but also food insecurity, domestic violence and violent crime. ACEs impact children individually and also change the functionality of families. Only 7 counties have more children in the care of the Division of Child Protection and Permanency. These factors and more impact childhood experiences in negative ways with lasting effects.

Summary: Nature of the Need

The data provided on mental health appears to have been based on the New Jersey Behavioral Risk Factor Survey(NJBRFS), an ongoing health survey of New Jersey residents aged 18+. Within the data provided, the NJ DHS Directory of Mental Health Services 2017 was the basis for the outline of the types of available mental health programs. It notes the most available programs are outpatient programs and there are 4 considered. However, in 2021, there are twice as many Medicaid outpatient behavioral/mental health programs serving children and youth in Atlantic County identified by the Children's Inter-Agency Coordinating Council/CIACC. The stakeholder surveys are an indicator of the local perception of the services available.

Summary: Local Considerations for Addressing the Need for County Prioritized Need Area

Behavioral/Mental Health for Children was not identified as a focus group need area topic. The surveys however, do indicate perceptions around available services and access to services. 40% felt there are enough services available although 27% felt that wait lists were barriers to access. 50% felt that anyone in the county is able to access services. Only 33% of the respondents thought the services were widely known and the same percentage felt that lack of awareness of services was a barrier to access. 31% of the respondents indicated that stigma leads to avoidance of mental/behavioral health services. In light of the additional daily and prolonged challenges and disruptions to normal activities and socialization caused by the covid-19 pandemic, in combination with the level of ACEs possible from situations and circumstances in Atlantic County, countering the stigma surrounding engagement in mental health services should be a focus in communities.

If applicable: Additional Notable Focus Group Trends for County Prioritized Need Area



Need Area: Survey Results

Item	Total Number of Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Total
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	54	7.41%	24.07%	40.74%	3.70%	24.07%	100%
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	54	7.41%	16.67%	50.00%	3.70%	22.22%	100%
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	54	9.26%	31.48%	33.33%	3.70%	22.22%	100%
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	54	3.70%	16.67%	51.85%	3.70%	24.07%	100%
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	54	1.85%	7.41%	44.44%	5.56%	40.74%	100%
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	54	1.85%	12.96%	38.89%	11.11%	35.19%	100%

Key Barriers

Barrier	Total Number of Respondents	Number of Times Identified	Percentage of Responses
Wait Lists	54	15	27.78%
Services do not exist	54	8	14.81%
Transportation	54	13	24.07%
Cannot contact the service provider	54	4	7.41%
Too expensive	54	12	22.22%
Lack of awareness of service	54	18	33.33%
Cultural Barriers	54	11	20.37%
Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs	54	7	12.96%
Stigma Leads to Avoidance	54	17	31.48%
Eligibility Requirement (explain below)	54	5	9.26%
Other (explain below)	54	18	33.33%

Need Area: Behavioral/Mental Health Services for Adults

Status:General Need Area

Adult behavioral/mental health services include services designed to assess, address and support the emotional, psychological and social well-being of adults. This need area seeks to assess the level to which adult residents throughout the county have behavioral/mental health disorders, their ability to function and the existence of community services and supports to address adult behavioral/mental health needs (e.g., hospitals, in/out-patient therapy, individualized counseling, medication management, Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, PerformCare, etc.)

Need Assessment Key Findings

Summary: Scope of the Need

Behavioral/Mental Health Services for Adults was described as a General Need Area. In Atlantic County, the estimated frequency of mental health distress found is above the state average. and ranks 9th highest with an average of 13.8% compared to the overall NJ state average of 12.1%. Respondents indicated frequent mental health distress indicating 14 or more of the past 30 days “not good”. It is also important to note that over time, the self-reported level of distress has varied. White residents reported symptoms of mental distress most frequently, followed by Hispanics residents (2017).

Summary: Nature of the Need

Symptoms of mental health distress were reported by women at a higher rate than men. The frequency of depressions is 18.7% and above the state average of 14.8% (2017). Per the data provided, the majority of mental health programs available are outpatient followed by supportive housing. The NJ DHS Directory of Mental Health Services, November 2017 shows no supported education or emergency services available. The stakeholder surveys are an indicator of the local perception of services available.

Summary: Local Considerations for Addressing the Need for County Prioritized Need Area

Behavioral/Mental Health for Adults was not identified as a focus group need area topic. The surveys however, do indicate perceptions around available services and access to services. 42% felt there are enough services available although 35% felt that wait lists were a barrier to access. 40% felt that anyone in the county is able to access services. 35% of the respondents through the services were not widely known and 40% felt that lack of awareness of services was a barrier to access. 33% of the respondents indicated that stigma leads to avoidance of mental/behavioral health services. In light of the additional daily and prolonged challenges and disruptions to normal activities and socialization

caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, countering the stigma surrounding engagement in mental health services should be a focus in communities.

If applicable: Additional Notable Focus Group Trends for County Prioritized Need Area

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Need Area: Survey Results

Item	Total Number of Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Total
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	54	7.41%	27.78%	42.59%	3.70%	18.52%	100%
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	54	5.56%	29.63%	40.74%	3.70%	20.37%	100
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	54	14.81%	35.19%	29.63%	3.70%	16.67%	100%
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	54	7.41%	20.37%	50.00%	5.56%	16.67%	100%
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	54	1.85%	11.11%	44.44%	9.26%	33.33%	100%
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	54	1.85%	14.81%	42.59%	7.41%	33.33%	100%

Key Barriers

Barrier	Total Number of Respondents	Number of Times Identified	Percentage of Responses
Wait Lists	54	19	35.19%
Services do not exist	54	5	9.26%
Transportation	54	16	29.63%
Cannot contact the service provider	54	3	5.56%
Too expensive	54	18	33.33%
Lack of awareness of service	54	24	44.44%
Cultural Barriers	54	8	14.81%
Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs	54	8	14.81%
Stigma Leads to Avoidance	54	18	33.33%
Eligibility Requirement (explain below)	54	6	11.11%
Other (explain below)	54	13	24.07%

Need Area: Substance Use Disorder and Prevention Services (Adults and Adolescents)

Status:General Need Area

Substance use treatment services include services that provide a range of assessment and supportive treatment for substance use disorders. This need area seeks to gauge the substance use needs and the existence of community services and supports to address substance use disorder needs throughout the county (e.g., detoxification, short- and long-term inpatient treatment services, outpatient treatment services, medication management, Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, NJ 2-1-1, etc.)

Need Assessment Key Findings

Summary: Scope of the Need

Change in suspected overdoses for Atlantic County was average in the county profile. There was a 12.43% increase in the suspected overdose deaths in Atlantic County between 2016 and 2018. This is the 6th highest among the counties with an increase. Average change in population due to overdose deaths in NJ is 14%. Types of substances identified at treatment center admissions in Atlantic County were 59% heroin, 17% alcohol, 10% marijuana, 7% other opiates, 4% cocaine, and 3% other drugs.

Summary: Nature of the Need

As per the survey results, 43.40% agreed there are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need. 42.28% agreed that anyone in the county is able to access services. 37.74% felt that the services are widely advertised and known by the county. 47.17% surveyed agreed the services take race, age, gender and ethnicity and more into account. 47.17% felt that the facilities provide service to meet this need and are of good quality. 45.28% felt the staff were well trained, knowledgeable and provided good customer service. The leading barriers identified by those surveyed were lack of awareness of service (39.62%), stigma leads to avoidance (37.74%), other issues with no explanation (32.08%), transportation (30.19%) and cultural barriers (20.75%).

Summary: Local Considerations for Addressing the Need for County Prioritized Need Area

The Division of Public Health receives state funding to ensure the availability of treatment services, particularly for the indigent. Services include detoxification, inpatient and outpatient services, halfway house programs, and substance abuse education. Residents can access substance abuse services through NJ 2-1-1. Atlantic County participates in the Governor’s Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (GCADA) which funds the County Alliance Program. During fiscal year 2020, Atlantic County, as a whole, will receive a base grant of \$314,500 during the funding cycle for prevention programming. The grant allows for \$60,000 of these funds to be used for coordination and \$14,041 for countywide programming. The remaining funds are distributed to the 18 local Municipal Alliances. There are over 200 volunteers working within these Alliances who administer, fund and/or run 130 substance abuse prevention programs through awards. The County Alliance Program also leads the “Just in Case” Opioid Awareness Campaign which includes a free training and a Naloxone Opioid Overdose Kit. There is also the HOPE ONE Atlantic County Mobile Response Unit. The mobile recovery access vehicle offers critical support for persons struggling with addiction, with the goals of preventing drug overdoses and deaths.

If applicable: Additional Notable Focus Group Trends for County Prioritized Need Area

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Need Area: Survey Results

Item	Total Number of Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Total
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	53	9.43%	18.87%	43.40%	5.66%	22.64 %	100%
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	53	3.77%	22.64%	45.28%	7.55%	20.75 %	100%
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	53	11.32%	24.53%	37.74%	9.43%	16.98 %	100%
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	53	1.89%	18.87%	47.17%	7.55%	24.53 %	100%
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	53	1.89%	3.77%	47.17%	9.43%	37.74 %	100%
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	53	1.89%	5.66%	45.28%	11.32 %	35.85 %	100%

Key Barriers

Barrier	Total Number of Respondents	Number of Times Identified	Percentage of Responses
Wait Lists	53	13	24.53%
Services do not exist	53	5	9.43%
Transportation	53	16	30.19%
Cannot contact the service provider	53	3	5.66%
Too expensive	53	10	18.87%
Lack of awareness of service	53	21	39.62%
Cultural Barriers	53	11	20.75%
Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs	53	8	15.09%
Stigma Leads to Avoidance	53	20	37.74%
Eligibility Requirement (explain below)	53	6	11.32%
Availability of Substance Use Disorder Services	0	0	0%
Availability of Substance Abuse Prevention Programs	0	0	0%
Other (explain below)	53	17	32.08%



Need Area: Domestic Violence Services

Status:General Need Area

Domestic violence is violence or other forms of abuse by one person against another in a domestic setting, e.g., husband and wife, child and parent, sibling and sibling, etc. This need area seeks to assess the level to which domestic violence impact residents throughout the county and the existence of community services and supports that will keep families safe from physical, sexual, financial, digital, mental and emotional forms of domestic violence (e.g., shelter services, victim services, batterers intervention services, DCF's Office of Domestic Violence Services, domestic violence liaisons, domestic violence hotline, Family Success Centers, etc.)

Need Assessment Key Findings

Summary: Scope of the Need

Domestic Violence was identified as having a greater need compared to other counties. There were 4,563 violent incidents reported in Atlantic County in 2016. Atlantic County is the third highest county in the state. Overall, the number has decreased in Atlantic County between 2012 and 2016 by 248 incidents. In 2016, Galloway Township led the municipalities with the most incidents reported of 754, Hamilton Township second with 695 and Atlantic City third with 686 incidents. In 2016, the top three types of violence offenses state wide were Harrasment 27,256, Assault 27,222 and Terroristic threats 2,442. All three categories led the arrests statewide in 2016.

Summary: Nature of the Need

As the third county with the highest rate of reported violent incidents 35.85% agreed there were enough services available in the county to help those who have this need while 30.19% did not know. 39.62% agreed anyone in the county is able to access services and 26.42% did not know. Only 28.30% agreed the services are widely advertised and known by the county. 41.51% agreed services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account. 39.62% agreed the facilities that provide services to meet this need are of good quality. Only 35.85% agreed staff were well trained, knowledgeable and provided good customer service. The identified barriers of those surveyed were lack of awareness(43.40%), stigma leads to avoidance (33.96), Other with no explanation (33.96%), and cultural barriers (26.42%).

Summary: Local Considerations for Addressing the Need for County Prioritized Need Area

Resources for women in Atlantic County include: Atlantic County Division of Public Health Women’s Health Resources, Atlantic City Rescue Mission, Atlantic County Women’s Center, Atlantic Project TEACH, AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center Women’s Health Services, AtlantiCare Mobile Mammography, Atlantic County Family Success Centers.

If applicable: Additional Notable Focus Group Trends for County Prioritized Need Area



Need Area: Survey Results

Item	Total Number of Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Total
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	53	9.43%	20.75%	35.85%	3.77%	30.19%	100%
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	53	9.43%	18.87%	39.62%	5.66%	26.42%	100%
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	53	18.87%	28.30%	28.30%	3.77%	20.75%	100%
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	53	7.55%	20.75%	41.51%	5.66%	24.53%	100%
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	53	5.66%	5.66%	39.62%	11.32%	37.74%	100%
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	53	5.66%	5.66%	35.85%	11.32%	41.51%	100%

Key Barriers

Barrier	Total Number of Respondents	Number of Times Identified	Percentage of Responses
Wait Lists	53	5	9.43%
Services do not exist	53	6	11.23%
Transportation	53	8	15.09%
Cannot contact the service provider	53	7	13.21%
Too expensive	53	4	7.55%
Lack of awareness of service	53	23	43.40%
Cultural Barriers	53	14	26.42%
Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs	53	7	13.21%
Stigma Leads to Avoidance	53	18	33.96%
Eligibility Requirement (explain below)	53	4	7.55%
Other (explain below)	53	18	33.96%



Need Area: Parenting Skills Services

Status: Prioritized Need Area

Parenting skills services are programs that aim to enhance parental capacity and skills, improve parenting practices and behaviors, and teach age appropriate child development skills and milestones. This need area seeks to assess the level to which residents require parenting skills services and the existence of community services and supports which address parenting skills (e.g., Home Visiting Program, Nurse-Family Partnership, Family Preservation, Family Success Centers, Family Service Organizations, Parents Anonymous, Parent Mentors, SPAN, etc.).

Need Assessment Key Findings

Summary: Scope of the Need

Some resources are known to the Children's Inter-Agency Coordinating Council/CIACC. Atlantic County has 5 Family Success Centers that provide resources and supportive services at no-cost for families and which promote these offerings through social media and web-based activity calendars. The Atlantic Cape Family Support Organization has parent support groups with speakers highlighting resources and strategies for parents. SPAN has an active virtual presence offering a wealth of supports for parents. Atlantic Prevention Resources has consistently offered Strengthening Families programs and during the pandemic, has successfully transitioned to virtual platforms. The home visiting program, nurse family partnership and family preservation programs exist but are not active in the CIACC

Summary: Nature of the Need

The surveys indicate perceptions around available services and access to services. 44% felt there are enough services available although 26% felt that wait lists were a barrier to access. 42% felt that anyone in the county is able to access these services. 32% thought the services were widely known and 36% felt that a lack of awareness of services was a barrier to access.

Summary: Local Considerations for Addressing the Need for County Prioritized Need Area

Parenting Skills was identified as a focus group topic. Stigma is a barrier. Labels like parenting education or skills classes denotes a deficit before they even get through the door. We should re-frame the names and the provision methods of these programs to 'sell-it' in a strengths-based way. It should also be framed in a way to include single fathers and men as well. DCF asked to implement different types of parenting but there was such a low turnout even with incentives and supports. Using children in the program itself seemed to help with attendance. Active parenting was a draw for non-english speaking families to help youth with homework or adults with tasks that needed

translation. Cultural differences sometimes don't allow for feedback for parenting. What can the county do? Change the names of these groups and market them from a strength based perspective. Offer things virtually to promote participation. Make it easier for families: example have pizzas delivered to homes to increase family participation. Provide free peer-led groups to engage participants and make them feel more supported and better connected to those with lived experience. Having more translators would help with attendance and understanding . Groups, internet based with volunteers are less expensive and more cost effective. Attendance increases with virtual groups.

If applicable: Additional Notable Focus Group Trends for County Prioritized Need Area



Need Area: Survey Results

Item	Total Number of Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Total
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	52	7.69%	13.46%	44.23%	1.92%	32.69%	100%
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	52	5.77%	17.31%	42.31%	1.92%	32.69%	100%
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	52	13.46%	21.15%	32.69%	1.92%	30.77%	100%
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	52	5.77%	13.46%	48.08%	1.92%	30.77%	100%
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	52	3.85%	3.85%	48.08%	3.85%	40.38%	100%
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	52	3.85%	5.77%	44.23%	7.69%	38.46%	100%

Key Barriers

Barrier	Total Number of Respondents	Number of Times Identified	Percentage of Responses
Wait Lists	52	14	26.92%
Services do not exist	52	8	15.38%
Transportation	52	8	15.38%
Cannot contact the service provider	52	3	5.77%
Too expensive	52	5	9.62%
Lack of awareness of service	52	19	36.54%
Cultural Barriers	52	9	17.31%
Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs	52	7	13.46%
Stigma Leads to Avoidance	52	18	34.62%
Eligibility Requirement (explain below)	52	6	11.54%
Other (explain below)	52	16	30.77%



Need Area: Legal and Advocacy Services**Status:General Need Area**

Legal and advisory services include legal assistance, advocacy and support in various types of legal matters, including child support, child custody, paternity, immigration, domestic violence, housing and eviction, criminal, etc. This need area seeks to assess if the level to which residents throughout the county have unresolved legal issues for which they need assistance and the existence of legal and advisory services to meet those needs (e.g., Legal Aid, pro-bono attorneys and clinics, court system, ombudsman, etc.)

Need Assessment Key Findings**Summary: Scope of the Need**

Data was not provided regarding the number or percent of the population affected by this need/issue. However, given the number of Atlantic County Basic Needs that were identified as a Greater Need when compared to other counties, it seems that Legal and Advocacy Services might affect more of the population than not. Data was not provided regarding how Atlantic County fared over time for this need/issue.

Summary: Nature of the Need

There seems to be a lack of awareness of Legal and Advocacy Services in Atlantic County. Per the survey results, 32.69% of respondents agree there are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need, but 25.00% of respondents do not know. However, 26.92% and 13.46% of respondents disagree and strongly disagree respectively that there are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need. Per the survey results, 36.54% of respondents agree anyone in the county is able to access services, but 26.92% of respondents do not know. However, 25.00% and 9.62% of respondents disagree and strongly disagree respectively that anyone in the county is able to access services. Per the survey results, 32.69% of respondents agree services are widely advertised and known by the county, but 25.00% do not know. However, 28.85% and 11.54% of respondents disagree and strongly disagree respectively that services are widely advertised and known by the county. Per the survey results, 38.46% of respondents agree legal and advocacy services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account, but 34.62% do not know. However, 19.23% and 5.77% of respondents disagree and strongly disagree respectively that services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account. Per the survey results, 44.23% of respondents agree facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality, but 42.31% do not know. Per

survey results, 46.15% of respondents agree that staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service, but 42.31% do not know. Per the survey results, respondents identified the following as barriers: Lack of awareness of service (46.15%); Other (28.85%); Transportation (26.92%); Wait Lists (25.00%); and Too Expensive (25.00%).

Summary: Local Considerations for Addressing the Need for County Prioritized Need Area

Legal and Advocacy Services were not identified as a focus group need area topic. The following resources are available in Atlantic County to help with Legal and Advocacy Services: Avanzar; South Jersey Legal Services; Family Success Centers; Community Mediation Services; Disability Rights NJ; Community Health Law Project; and SPAN Parent Advocacy Network.

If applicable: Additional Notable Focus Group Trends for County Prioritized Need Area



Need Area: Survey Results

Item	Total Number of Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Total
1. There are enough services available in the county to help those who have this need.	52	13.46%	26.92%	32.69 %	1.92%	25.00%	100%
2. Anyone in the county is able to access services.	52	9.62%	25.00%	36.54 %	1.92%	26.92%	100%
3. Services are widely advertised and known by the county.	52	11.54%	28.85%	32.69 %	1.92%	25.00%	100%
4. Services take race, age, gender, ethnicity and more into account.	52	5.77%	19.23%	38.46 %	1.92%	34.62%	100%
5. Facilities that provide service to meet this need are of good quality (e.g., clean, well supplied).	52	1.92%	9.62%	44.23 %	1.92%	42.31%	100%
6. Staff are well-trained, knowledgeable and provide good customer service.	52	1.92%	7.69%	46.15 %	1.92%	42.31%	100%

Key Barriers

Barrier	Total Number of Respondents	Number of Times Identified	Percentage of Responses
Wait Lists	52	13	25.00%
Services do not exist	52	3	5.77%
Transportation	52	14	26.92%
Cannot contact the service provider	52	3	5.77%
Too expensive	52	13	25.00%
Lack of awareness of service	52	24	46.15%
Cultural Barriers	52	10	19.23%
Services provided are one-size fits all, and don't meet individual needs	52	7	13.46%
Stigma Leads to Avoidance	52	11	21.15%
Eligibility Requirement (explain below)	52	5	9.62%
Other (explain below)	52	15	28.85%