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PARTNERSHIP

**WEST CENTRAL MISSOURI
COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY**

Higher Ground

Community Needs Assessment 2011

West Central Missouri Community Action Agency

Community Needs Assessment 2011

Why do a Community Needs Assessment?

The Community Needs Assessment is a tool to identify the most significant needs in the community, and; therefore, the basis for accessing, planning and developing agency strategies to address those needs in the most effective way possible.

How was the data collected?

- Statistical data was collected from the Missouri Association for Community Action's Community Needs Assessment web based tool and other resources such as: Missouri Kids Count, National Center for Chronic Disease Control, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Missouri Highway Patrol, etc...
- Over 500 Community Needs Assessment Surveys were collected.
- Staff identified trends and resources available in the community.

How were the needs identified?

Both statistical data and survey results were analyzed to identify and access trends of the entire service area. Results were also compared by county, age of survey respondents, and relationship of survey respondents to the agency (staff, client, board member, elected official, etc...) to note distinct needs identified by each population. Problem Statements were developed based on the *need* identified rather than *strategies* for addressing the need.

How were the needs prioritized?

After review and discussion of the Summary, each WCMCAA Unit Director and at least one other staff member of each program ranked the identified needs based on the following criteria:

- *What is the depth of the issue in the community?*
- *What is the impact of the issue in the community?*
- *What current resources are already available in the community (outside the agency) to address the issue?*
- *What is WCMCAA's current ability to impact this issue?*
- *What is WCMCAA's potential to impact this issue in the future?*
- *How would addressing this issue impact the Community Action mission to decrease poverty?*

Each need was ranked on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating only a mild need and 5 being the highest priority need, indicating that WCMCAA resources (time, talent and funding) should be allocated accordingly.

West Central Missouri Community Action Agency
Community Needs Assessment 2011

Agency Priorities

Approved by WCMCAA Board of Directors June 23, 2011.

Highest Priority Need

Need to increase **employment** opportunities within the area.

High Priority Need

Need for dependable and affordable **transportation**.

Need for affordable access to **health care and prescription drugs**.

Need to decrease incidence of **child abuse and neglect** and the effects on children.

Need for affordable, quality **child care** available for families during varying work schedules.

Need for affordable **housing** options.

Need for **parenting education**.

Need for **in-home health care** for the elderly and disabled.

Need for **financial management** education and resources.

Need to increase access to **GED, vocational and college education**.

Moderate Need

Need to decrease **teen pregnancy** rates and the long term effects of related issues.

Need to address low-income households' struggle to pay **utility expenses**.

Need to increase **dental providers** in the area that provide affordable access to **dental care**.

Need to decrease **obesity** rates and **diabetic** related issues through access to **affordable nutritious food** and **nutrition education**.

Need to address **housing repair** issues.

Need to decrease **substance abuse** and the related issues affecting families and the community.

Need to increase the availability of **emergency shelters**.

Mild Need

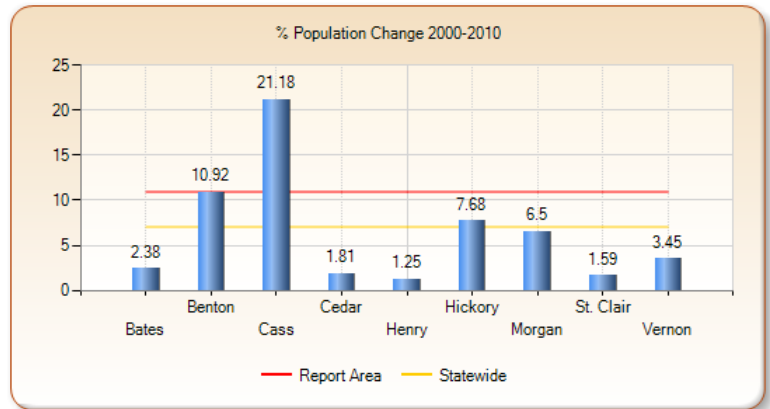
Need to increase **high school graduation** rates.

SUMMARY OF DATA

Demographics

Population

West Central Missouri Community Action Agency serves a nine county area of mostly rural communities. According to the U. S. Census Bureau, the total population for the area is 232,993. Cass County is by far the most urban area served by the agency with a population of 99,478. The least populated areas are Hickory and St. Clair Counties with populations of 9,627 and 9,805 respectively.



Age of Population

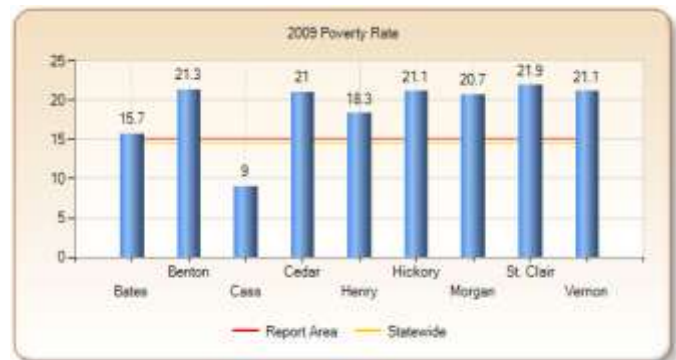
According to U.S. Census Bureau, several West Central Missouri counties have higher populations of persons 65 years and older than the state average of 14%. Persons 65 years and older in Benton, St. Clair and Hickory counties made up 22.5% to 29.6% of the county population in 2010.

Race

West Central Missouri population is 95.38% white. However, over the last several years, Cass County has seen a significant increase in Hispanic population. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, at 3.8%, Cass County's Hispanic population was ranked 9th largest in the state by percentage of county population.

Poverty Level

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, all counties in the WCMCAA services area have recently experienced increases in poverty rates.



Strengths

The WCMCAA 2011 Community Needs Assessment survey responses identified *volunteers, community / family orientation of small towns and faith based community* to be the top strengths in the area.

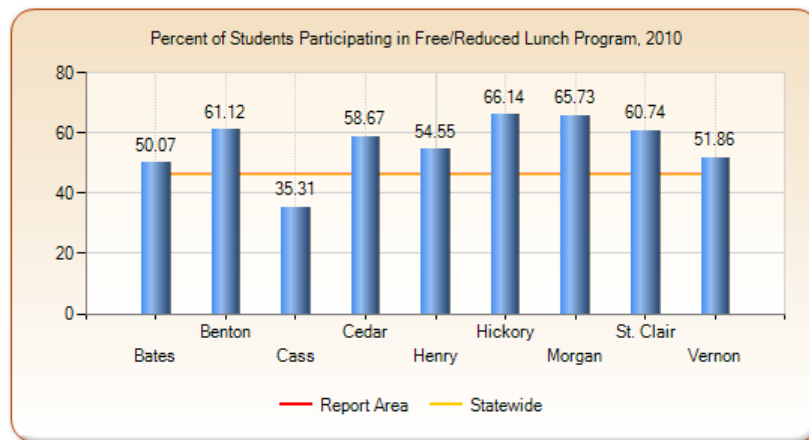
Food

Problem Statement:

Need to decrease **obesity rates** and **diabetic related issues** through access to affordable nutritious food, and nutrition education.

Sources

Results of the WCMCAA 2011 Community Needs Assessment Survey show that **61%** of respondents believe **nutrition** is an issue in their community ranking the greatest nutrition issues as 1) *Not enough income / resources to purchase nutritious food* 2) *population obesity* and 3) *lack of education in nutrition*.



Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Current Food Resources Available

Many resources for food are available in the nine county area served by West Central Missouri Community Action Agency. Each community collaborates to provide food to impoverished people of all ages. Entities of these collaborations include faith-based organizations, senior centers, meals on wheels, community gardens, weekend back pack programs, food pantries which are operated by both West Central Missouri Community Action Agency and non-profit groups. Successful food drives are sponsored by various community volunteers and local businesses such as the public schools and Head Start Centers, Lions Club, the Post Office, Ministerial Alliances, Salvation Army and local grocery stores.

Strategies questions?

What information is still needed in order to develop effective strategies for addressing the problem?

- Are food distributions highly nutritious food? Do food distributions include nutrition education and/or suggestions related to healthy food prep?

- What health / nutrition curriculums are available that could be implanted into current program operations?
- What additional funding is available to address nutrition, obesity and diabetic issues?
- How could we partner with health professionals for nutrition education?

Health

Problem Statement(s):

Need to decrease **obesity rates** and **diabetic related issues**.

Need to increase **dental providers** in the area that provide affordable access to **dental care**.

Need to decrease **teen pregnancy** rates and the long term effects of related issues.

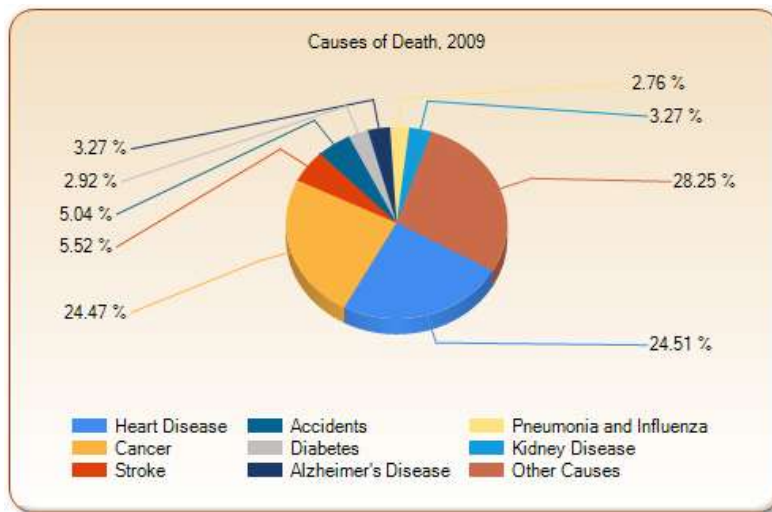
Need to decrease **substance abuse** and the related issues affecting families and the community.

Need for affordable access to **health care** and prescription drugs.

Need for **in-home health care** for the elderly and disabled.

Need to decrease incidence of **child abuse and neglect** and the effects on children.

Sources



Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

WCMCAA CNA Survey respondents ranked the three most important **health care Issues** for their community as: *1) dental care 2) obesity and 3) common health issues.*

When survey responses were divided by age of respondent health care issues were ranked as follows:

18 – 29 year olds: *1) Dental care 2) Teen Pregnancy 3) Obesity*

30 – 44 year olds: *1) Dental Care 2) Common health issues 3) Obesity*

45 – 64 year olds: *1) Obesity 2) Dental Care 3) Substance Abuse Issues*

65 & older: 1) Obesity 2) Diabetic Care 3) Substance Abuse Issues

Obesity / Diabetic Care

According to the Center for Disease Control, adult obesity rates in the area range from 29.5% in Bates County to 30.7% in Vernon County. In 2009, 14% of Missouri high school students were obese and 10 to 15% of Missouri’s low-income children ages 2 to 4 years old were obese. 1 of 7 low-income, preschool-aged children in the United States is obese.

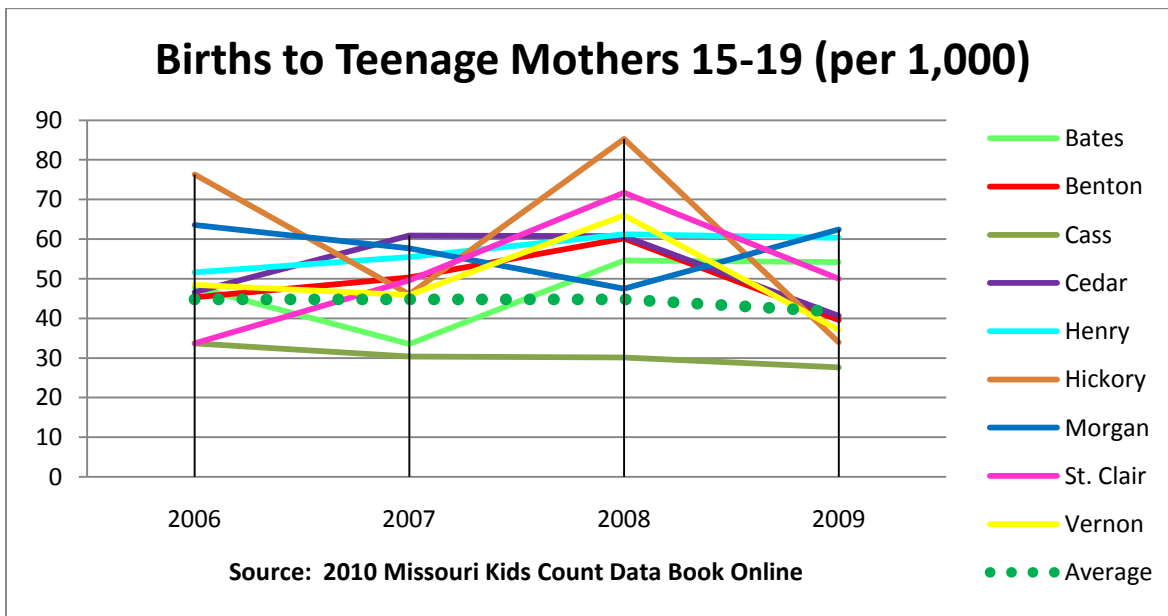
According to the Center for Disease Control, 7 to 8.5% of the service area residents are diagnosed diabetics.

Dental Coverage

According to the Division of Professional Registration, the services area has just .63 dental professionals per 1,000 persons.

Teen Pregnancy

Per Kids Count Missouri 2010, teen Pregnancy rates in the area ranged from 27.6 per 1,000 in Cass County to 60.3 and 62.4 per 1,000 in Henry and Morgan Counties respectively. The average births to teenage mothers per 1,000 across the service area was slightly down in 2009, from 44.8 in each of the previous three years to 41.6.



Drug / Alcohol Abuse

When asked “What emergency situations seem to be a problem in your community?” survey respondents indicated alcohol, drug abuse, and /or gambling as the 4th highest issue.

In regard to the biggest challenges for youth, responses were related to increase in available activities and issues with drugs and crime.

According to the Missouri State Highway Patrol, in 2010, there were 102 methamphetamine incidents within the nine county area. Cedar County reported 61 of those incidents.

Affordability / Insurance

Results of the WCMCAA Community Needs Assessment Survey show that **83%** of respondents believe that **affordable health care** is an issue in their community ranking the greatest issues as 1) *Cost of health insurance* 2) *high cost of prescriptions* and 3) *high deductibles and co-pays*.

When asked, “*What emergency situations seem to be a problem in your community?*” survey respondents indicated *lack of income for prescription drugs* as the 2nd highest issue.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 30,211 persons or 15.8% of the population were uninsured in the service area. Morgan County had the highest rate of uninsured at 22.7%. Cass County had the lowest rate at 12.8%.

Home Care

In regard to the **biggest challenges for elderly**, survey responses indicated *In-Home Health Care* as the top challenge, followed by *transportation and cost of health care*.

Results of the WCMCAA Community Needs Assessment Survey show **70.8%** of respondents felt that services to remain in the home are needed for the elderly and handicapped in their community ranking the three greatest **home care issues** as: 1) *transportation out of area to doctors* 2) *caregiver relief* and 3) *meeting the spend down for Medicaid*.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Per Kids Count in Missouri 2010 data, the service area is ranked among some of the highest in the state regarding child abuse and neglect. Of the 115 counties in the state, WCMCAA counties ranked as follows:

County	CA/N family assessment per 1,000	State Ranking of 115 Counties
Bates	33.3	49
Benton	35.9	62
Cass	20.2	9
Cedar	58.5	114
Henry	34.4	54
Hickory	54.3	109
Morgan	37.9	73
St. Clair	34.4	56
Vernon	55.1	110

Note: In Cedar County, in regard to parent education topics Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention was ranked as the most needed.

Current Health Resources Available

Many communities offer Health Clinics to serve community members who are ill or have sustained injury but cannot afford regular healthcare are cared for on a sliding scale. Mental health, substance abuse centers and hospice are also accessible throughout the nine county area served by West Central Missouri Community Action Agency. There are a limited number of dental providers within the area and even fewer who accept Medicaid; however, this issue has received some attention resulting in the Smiles Clinic in Nevada and the Miles for Smiles mobile dental clinic, as well as others. Women's Health clinics provide family planning and assist with teen pregnancy. Door of Hope provides abstinence education in schools. Hospitals, family and private owned clinics and In Home Health Care are also available.

Strategy questions?

What information is still needed in order to develop effective strategies for addressing the problem?

- In addition to nutrition education, how can education regarding active lifestyles be most effectively implemented?
- What strategies to address transportation have been implemented with success in other communities? Areas to explore: Shuttle service through local partnerships, partnerships with Vo-Tech schools to provide auto repair for low-income, senior ride programs, transportation options for in-home clients.
- How cost prohibitive is liability insurance for providing transportation services?
- What is the age breakdown of teen pregnancy – younger teens or older teens?
- How effective is the abstinence only education being provided in the schools?
- What partnerships could be developed with current community resources to have greater impact in reducing teen pregnancy rates?
- Why are people not choosing the dental field? Pay? Liability? No Interest? Length of Education? Location of Education? What is needed to attract people to choose dentistry in rural areas?
- How many elderly are in need of home care, but are not eligible for services through Medicaid and Medicare?
- What psychological factors contribute to a person's choice to try drugs? (Those who try meth just 1 time are typically hooked.) What strategies would be effective in prevention of addiction?
- What partnerships could be developed around substance abuse issues for: prevention, referrals for treatment and recovery, family support, staff safety?
- How related are the child abuse and neglect incidents to the substance abuse instances? Example: Cedar County had the highest incidence of each.
- What types of child abuse and neglect issues are being reported / substantiated? What are the demographics of households being investigated? Example: Are single parents struggling to afford child care and therefore have abuse and neglect issues?
- What strategies have other communities implemented to reduce Child Abuse and Neglect incidents? What parent curriculum is available to address CA/N? What partnerships can be developed around the issues?

Education

Problem Statement(s):

Need to increase access to **GED, vocational and college education.**

Need to increase **high school graduation rates.**

Need for affordable, quality **child care** available for families during varying work schedules.

Need for **parenting education.**

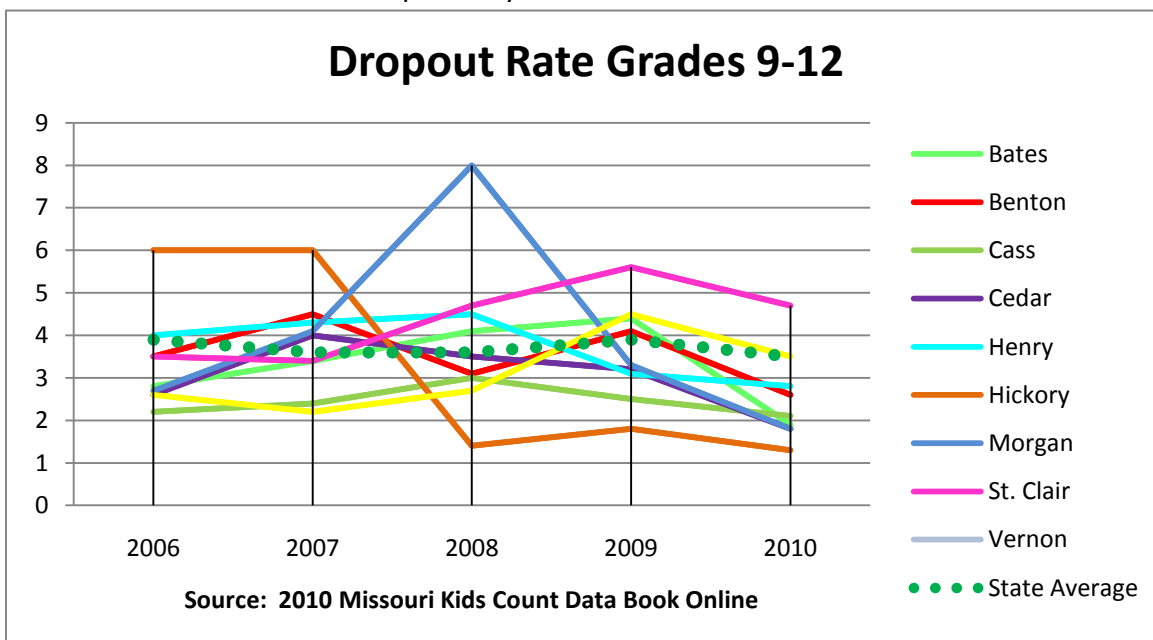
Sources

Results of the WCMCAA 2011 CNA Survey show **56.1%** of respondents felt **education** was an issue in their community, ranking the top three education issues as: 1) *lack of vocational skills or college* 2) *long commute to education beyond high school* and 3) *no high school diploma*. However, survey respondents who were clients of the agency ranked *need for computer access at home* as the most important issue.

When responses were divided by age of respondent, 60% of those over 30 ranked education as a need. However, of those under 30, only 38% ranked education as a need.

High School Graduation Rates

In Benton County, *no dropout prevention / after school programs for youth* was ranked as the number one education issue. In Bates and Vernon County, the issue was ranked 2nd. According to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, at 81.19%, Benton County had the lowest high school graduation rate in the services area. Cedar, Henry, St. Clair and Vernon also had graduation rates slightly below the statewide average of 86.24%. Morgan and Hickory County had the highest graduation rates in the area at 92.82% and 90.97% respectively.



According to the U.S. Department of Education, 8.6% of the adult population in the area lack basic prose literacy skills.

Child Care

There are 165 licensed child care facilities in the nine county service area with a total capacity of 4,492.

Results of the WCMCAA CNA Survey show **63%** of respondents feel **child care** is an issue in their community, ranking the top three issues as: 1) *Cost* 2) *lack of evening /weekend care* and 3) *quality of care / education provided*.

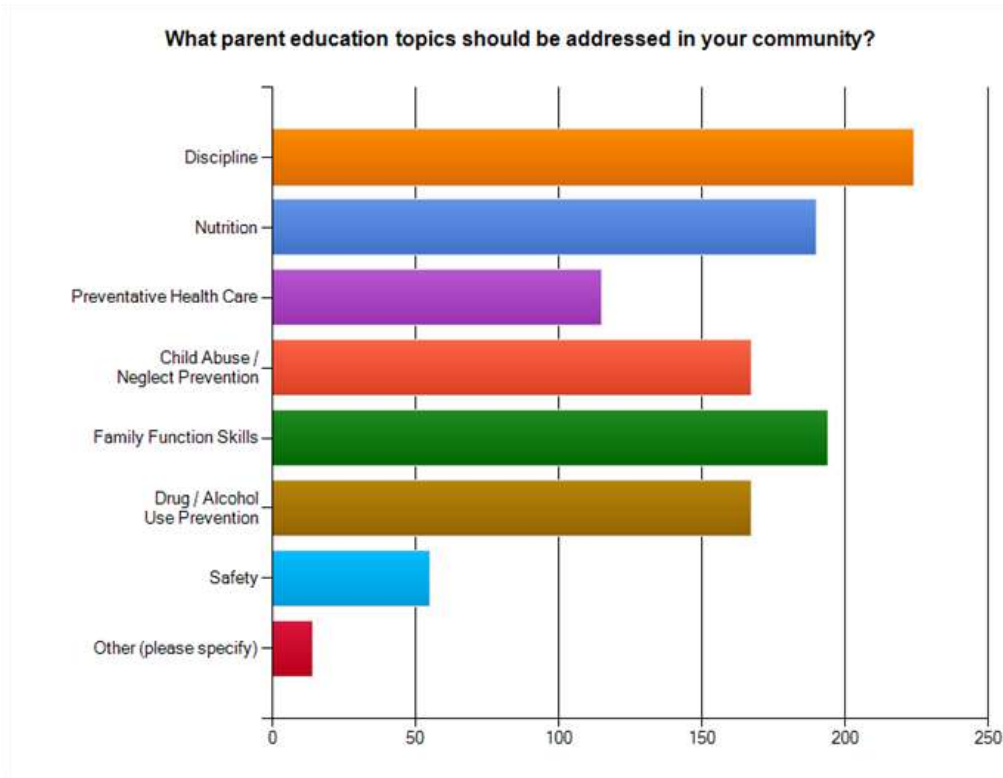
Parents responding to the survey indicated that, *when not in school or Head Start*, children are most usually cared for by a *parent home with child* followed by *other relative care*.

According to the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, in 2009, average daily Child Care Cost in the area was Infant / \$12.47, pre-school / \$10.89 and school-age / \$8.44.

Of the families enrolled in the WCMCAA Head Start and Early Head Start Programs, 57% are single-parent homes. Results of the WCMCAA 2011 CNA Survey show **child care** was ranked as the number one issue for single parents.

Parent Education

Family / Parent education was ranked as the third highest issue for families. Education topics that should be addressed are shown in the chart below:



Note: In Cedar County, Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention was ranked as the most needed topic.

Current Education Resources Available

Educational resources vary throughout the nine county West Central Missouri Community Action Agency service area. Education starts with Parents as Teachers, child care centers such as Head Start and other licensed facilities. There are 54 public schools. Vocational schools and advanced education are easily accessed to a select few counties. Life skills and adult education classes are provided by West Central Missouri Community Action Agency as well as by churches and health centers. Some programs provide educational opportunities to help adults achieve a high school diploma or GED, regardless of age; however resources for obtaining a GED in the rural areas are declining. There are free literacy programs dedicated to helping illiterate adults learn to read and write in select areas.

Strategy questions?

What information is still needed in order to develop effective strategies for addressing the problem?

- Which vocational skills are most needed from employer point of view?
- What strategies have been implemented in Hickory and Henry County to address high school dropout rates that could be duplicated in other counties?
- What partnerships with high schools, vo-tech schools, colleges and universities could be developed for greater access to GED, vocational and college education?
- In what locations are evening / weekend child care most needed? If available, how many parents would use evening / weekend care? What major employers would have the greatest interest in partnering around child care needs?

Energy & Housing

Problem Statement(s):

Need for **affordable housing** options.

Need to address **housing repair** issues.

Need to address low-income households' struggle to pay **utility expenses**.

Need to increase the availability of **emergency shelters**.

Sources

Results of the WCMCAA 2011 CNA Survey show **64.9%** of respondents feel that **housing** is an issue in their community, ranking the top three issues as: *1) cost of rent/house payment 2) cost of rent/utility deposit and 3) lack of down payment to purchase a house.*

In addition to *cost of rent/ house payment*, Henry County respondents ranked *housing needs repair* as a top issue.

Results of the WCMCAA 2011 CNA Survey show *lack of income for utilities and fuel* as the number one **emergency situation**.

Overall, *lack of emergency shelters* ranked third in **emergency situations**, however, the issue ranked as the most important emergency situation in Vernon County.

The median housing unit age in the area ranged from 21 years in Cass County to 35 years in Bates County. Fair Market Rent for a 2 bedroom in the area ranged from \$501 in Benton County to \$754 in Cass County.

Current Energy and Housing Resources Available

Each of the nine counties served by West Central Missouri Community Action Agency has its own community resources dedicated to providing affordable housing to people who are not able to procure it on their own. These organizations are usually funded by government programs, local and national banks, contracts with private entities, local foundations and other non-profit organizations. Elderly & disabled housing units are available with income based assistance. Housing is provided by shelters for domestic and or child abuse in select counties. Emergency housing is also available through various entities.

Energy assistance is provided by collaborations of ministerial alliances, local programs as well as through West Central Missouri Community Action Agency's distribution of LIHEAP & ECIP funding.

Home repair for energy efficiency is available through West Central Missouri Community Action Agency throughout each community and county.

Strategy questions?

What information is still needed in order to develop effective strategies for addressing the problem?

- How has the foreclosure rate changed in our area over the last couple of years?
- What type of emergency shelters are needed? Homeless, domestic violence, youth, disaster or severe weather?

Family and Economic Security

Need to increase **employment** opportunities within the area.

Need for **financial management** education and resources.

Need for affordable and dependable **transportation**.

Sources

When asked, *what information would improve your situation / the life of your family and the biggest challenges for families*, the responses were overwhelming related to **employment and financial issues**.

When asked, *what services or resources does your community need*, the response was overwhelmingly related to **employment**, with **transportation** a distant second.

When asked, *what would it take to end poverty in your community*, the response was overwhelmingly related to **employment**.

Employment

Results of the WCMCAA Community Needs Assessment Survey show **90.4%** of respondents felt that **employment** is an issue, ranking the top three employment issues as: *1) Unable to find jobs in the area 2) Lack of good paying jobs with benefits and 3) long commute to jobs*.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, in January 2011 the highest unemployment in the service area was 15.2% in Morgan County. Cedar (9.1%) and Vernon County (8%) were the only counties below 10%.

Financial Issues

Results of the WCMCAA 2011 CNA Survey show 70.9% of respondents felt **financial matters** are an issue in their community, ranking the top three issues as: *1) Difficulty in setting or maintaining a budget 2) difficulty with money management and 3) too much debt*.

Income

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 median household income for the service area was below the statewide median of \$46,847 for all counties, except Cass, which was \$61,922. Hickory County had the lowest median household income at \$28,988. The average hourly wage for the service area, at \$12.47, was also lower than the statewide average of \$19.24. Hickory County again ranked lowest. Henry County had the highest average hourly wage at \$14.66.

Transportation

Results of the WCMCAA 2011 CNA Survey show 64.8% of respondents felt that **transportation** is an issue in their community, ranking the top three transportation issues as: *1) Lack of public transportation 2) cost of buying or down payment on a car 3) lack of credit to buy a car*.

Note: Transportation is identified as an issue regarding employment, education and health care.

Current Family and Economic Security Resources Available

Community resources for both economic and family security are valuable social services, whether public or private and vary depending upon the need displayed. These resources, public or private, can serve a multitude of purposes. Employment opportunities are offered through West Central Missouri Community Action Agency's employment and training program as well as the career centers and other work force development programs. Family Support division, ministerial alliances, local businesses, transportation services, Head Start and many others assist impoverished people with various needs.

Strategy questions?

What information is still needed in order to develop effective strategies for addressing the problem?

- What strategies to address transportation have been implemented with success in other communities?
Areas to explore: Shuttle service through local partnerships, partnerships with Vo-Tech schools to provide auto repair for low-income, senior ride programs, transportation options for in-home clients.
- How many people would use public transportation if available? What age group would be most likely to use? What service routes would be most needed?
- What would attract employers to the area?
- What financial education delivery methods have been most effective?