



COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

20
24

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend our deepest gratitude to the Community Action Advisory Board (CAAB) and the CNA Task Force for their unwavering dedication and insightful contributions to the 2024 Clark County Community Needs Assessment. Their expertise and commitment have been instrumental in ensuring that this assessment reflects the diverse voices and needs of our community.

COMMUNITY ACTION ADVISORY BOARD (CAAB)

The Community Action Advisory Board (CAAB) represents a cross-section of the Clark County community including low-income residents, elected officials, and community representatives. This advisory board advocates on behalf of people who are low-income at the local, state, and federal levels to ensure services are available and equitable. *CAAB members include:*

Melanie Green, Chair
Alishia Topper, County Treasurer, Vice Chair
Rob Perkins, Evergreen School Board, Secretary
Amy Roark
Bridget McLeman
David Poland
Diana Perez, Vancouver City Council
Ernie Suggs, Washougal City Council
Jamie Spinelli
Joyce Cooper, Green Mountain School Board
Karyn Kameroff
Megan Mulsoff
Nickeia Hunter

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT TASK FORCE

The CNA Task Force was a team of CAAB members, community partners, and people with lived experience. *Members include:*

Amy Roark, CAAB Member
Cherise Billington, Community Member
Esra Khalil, Community Foundation of SW Washington
Jackie St. Louis, Co-Facilitator/Consultant
Laura Ellsworth, Council for the Homeless
Lauren Hendricksen, Clark County Public Health
Liz Kearny, Clark County Community Services
Melanie Green, CAAB Member
Morgan Gist, Recovery Café
Rickiesha Hinchon, Community Member

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

We are grateful for the collaboration and support of numerous community partners who played a vital role in this assessment. These community partners were instrumental in distributing the survey and raising awareness about opportunities to participate in the CNA process. A full list of partners can be found in the appendices.

Clark County Staff

Vanessa Gaston, Director
Abby Molloy, Program Coordinator
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CONSULTANTS

Community Needs Assessment Task Force

The CNA Task Force was an integral team who worked with staff over an 18-month period to develop every component of the CNA from reviewing the Survey of Needs, developing the Community Forums, and reviewing the final draft. The CNA Task Force reviewed information and provided feedback throughout the process, making sure to incorporate an equity lens so that all the components were accessible to low-income community members.

Survey of Needs Data Review

Rachel Williams, with Rachel Williams Consulting, vetted all the data from the 893 responses to the Survey of Needs looking for bias in the responses and created charts based on survey responses and the comparison chart.

Assessment

Jackie St. Louis was consulted throughout the development and implementation of the Community Needs Assessment. Jackie's input was integral in collecting feedback from the community, incorporating an equity lens throughout the CNA process, and assessing the causes and conditions of poverty in Clark County by analyzing quantitative and qualitative feedback. His insights helped ensure that the assessment was inclusive and reflective of the community's diverse needs. Jackie also drafted the final assessment in partnership with Clark County staff.

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INTRODUCTION

The 2024 Clark County Community Needs Assessment (CNA) is a strategic initiative by Clark County Community Services, aimed at systematically identifying the most pressing needs of low-income populations within the county. Building on the efforts of the 2020 CNA, this updated assessment underscores the county's commitment to fostering an inclusive, supportive, and responsive environment for all community members, particularly those facing economic and social challenges.

This assessment is rooted in a participatory approach that prioritizes deep community engagement, leveraging a mixed-methods design to capture a broad spectrum of data. It incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data, gathered through surveys and community forums. Surveys were distributed in multiple languages and completed by people from low-income households. Virtual and in-person community forums were conducted with a broad range of stakeholders including service providers, elected officials, advocates, and low-income community residents. This methodology ensures a rich, multi-dimensional understanding of the community's needs, emphasizing inclusivity and representation.

Considering the recent global pandemic and its socioeconomic repercussions, this iteration of the CNA places a heightened focus on emerging needs and challenges. It seeks to understand the interplay between various factors affecting low-income communities, including employment barriers, educational access, housing affordability, healthcare accessibility, and the overall social support system. This perspective aims to inform the development of targeted, effective policies and programs that address the root causes of poverty and economic disenfranchisement in Clark County. Central to the 2024 CNA is the principle of interconnectedness, recognizing that the issues faced by the community are not isolated but are overlapping and multifaceted. The assessment aims to highlight these complexities and foster a collaborative approach among policymakers, service providers, community organizations, and residents. The ultimate goal is to mobilize resources, encourage innovative solutions, and strengthen partnerships to improve the quality of life for all Clark County residents. The 2024 Clark County Community Needs Assessment is not only a diagnostic tool but also as a roadmap for targeted action. It is intended to spark dialogue, inspire collective action, and guide the allocation of resources toward strategic, community-driven interventions that are equitable, effective, attainable, sustainable, and measurable. Through this document, Clark County reaffirms its dedication to understanding and meeting the needs of its most vulnerable populations, paving the way for a more inclusive and prosperous community.



STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

STRENGTHS

- 1 Comprehensive Data Collection:** The needs assessment utilized a variety of methods, including surveys and community forums, to gather data from a diverse range of individuals and communities. This comprehensive approach ensured that a broad array of perspectives, insights and experiences were captured.
- 2 Community Engagement:** The needs assessment actively engaged community members, allowing them to voice their concerns and priorities. This participatory approach ensured that the assessment was grounded in the needs and realities of the community such that strategies would be reflective of their desires.
- 3 Data Analysis:** The needs assessment employed the use of scientific data collection methods, used rigorous data analysis techniques to identify key themes and trends in the data and presented this in a format that can be understood by all community members. This analysis provided valuable insights into the most pressing needs and challenges facing the community.
- 4 Identification of Disparities:** The needs assessment identified disparities in access to services and resources based on factors such as race, income, and disability status. This information is crucial for developing targeted interventions to address these disparities.
- 5 Action-Oriented Recommendations:** The needs assessment concluded with actionable recommendations for addressing the identified needs and challenges. These recommendations provide a roadmap for stakeholders to improve services and support for the community.



LIMITATIONS

- 1 Self-Selection Bias:** Participation in the needs assessment was voluntary which can lead to self-selection bias. This bias could affect the representativeness of the sample and the generalizability of the findings.
- 2 Language and Accessibility Barriers:** Language and accessibility barriers may have limited the participation of certain groups in the needs assessment. Despite our best efforts to recruit and engage communities from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, we readily acknowledge that our efforts are still evolving and can be improved upon. This limitation could have led to an underrepresentation of these groups in the data.
- 3 Time Constraints:** The needs assessment may have been limited by time constraints, which could have impacted the

depth and scope of the data collection and analysis. As is true with any community-focused research process, timelines are subject to shift due to unforeseen challenges. This limitation could have affected the comprehensiveness of the assessment.

- 4 Limited Sample Size from Rural Regions:** The needs assessment may have had limited participation from certain geographic areas, specifically more rural areas of Clark County. This was especially true for the community forums, of which one had to be rescheduled due to inclement weather, affecting the eventual turnout. This limitation could affect the generalizability of the findings to the broader community.

COMMITMENT TO RACIAL EQUITY

The importance of racial equity can never be overstated, and Clark County has experienced a period of significant growth. ↪¹The population of Clark County, Washington, in 2022 was 504,091, marking a 6.5% increase from the 2019 estimate of 473,252. For comparison, the US population grew 1.5% and Washington's population grew 2.3% during that period. In 2022, Clark County was more diverse than it was in 2019. In 2022, the White (non-Hispanic) group made up 75% of the population compared with 77.3% in 2019. Between 2019 and 2022, the share of the population that is Hispanic/Latinx grew the most, increasing 1.1 percentage points to 11.4%.

As a result of Clark County becoming more diverse, the needs and culture of the community are changing, requiring that services and programs reflect the diversity of the residents who most need them. As discussed below, complex systems of generational marginalization and ongoing structural discrimination lead persons of color, including those who are Black, Indigenous, Hispanic/Latinx, Asian, and Pacific Islander, to experience poor social, economic, and health outcomes at significantly higher rates than people who are White. This reality underscores the need for approaches that are informed by the lived expertise of community members who are most marginalized. Though we made our best attempt to engage those groups, we know that there is still much work to be done to continue building relationships with groups that are disenfranchised.

Addressing the disparities in our community requires a multifaceted approach that considers the lived expertise of marginalized community members. It calls for the development of culturally competent services that are attuned to the specific needs of diverse populations. This includes providing language access services, hiring a diverse workforce, and implementing policies that promote equity in education, housing, and employment. Moreover, community engagement is crucial in understanding and addressing the needs of diverse populations. By involving

community members in decision-making processes and leveraging the strengths of local organizations, Clark County can create more inclusive and effective programs.

METHODOLOGY

DESIGN

The methodology of the 2024 Clark County Community Needs Assessment was designed to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive approach to understanding the multifaceted needs of the community, with a particular focus on low-income populations. The methodology was collaboratively developed by the CNA team which included Clark County staff, the CNA Task Force, and an independent third-party consultant. The approach combined quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to capture a holistic view of the challenges faced by residents. Additionally, the CNA team conducted desk research and consulted secondary data sources to contextualize the findings within broader social and economic trends affecting Clark County and the region. This comprehensive approach ensured that the assessment was grounded in robust data and reflective of the community's diverse perspectives.

SURVEY DISTRIBUTION AND COLLECTION

The CNA utilized a structured survey distributed across Clark County to gather quantitative data on the needs of low-income families and individuals. The survey was made available in English, Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, and Chuukese to ensure wide accessibility and inclusivity. Distribution channels included:

- Online distribution through the Clark County Community Services website, social media platforms, news releases and email newsletters to reach a broader audience.
- Physical distribution through partner organizations, including

non-profits, social service agencies, faith-based organizations, and community centers which directly serve the target population.

To encourage participation, the survey was designed to be concise, taking approximately 15 minutes to complete. Respondents were assured of their anonymity and the confidentiality of their responses.

COMMUNITY FORUMS

Community forums were conducted in virtual and in-person formats across Clark County in cities that included Camas, Ridgefield, and Vancouver, allowing for broad participation, geographical representation, and adherence to social distancing guidelines. ↪² The Vancouver forum was also recorded by the local government access channel, CVTV, and made available for viewing with options to provide feedback online. The forums were structured to elicit feedback on the survey findings, generate discussion on unaddressed needs, and gather suggestions for community improvements. Additional elements of the community forums included:

- Presentation of survey data through written, visual, and verbal formats.
- Physical copies of the survey data in English, Spanish, Russian, and Chuukese.
- Anonymous comment boxes for public feedback on survey data.
- Facilitated discussions focusing on themes identified in preliminary survey results.
- Additional opportunities to provide feedback through physical and virtual satisfaction surveys.



DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

Data from the surveys and community forums were analyzed to identify patterns, trends, and areas of concern. The findings were compiled into a detailed report, highlighting the most pressing needs of the community, and providing a basis for targeted interventions. The methodology of the 2024 Clark County CNA reflects a commitment to inclusivity, thoroughness, and responsiveness to the community's diverse needs. By employing a multi-faceted approach, the assessment aims to inform the development of effective policies and programs that address the root causes of poverty and economic disenfranchisement in Clark County.



POPULATION PROFILE

Clark County, located in the southwestern part of Washington state, has experienced significant growth and diversification in recent years. ↪³ According to American Community Survey 2022 5-year estimates, the county's population was estimated at 504,091, marking a 6.5% increase from the 2019 5-year estimate of 473,252. This growth reflects the county's vibrant and expanding community.

The American Community Survey was able to determine poverty status for 99.1% (499,749) of the Clark County population and estimates that 8.6% of people in Clark County currently live below the Federal Poverty Level. ↪⁴ The federal poverty level, or FPL, is an economic measure used to decide whether a person's or family's income level qualifies them for certain federal benefits and programs. The FPL is supposed to represent the set minimum income a family needs for food, clothing, transportation, shelter, and other necessities. However, the formula used to calculate the FPL has not been updated since its inception in the 1960s and does not take into account many of the costs common in today's society. For example, it does not take childcare costs into consideration, assuming that one parent will be home with children.

The tables that follow on pages 11-14 reflect demographic data of those for whom poverty status was determined.



DEMOGRAPHICS

Age: The county has a diverse age range, with 39.1% of the population aged 35-64, 23% under 18 years, 21.9% aged 18-34, and 16.1% aged 65 and over. The Clark County age distribution is similar to the metropolitan area, state, and nation, and children ages 0-17 experience the highest rates of poverty in all areas shown.

Table 1. Population by age

	Age 0-4		Age 5-17		Age 18-34		Age 35-64		Age 65+	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Clark County, WA total population	28,269	5.7%	86,344	17.3%	109,272	21.9%	195,503	39.1%	80,361	16.1%
Clark County, WA below poverty	3,432	7.7%	9,064	20.5%	12,591	28.4%	13,805	31.2%	5,423	12.2%
OR-WA Metro Area total population	128,466	5.2%	383,555	15.5%	571,177	23.1%	1,004,150	40.6%	384,934	15.6%
OR-WA Metro Area below poverty	14,267	6.0%	41,632	17.4%	70,252	29.4%	80,309	33.6%	32,291	13.5%
Washington total population	431,325	5.7%	1,202,710	15.9%	1,777,446	23.5%	2,936,174	38.9%	1,205,987	16.0%
Washington below poverty	54,426	7.3%	140,447	18.8%	216,327	28.9%	238,918	32.0%	97,420	13.0%
United States total population	18,654,535	5.8%	53,380,823	16.5%	72,787,641	22.5%	125,100,086	38.7%	53,352,363	16.5%
United States below poverty	3,369,529	8.3%	8,632,822	21.3%	10,689,150	26.4%	12,520,631	30.9%	5,309,452	13.1%

DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender: The Clark County gender distribution is similar to the other distributions, with 50.3% of the population identifying as female and 49.7% identifying as male. Importantly, the available data from the U.S. Census Bureau only includes “male” and “female” gender identities. Therefore, this data does not provide a complete representation of Clark County gender demographics.

Table 2. Population by gender

	Male		Female	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Clark County, WA total population	248,566	49.7%	251,183	50.3%
Clark County, WA below poverty	19,410	43.8%	24,905	56.2%
OR-WA Metro Area total population	1,235,115	50.0%	1,237,167	50.0%
OR-WA Metro Area below poverty	108,608	45.5%	130,143	54.5%
Washington total population	3,799,038	50.3%	3,754,604	49.7%
Washington below poverty	340,084	45.5%	407,454	54.5%
United States total population	159,672,006	49.4%	163,603,442	50.6%
United States below poverty	18,109,332	44.7%	22,412,252	55.3%

DEMOGRAPHICS

Race: The racial composition of Clark County is predominantly White (79.5%), with smaller percentages of Asian (4.7%), Black or African American (2.0%), Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (0.8%), and American Indian and Alaska Native (0.6%). Clark County has a higher white population and lower Black, Indigenous, and people of color population when compared to the state, metropolitan area, and the nation. Additionally, all communities of color in Clark County disproportionately experience poverty at a higher rate than the white population.

Table 3. Population by race

	American Indian/Alaska Native		Asian		Black or African American		Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander		White		Other Race		Multiple Races	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Clark County, WA total population	3,212	0.6%	23,338	4.7%	9,860	2.0%	3,811	0.8%	397,503	79.5%	15,606	3.1%	46,419	9.3%
Clark County, WA below poverty	306	0.7%	1,859	4.2%	1,669	3.8%	1,113	2.5%	31,619	71.4%	2,365	5.3%	5,384	12.1%
OR-WA Metro Area total population	19,460	0.8%	171,275	6.9%	70,511	2.9%	13,424	0.5%	1,864,689	75.4%	97,106	3.9%	235,817	9.5%
OR-WA Metro Area below poverty	2,849	1.2%	15,357	6.4%	15,851	6.6%	2,944	1.2%	162,064	67.9%	13,791	5.8%	25,895	10.8%
Washington total population	87,777	1.2%	698,268	9.2%	291,852	3.9%	51,847	0.7%	5,289,319	70.0%	391,512	5.2%	743,067	9.8%
Washington below poverty	16,972	2.3%	59,912	8.0%	49,537	6.6%	7,871	1.1%	455,418	60.9%	68,136	9.1%	89,692	12.0%
United States total population	2,692,978	0.8%	18,754,209	5.8%	39,695,427	12.3%	607,291	0.2%	213,295,033	66.0%	19,671,062	6.1%	28,559,448	8.8%
United States below poverty	608,547	1.5%	1,897,150	4.7%	8,159,391	20.3%	103,050	0.3%	21,525,577	53.6%	3,652,060	9.1%	4,215,809	10.5%

DEMOGRAPHICS

Ethnicity: When looking at ethnicity data from the ACS, Clark County has a lower total Hispanic and Latinx population (10.7%) when compared with the state, metropolitan area, and nation. For those living below the federal poverty level, there are significantly more Hispanic and Latinx persons when compared to the total population.

Table 4. Population by ethnicity

	Hispanic/Latinx		Non-Hispanic or non-Latinx	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Clark County, WA total population	53,445	10.7%	377,224	75.5%
Clark County, WA below poverty	7,733	17.5%	28,691	64.7%
OR-WA Metro Area total population	314,896	12.7%	1,746,481	70.6%
OR-WA Metro Area below poverty	44,063	18.5%	144,074	60.3%
Washington total population	1,016,427	13.5%	4,959,144	65.7%
Washington below poverty	159,170	21.3%	406,390	54.4%
United States total population	60,614,309	18.8%	190,513,343	58.9%
United States below poverty	10,447,540	25.8%	17,620,793	43.5%



DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

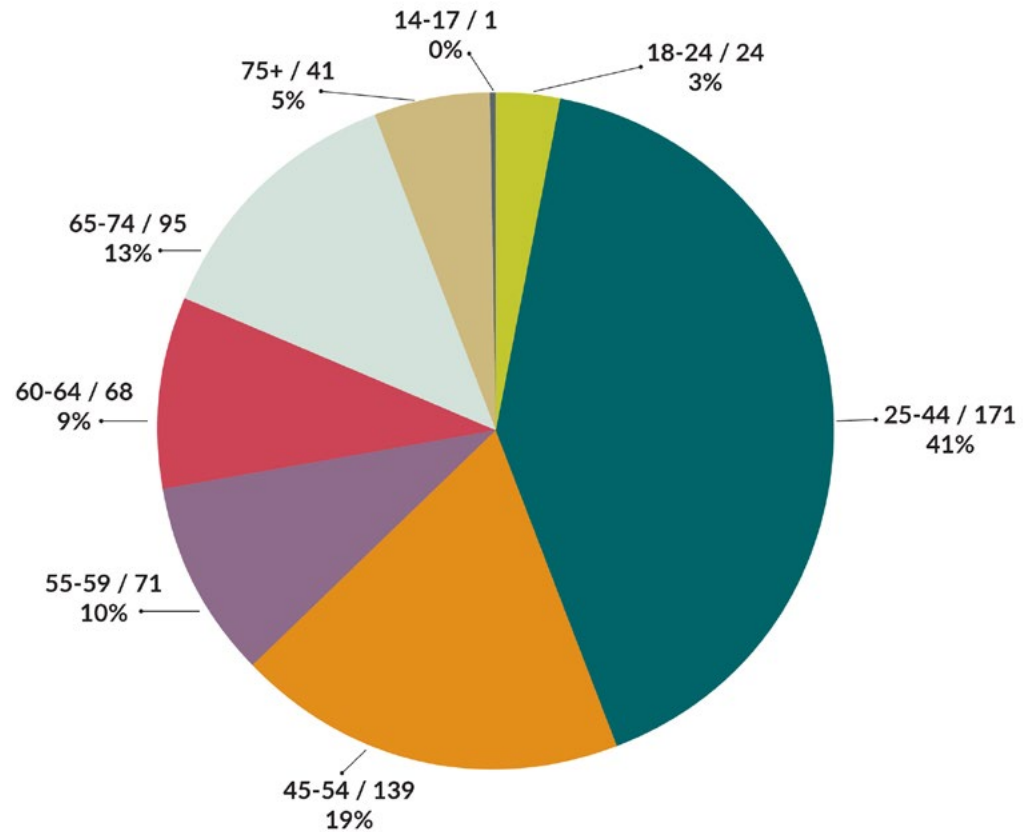
SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

The survey engaged a total of 893 respondents. The following sections detail the age, gender, race, ethnicity, educational attainment, family composition, primary language, medical insurance, health concerns, employment status, source of income, income levels, housing status, zip code, and military association of the participants. Survey respondents represent a diverse range of demographics which reflects the overall demographic distribution of low-income residents in Clark County.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

The age distribution of respondents shows a significant representation of the younger and middle-aged adult population, with 41% aged 25 to 44 and 19% aged 45 to 54. The survey also captured the perspectives of older adults, with 19% between 55 to 64, with 18% aged 65 and over. There were fewer respondents from younger age groups, with 3% aged 24 and under. The age distribution of survey respondents was similar to the age distribution of Clark County but was slightly skewed toward older adults.

Figure 1. Age
What is your age? / 745 responses

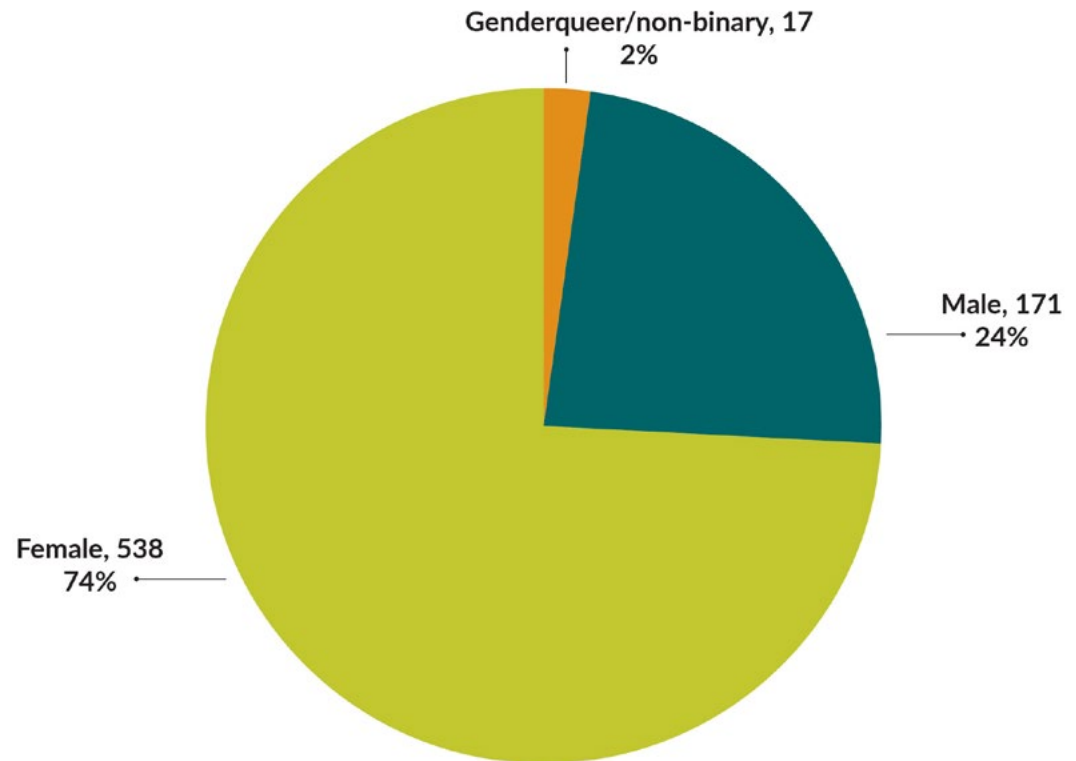


GENDER IDENTITY

The gender identity of respondents was predominantly female (75%), with a smaller representation of males (24%) and a modest representation of genderqueer or nonbinary individuals (2%). This gender distribution indicates a higher response rate among females, which is important to consider when analyzing the results.

Figure 2. Gender Identity

What gender do you identify? / 726 responses



RACE AND ETHNICITY

The racial composition of respondents was predominantly White or Caucasian (72%), with smaller percentages of Multiracial (6.5%), American Indian or Alaskan Native (5%), Black or African American (4%), Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (3%), and Asian (2%). This racial distribution was similar to the racial distribution of those experiencing poverty in Clark County.

The ethnic composition of survey respondents was primarily non-Hispanic or Latinx (48%), followed by Hispanic or Latinx (14%), and Slavic or Russian (10%). 21% of respondents selected that their ethnicity was none of the above, and 7% stated that they did not know. This composition was also similar to those living under the Federal Poverty Level in Clark County.

Figure 3. Race

What is your race? / 712 responses

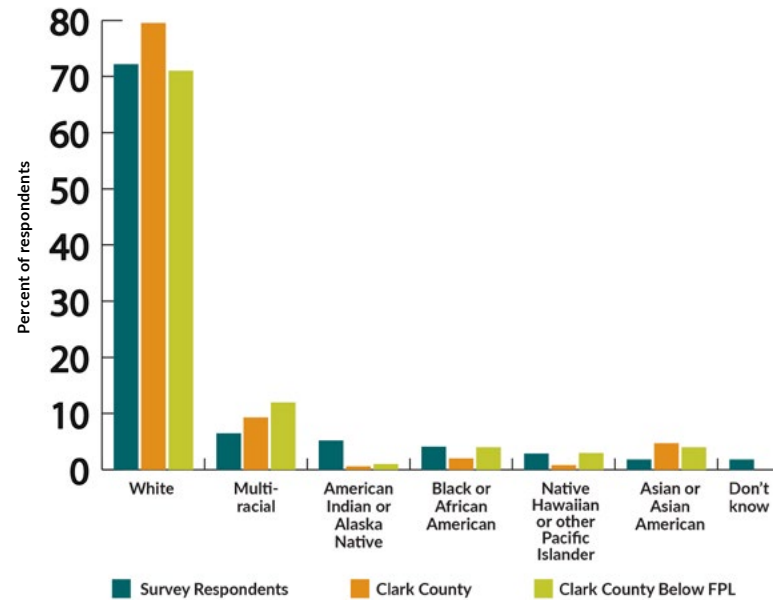
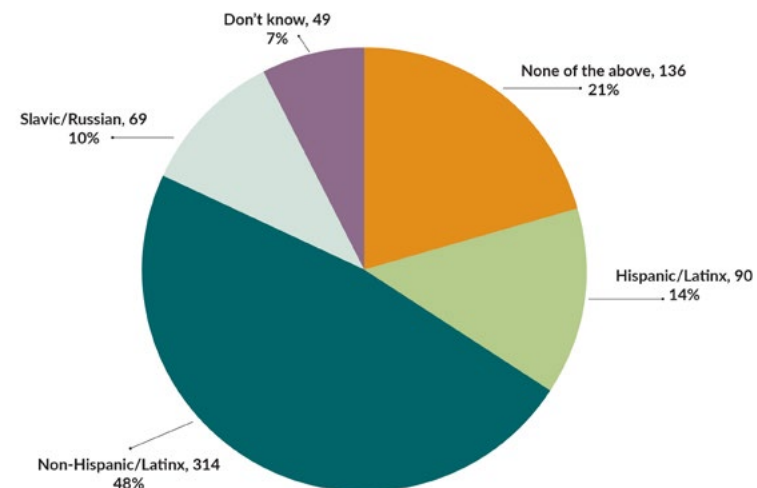


Figure 4. Ethnicity

What is your ethnicity? / 658 responses

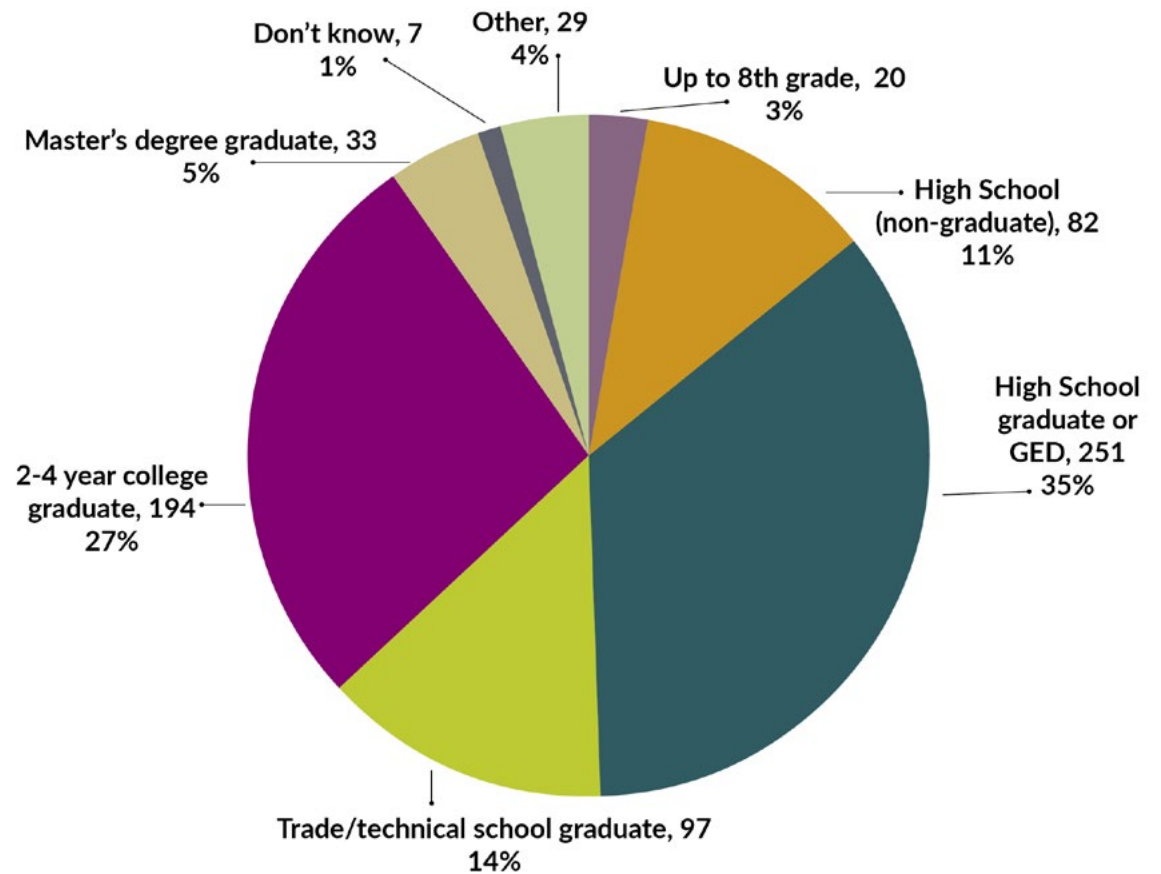


EDUCATION

The survey captured a wide range of educational backgrounds, with the highest group being high school diploma or GED holders (35%), followed by those with 2- or 4-year degrees (27%), trade or technical school graduates (14%), high school non-graduates (11%), and those with Master's degrees (4.6%).

Figure 5. Education

What is the highest level of education you have achieved? / 713 responses



FAMILY COMPOSITION

The family composition of respondents varied, with 31% being single-member family households, 22% composed of two persons, 28% being 3 to 4-member families, and 19% being 5 or more persons.

The majority of households reported having no youth members (50%), followed by 1 youth member (18%), 2-3 youth members (24%), and 4 or more youth members (8%).

The majority of households reported having no senior members (77%), followed by 1 senior (17%), 2 seniors (5%), and 3 or more seniors (1%).

Figure 6. Family Size
What is the size of your family? / 744 responses

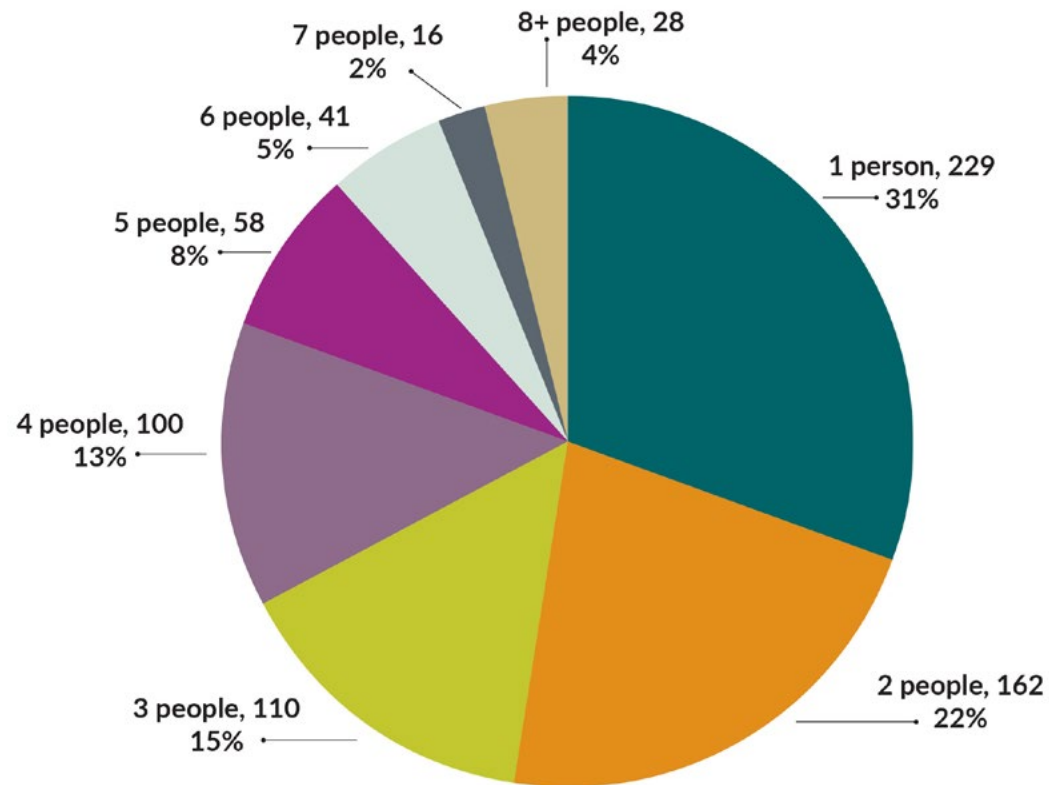


Figure 7. Youth Family Members

How many youths under age 18 are living with you?
727 responses

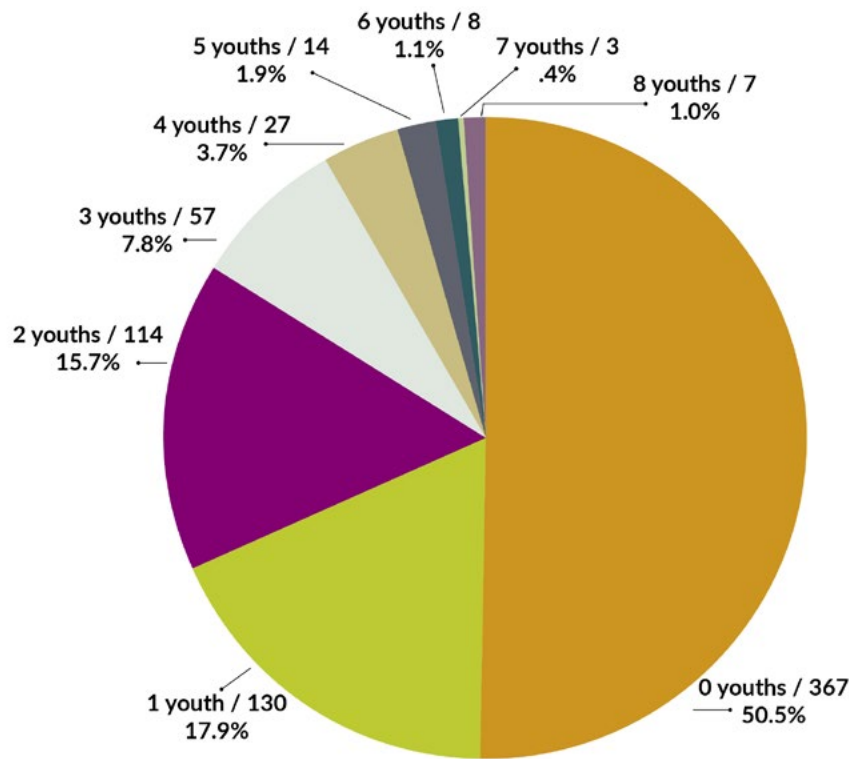
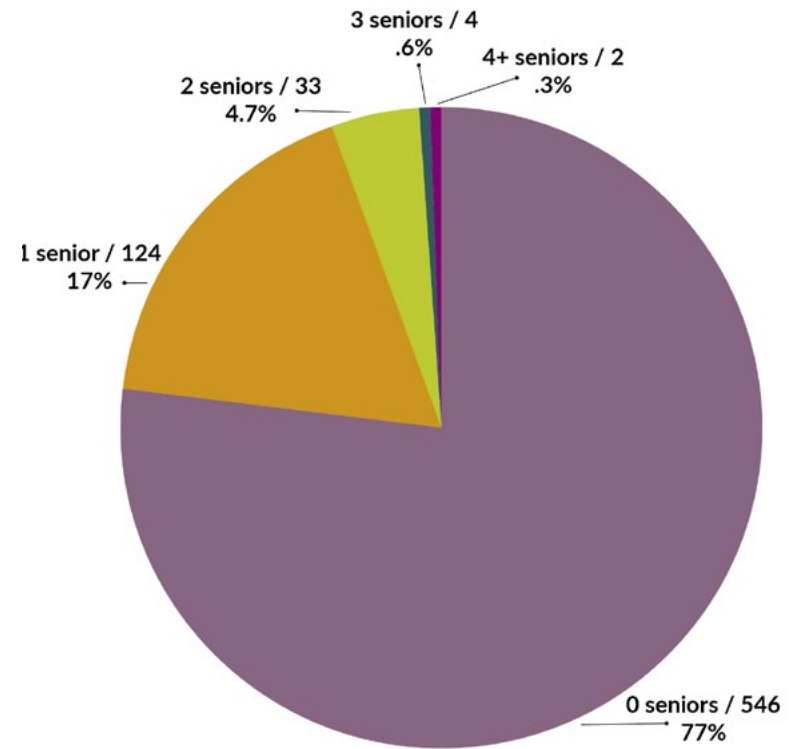


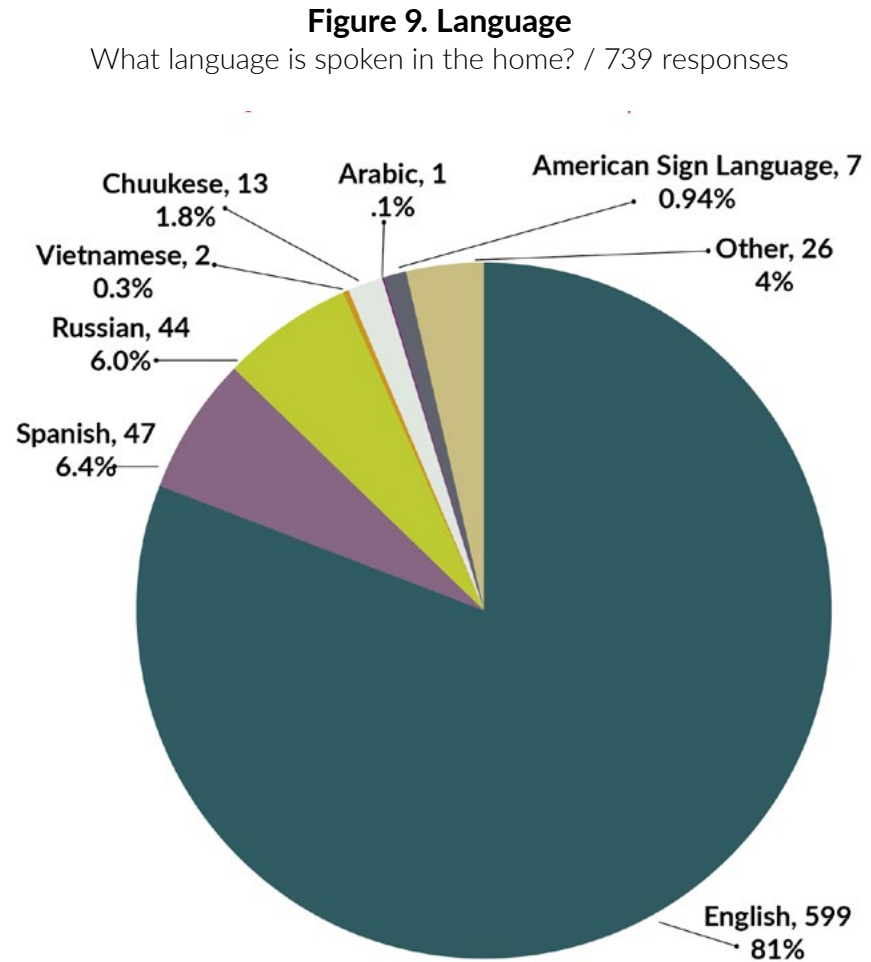
Figure 8. Senior Family Members

How many seniors aged 65 and older are living with you?
709 responses



PRIMARY LANGUAGE

The primary language spoken by respondents was English (81%), followed by Spanish (6.5%), Russian (6%), and Chuukese (2%). Respondents also indicated Vietnamese (0.3%), Arabic (0.1%), American Sign Language (0.9%), and other (3.5%) as primary languages.



MEDICAL INSURANCE AND HEALTH CONCERNS

Most respondents had some form of medical insurance, with State Medicaid being the most prominent (50%), followed by federal Medicare (24%), private insurance (14.5%), and Veteran’s Affairs insurance (3.5%).

Health concerns reported included mental health concerns (23%), physical disabilities (15%), substance use concerns (6.5%), and intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (6%).

These numbers are duplicated; a person may need support for more than one type of condition. Figure 10. 726 unduplicated responses, Figure 11. 665 unduplicated responses.

Figure 10. Insurance

What type of health insurance does your family have? / 963 responses

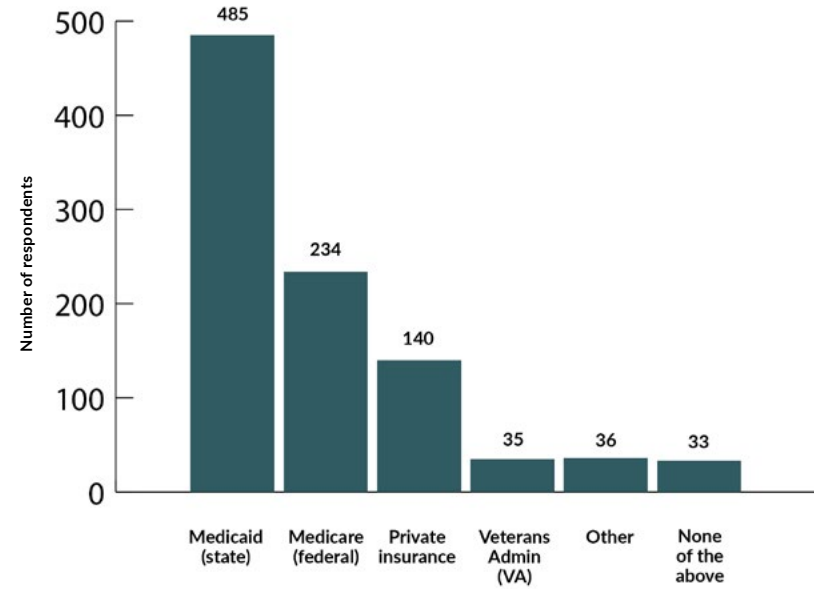
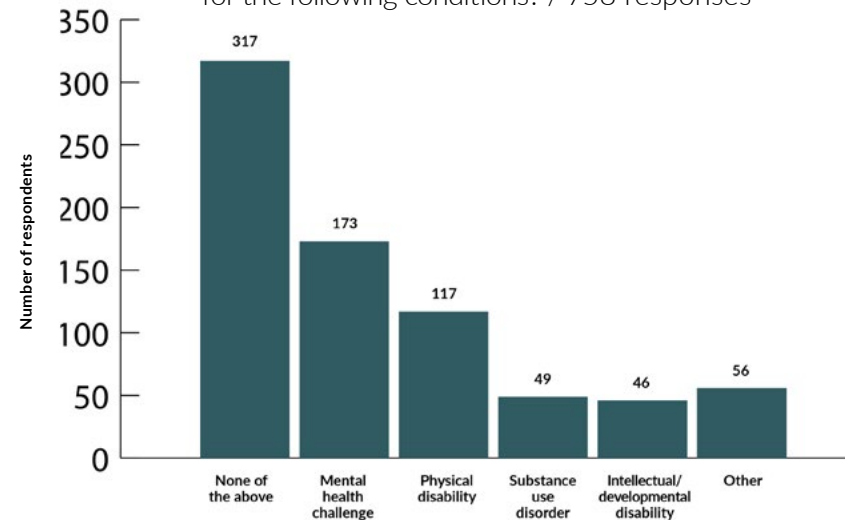


Figure 11. Support Services

Does anyone in your family need services for the following conditions? / 758 responses



EMPLOYMENT, SOURCE OF INCOME AND INCOME LEVEL

The source of income varied among respondents, with 43% being employed, 33% receiving Social Security benefits, and others receiving SSDI benefits (15%), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (8%), child support (7%), pension payments (6%), Aged, Blind, or Disabled (ABD) assistance (3%), or unemployment assistance (2%).

The majority of respondents had one employed family member (49%), followed by zero employed family members (31%), two employed family members (14%), three employed family members (4%), and four or more employed family members (2%).

Most respondents were considered low-income at the time of the survey, with 92% earning than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level and 71% earning less than 125% of the Federal Poverty Level.

Figure 12. Employment

How many family members are employed? / 596 responses

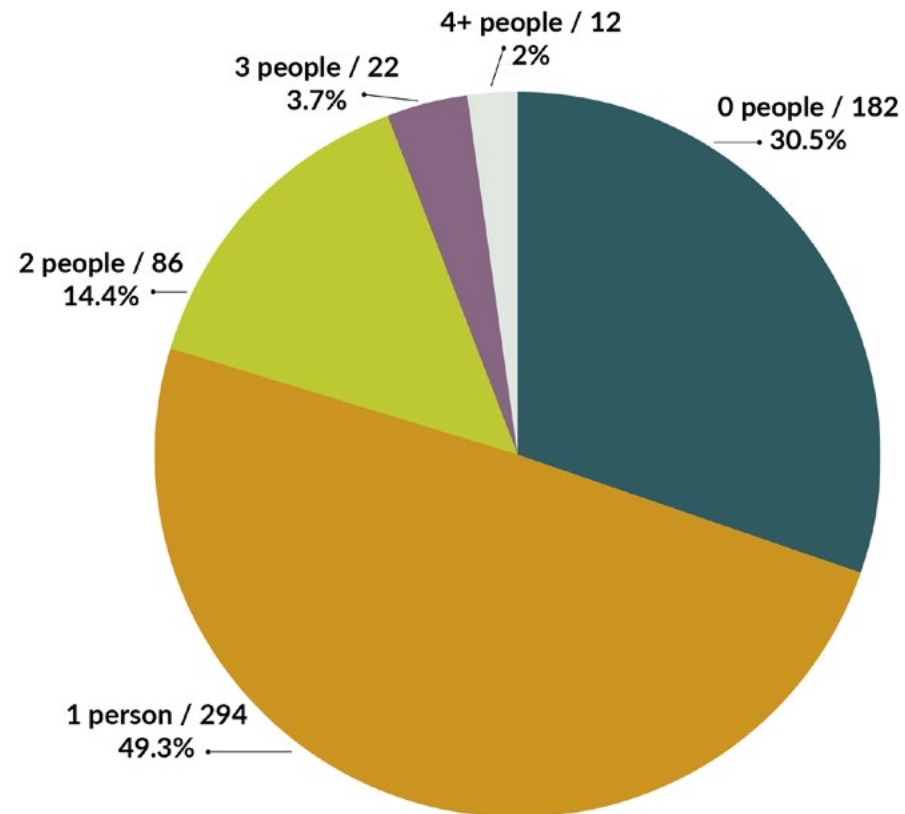


Figure 13. Income Source

What is your family’s source of income?
 923 duplicated responses
 689 unduplicated responses

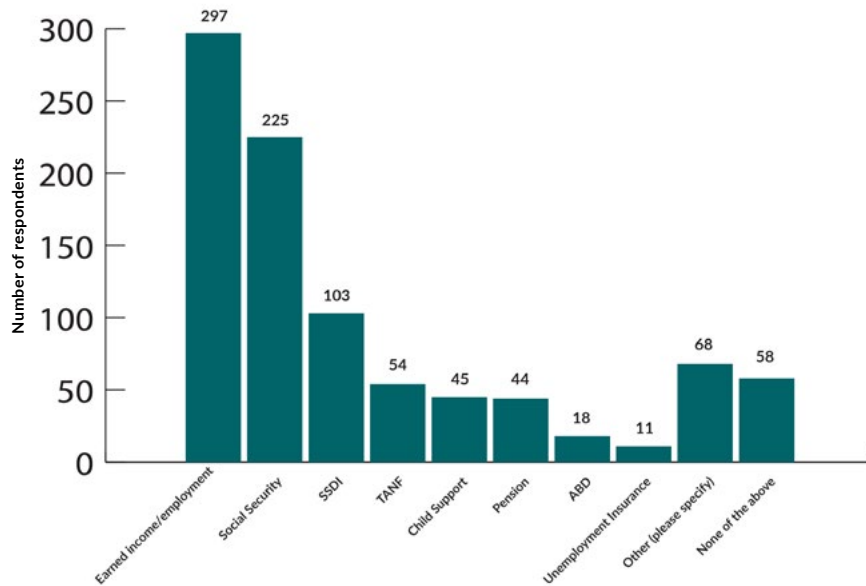
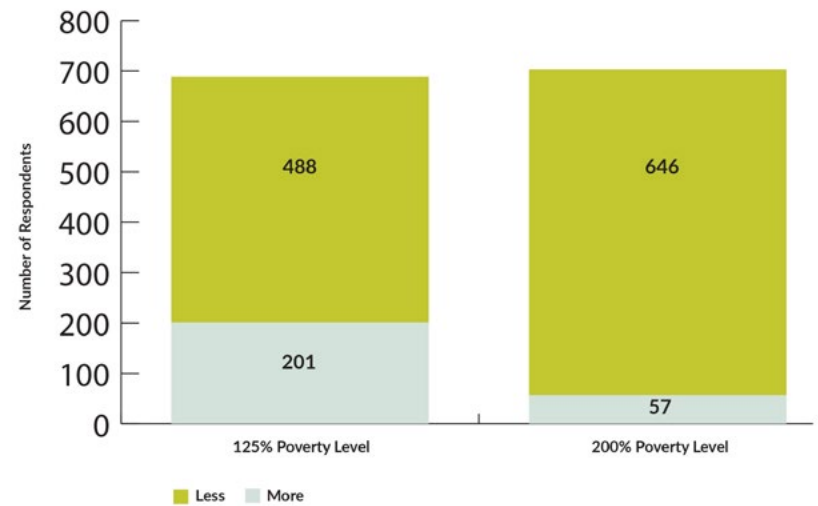


Figure 14. Income Level

Does your family earn more or less than the amount listed for your family size?
 689 responses (for 125% poverty level)
 703 responses (for 200% poverty level)



Respondents could select multiple answers to the Figure 13 question, so numbers may be duplicated. 689 unduplicated responses.

Figure 15. Housing

What is your current housing situation? / 718 responses

HOUSING STATUS AND ZIP CODE

The housing status of respondents showed that a majority were renting (65%), with a smaller percentage being homeowners (16.7%), houseless (11.6%), or living with friends (6.5%).

The majority of respondents lived in or close to the Vancouver area, but there were respondents from every zip code in Clark County. South and West Clark County has a higher representation than North or East Clark County.

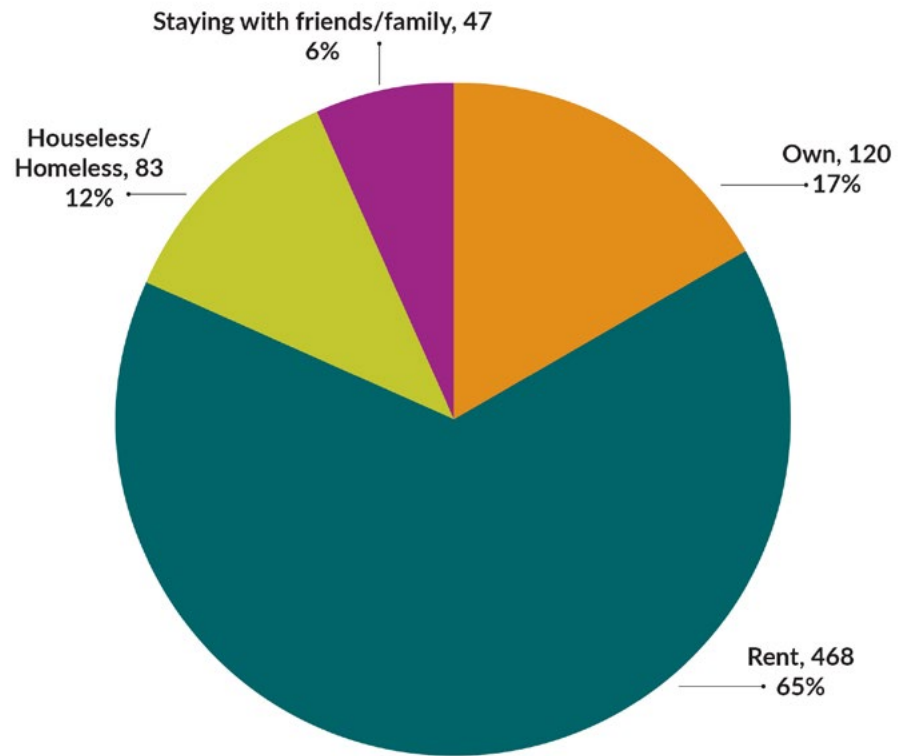


Figure 16. Zip Code

What is your current or last known zip code? / 709 responses

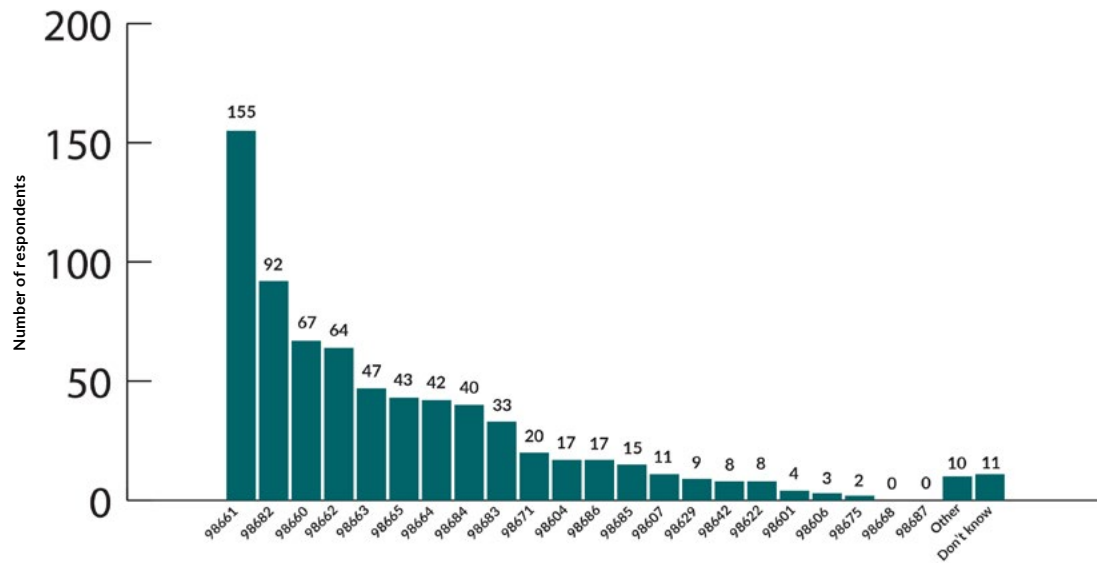


Figure 17. Zip Code Map

709 responses

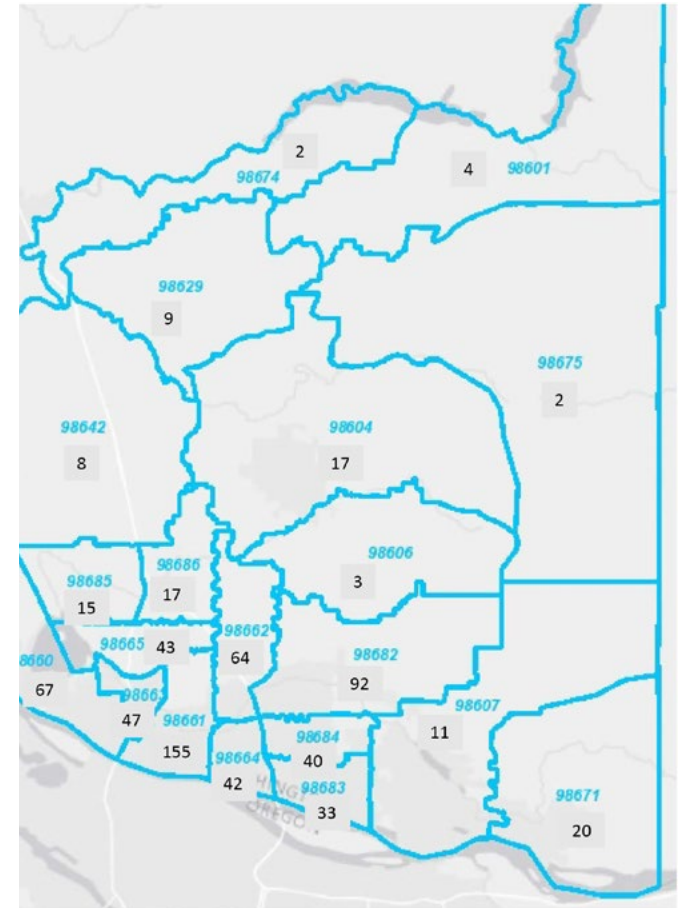
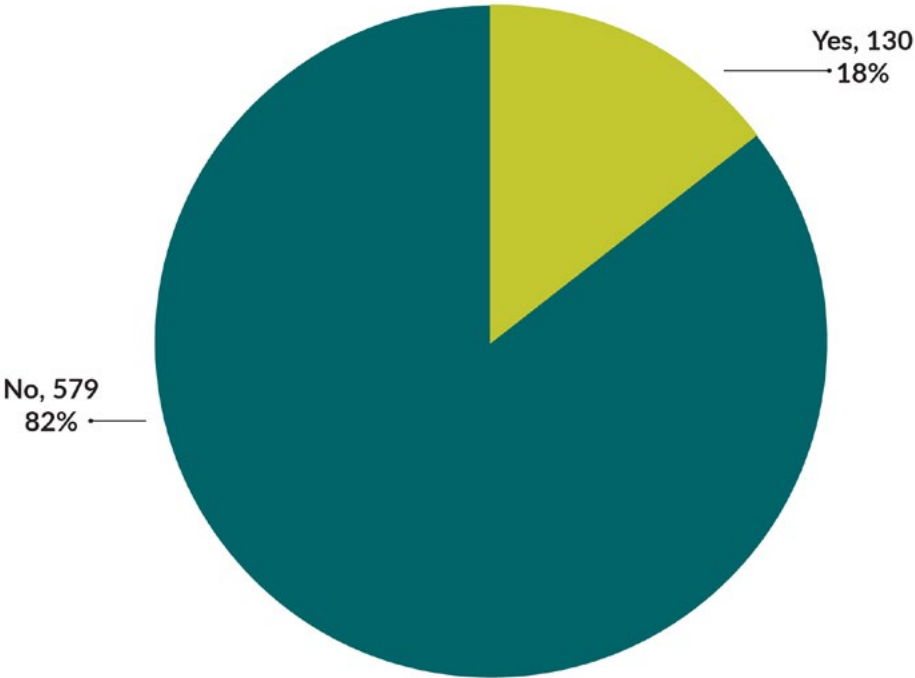


Figure 18. Military Service

Has anyone in your family served in the armed forces? / 709 responses

MILITARY SERVICE

Most respondents did not have a family member who had served in the armed forces (82%). 18% of participants stated that they did have a family member who had served in the armed forces.



REPRESENTATIVENESS

The diversity of the survey respondents provides a comprehensive overview of the community's demographics, although there may be areas of underrepresentation that should be addressed in future surveys. The high percentage of female respondents and the predominance of English speakers suggest that further efforts are needed to engage a more balanced gender distribution and non-English speaking populations. Additionally, the representation of various racial and ethnic groups, educational backgrounds, and family compositions offers valuable insights into the community's needs and challenges.

Overall, the survey's diversity and representativeness provide a solid foundation for understanding the needs and concerns of low-income families in Clark County, though continued efforts to enhance inclusivity and reach underrepresented groups will be important for future assessments.



COMMUNITY FORUM PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

A total number of 61 individuals participated in the community forums. Participants included a diverse cross-section of the community, including low-income residents, service providers, community leaders, and advocates.

Most community forum participants identified as White (52%), followed by multi-racial (10%), Black or African American (7%), Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (5%), Asian (2%), and Native American or Alaska Native (2%). When asked about racial identity, 7% of participants selected “don’t know/other” and 16% did not respond. The age distribution was skewed towards younger and middle-aged adults, with 41% of participants aged 24-44, 23% aged 45-54, 16% aged 55-69, and 2% aged over 70. 18% of participants did not respond to the question.



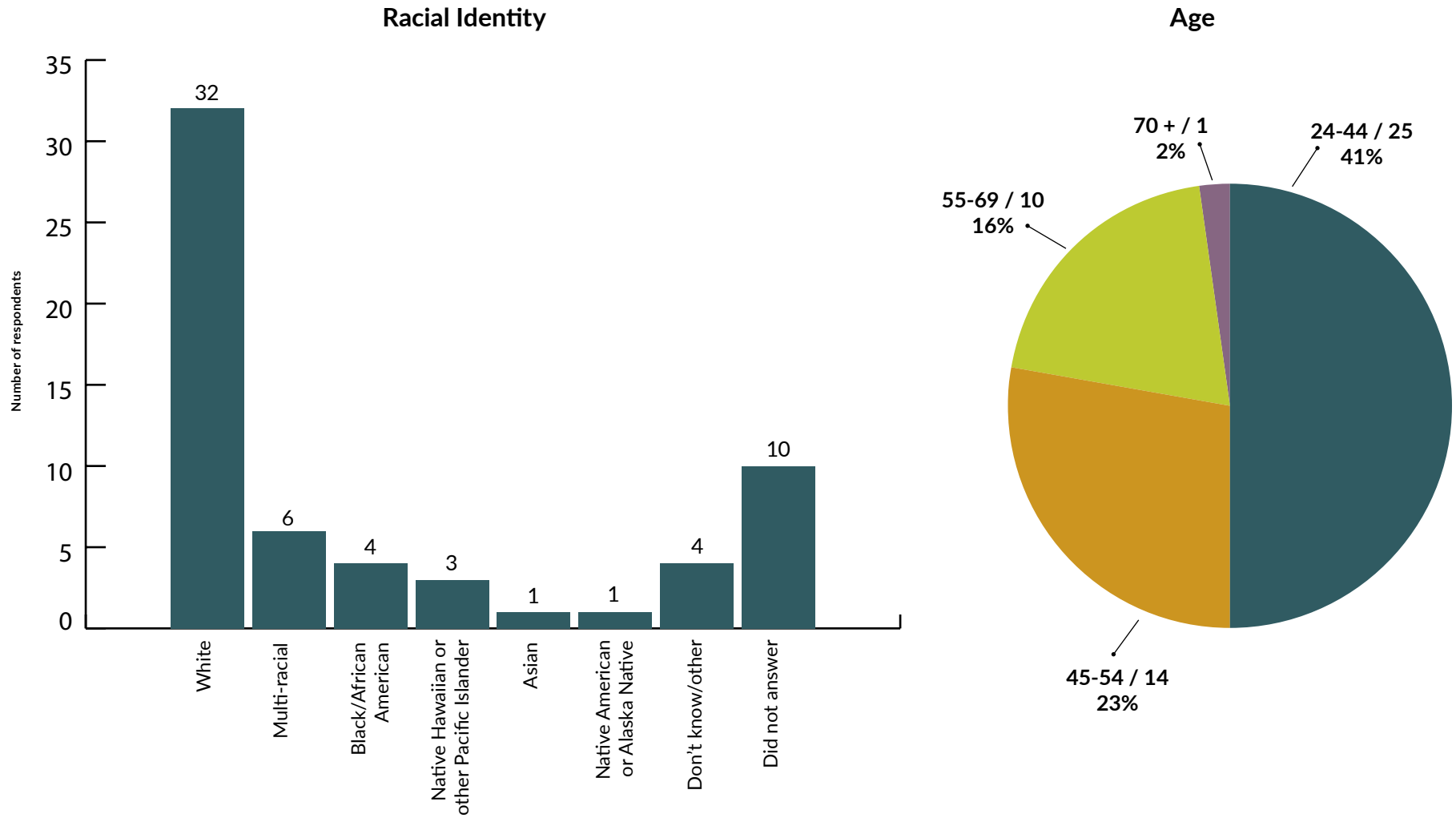
When asked where participants lived in Clark County, the majority said that they lived in Vancouver (52%). This was followed by Washougal (8%), Ridgefield (7%), unincorporated Clark County (3%), and Battle Ground (2%). 13% of participants stated that they lived outside of Clark County and 15% did not respond to the question. When asked how long participants had lived or worked in Clark County, the majority selected “over 10 years” (48%). This was followed by 6-10 years (11%), 2-5 years (10%), and 0-1 year (10%). 5% of participants selected “not applicable” and 16% did not respond to the question.

Most participants indicated that they were a service provider (49%). This was followed by advocate/volunteer (21%), engaged community resident (20%), elected official (3%), and member of a financially struggling household (3%). 13% of participants did not respond to the question. Participants were able to select multiple affiliations, so these numbers are duplicated.

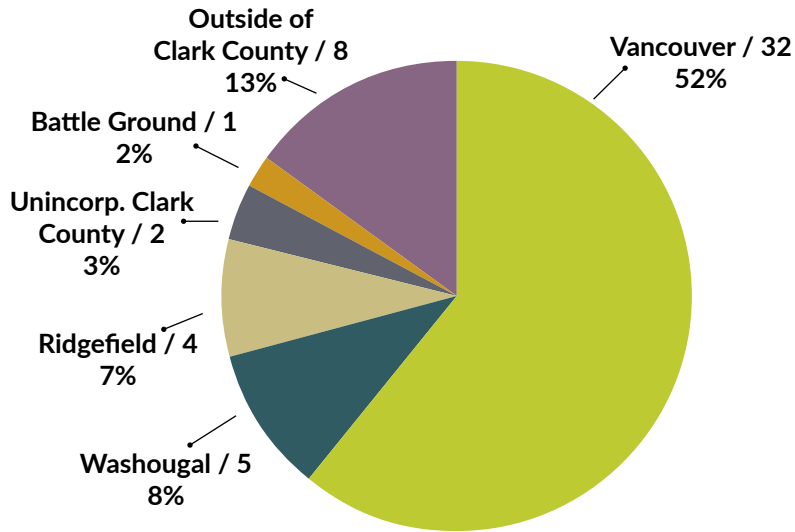
COMPARISON

The community forum demographics showed similarities to the survey respondents, with a high representation of White and younger to middle-aged participants. However, there were fewer participants from rural areas of Clark County, likely due to distance and transportation barriers. Additionally, only a few demographic statistics were collected at the community forum events when compared with survey statistics.

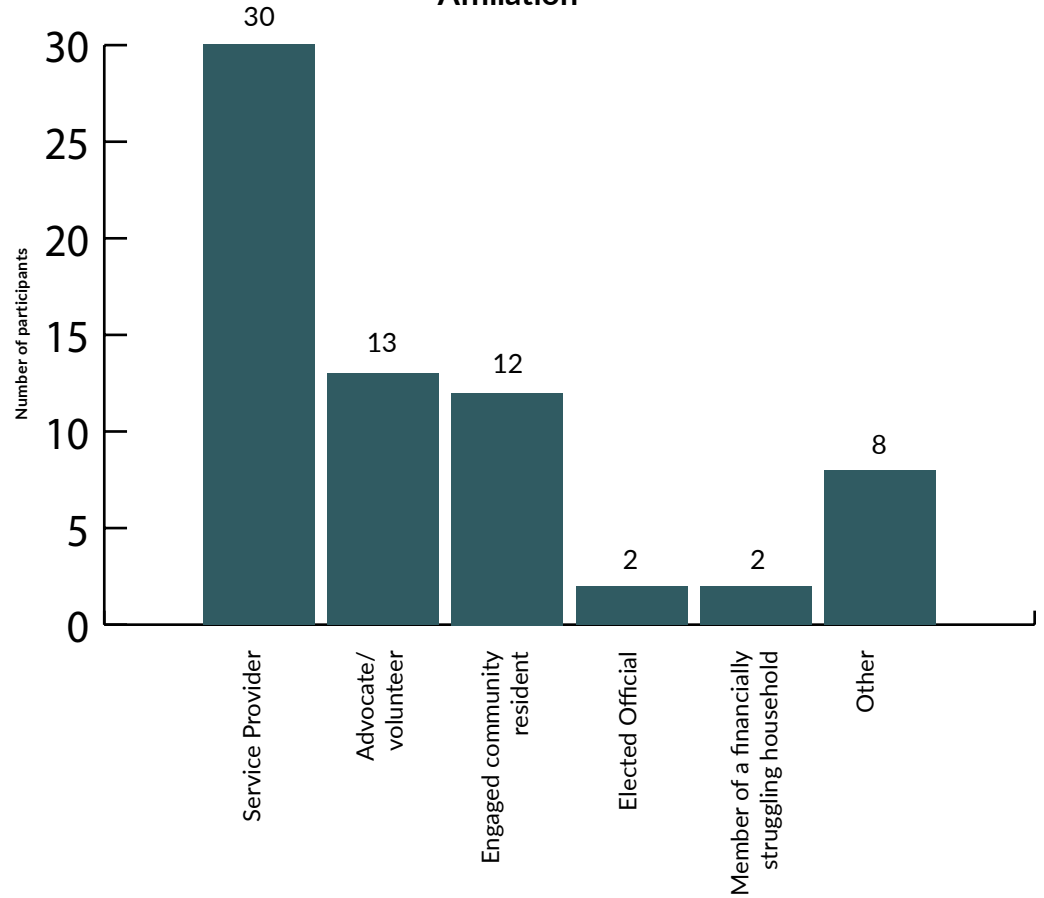
Figure 19. Community Forum Demographics



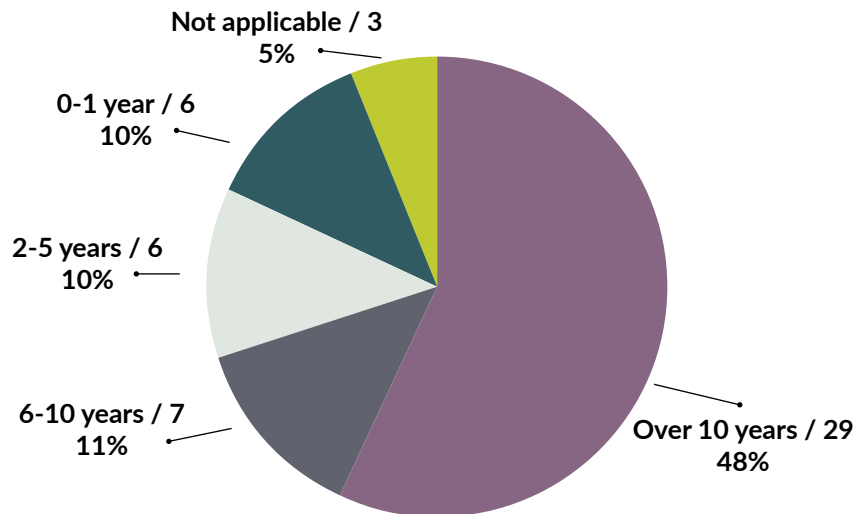
Where do you live?



Affiliation



How long have you lived or worked in Clark County?







KEY FINDINGS

OVERVIEW

Understanding the needs of a community is fundamental to providing effective support and services. These needs are not isolated but interconnected, reflecting the complex web of factors that influence individuals' overall wellbeing. By addressing these core needs, it is possible to lay a foundation for broader community resilience and development. Efforts to recruit community members for interviews were mostly unsuccessful, with the data collected from that group being statistically insignificant. As a result, the key findings are primarily based on the survey and community forum data.

PARTICIPATION

Surveys: A total of 893 individuals participated in the community survey, which was distributed online, through partner agencies, and through direct mail in multiple languages, including English, Spanish, Russian, and Chuukese. The survey aimed to capture a broad spectrum of data on the needs and challenges faced by low-income families and individuals in Clark County.

Community Forums: Four forums were held to complement the survey data with qualitative insights. One forum was conducted virtually, and three were held in-person in Ridgefield, Camas, and Vancouver. A total of 61 unduplicated attendees participated in these forums, providing feedback on the survey findings, and discussing unaddressed needs and suggestions for community improvements.

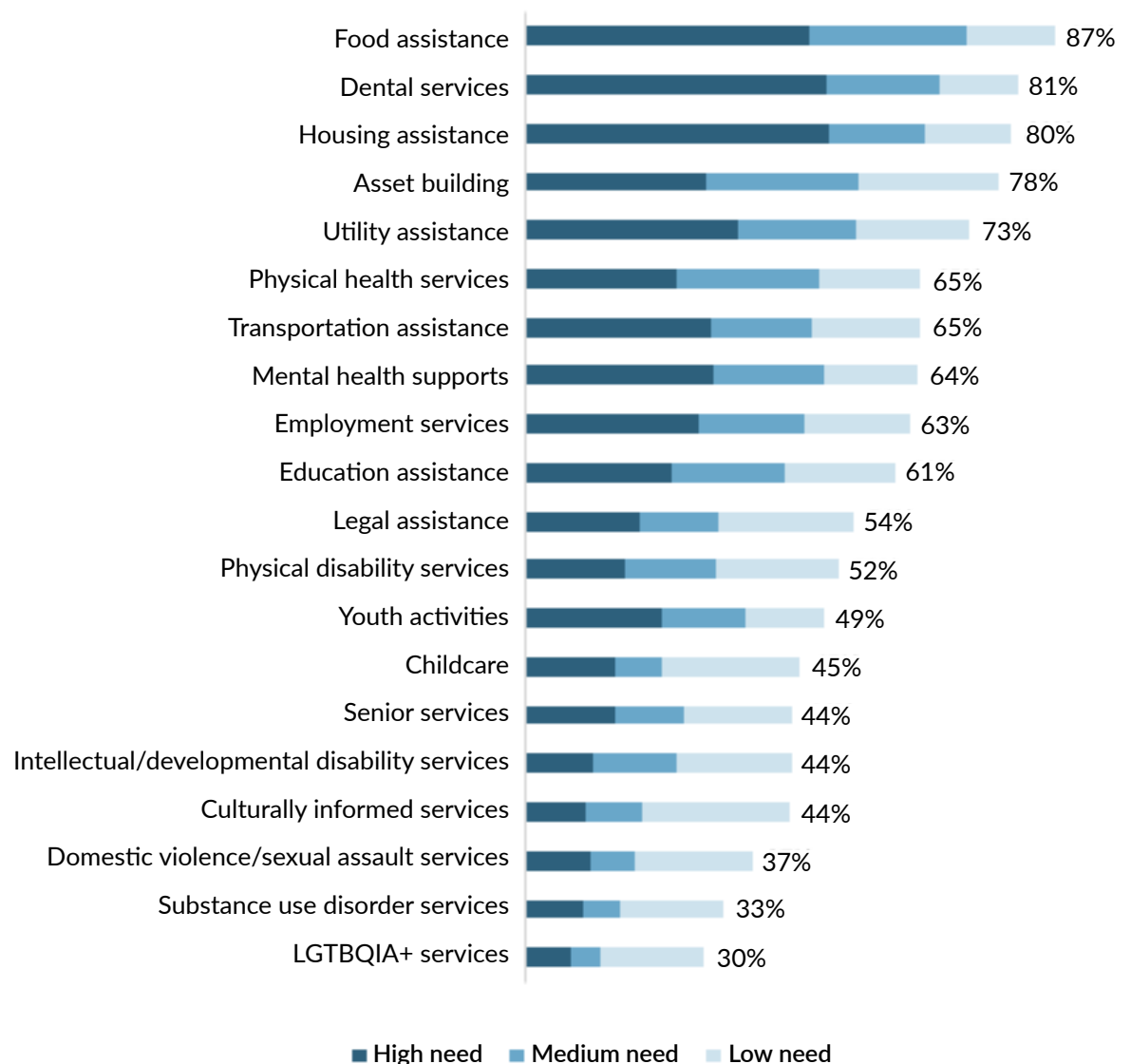
OVERALL NEEDS

The survey results and community forums highlighted several priority needs within the community. Survey respondents were presented with a list of various areas of need and asked to rank their family's need in the past year as high, medium, low, or not a need. Figure 20 shows that food assistance emerged as a critical need, with 87% of survey respondents identifying it as a need. This was followed by dental services (81%) and housing assistance (80%). Other notable needs included asset building (78%), utility assistance (73%), and physical health services (65%). The survey data indicates a consistent trend over the past years, with food and housing assistance consistently ranking as the top needs in the community (Table 5).

The majority of forum participants (74%) were not surprised by this data, though some participants expressed surprise that dental services emerged as such a high need. Other participants indicated that they believed childcare, culturally informed services, and language supports should have been higher on the list of overall needs. Forum participants also reaffirmed the need for affordable housing and food assistance, and cited housing and living costs as major barriers to financial stability.

We were interested in understanding more about the overall needs of certain populations within the service area. To explore this, we identified key demographic segments

Figure 20. Overall needs



Figures are based on the number of respondents who rated each of the twenty need areas, ranging from n=615 to n= 695

Table 5. Top needs compared to prior years

	2023 ¹	2020 ²	2017 ³
Food assistance	1	2	1
Dental services (new to service list in 2023)	2	N/A	N/A
Housing assistance	3	1	2
Asset building	4	3	6
Utility assistance	5	7	3
Mental health supports	6	4	11 ⁴
Physical health services	7	9	8
Transportation assistance	8	6	5
Employment services	9	5	4
Education assistance	10	8	7

¹ 2023 ranking is based on how many respondents identified a need as a "medium" or "high" need

² 2020 ranking is based on how many respondents identified a need as a "top" need, with a limit of how many needs could be selected

³ 2017 ranking is based on how many respondents identified a need as a "top" need

⁴ 2017 survey included substance abuse and mental health services in one category together

of interest and looked at how responses by these demographic groups compared with responses from other survey participants. Table 6 (page 38) shows each of the service areas along the left column and each of the demographic segments along the top row. The presence of an arrow indicates if that segment responded differently than all other respondents and the arrow shows directionality. Key observations included the following:

- Older respondents (55+) were overall less likely to have needs in most areas except for senior services.
- Non-English speakers were more likely to identify higher needs, compared with English speakers, for most services. A notable exception was mental health supports, where non-English speakers were less likely to perceive this as a need.

- Domestic violence services were acknowledged as a need most predominantly among the respondents with the lowest income, with the lowest levels of education, on Medicare/Medicaid, and those who identify as non-white or Hispanic/Latinx.

🔄⁵ These findings are consistent with recent studies indicating persistent challenges in accessing basic necessities. Access to these basic needs is closely linked to overall wellbeing and health outcomes, with individuals lacking adequate food, dental care, and stable housing at higher risk of experiencing poor physical and mental health outcomes, as well as economic instability. According to Feeding America, a leading hunger-relief organization, food insecurity affects millions of Americans, including those with incomes above the poverty line. This lack of consistent access to nutritious food can lead to health issues and exacerbate the challenges of living in poverty.

Access to nutritious food is closely linked to overall wellbeing and health outcomes. Individuals lacking adequate food are at higher risk of experiencing poor physical and mental health outcomes, as well as economic instability. Addressing food insecurity is essential for promoting health equity and ensuring that all residents have the resources they need to thrive. In addition to food assistance, access to dental services and stable housing remain critical needs in the community. Dental care is essential for maintaining overall health, yet many residents face barriers to accessing affordable dental services. Stable housing is closely linked to improved health outcomes and economic stability, highlighting the need for policies that support affordable housing and rental assistance programs.

Table 6. Overall needs

	% Need ⁵	Homeless	Doubled up	Income < 200% FPL	Income < 125% FPL	Veteran	55+	Non-English	Education < HS degree	Non-white or Hispanic	Medicare/Medicaid	Employed
Food assistance	73%			▲		▼	▼	▲			▲	
Dental services	68%											
Housing assistance	66%	▲		▲	▲		▼				▲	
Asset building	55%					▼	▼			▲		▲
Utility assistance	54%			▲	▲	▼	▼	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Mental health supports	49%	▲	▲				▼	▼				
Physical health services	48%	▲										
Transportation assistance	47%	▲		▲	▲						▲	▼
Employment services	46%	▲	▲	▲	▲	▼	▼	▲		▲		
Education assistance	43%						▼	▲		▲		▲
Youth activities	36%						▼	▲		▲		▲
Legal assistance	32%				▲			▲		▲	▲	
Physical disability services	31%	▲			▲						▲	▼
Senior services	26%						▲				▲	▼
Int./dev. disability services	25%	▲	▲	▲	▲						▲	
Childcare	23%			▲		▼	▼	▲		▲		▲
Culturally informed services	19%						▼	▲		▲		
DV/sexual assault services	18%			▲	▲		▼		▲	▲	▲	
Substance use disorder services	16%	▲			▲		▼			▲	▲	
LGBTQIA+ services	12%						▼			▲		

⁵ Identified area as a medium or high need in the past year

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Expand access to food assistance programs and initiatives that promote food stability and food security, including community gardens and food banks.
- 2 Increase access to affordable dental care options and financial assistance to ensure access to quality dental care.
- 3 Advocate for policies that support affordable housing options and rental assistance programs to ensure stable housing for all residents.
- 4 Increase availability of support services such as medical and behavioral health care, legal representation, and early care and education programs to meet the needs of the community.
- 5 Provide support services and financial assistance for transportation, including public transit subsidies and assistance with vehicle costs, to improve mobility for low-income individuals.

DID YOU KNOW? *In Clark County, 8.6% of people are living in poverty. People of color are disproportionately impacted, with 16.9% of people who identify as Black or African American and 29.2% of people who identify as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander living in poverty.*

COVID-19 IMPACT

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the community's needs, with over half of survey respondents (58%) reporting an increase in their needs. The pandemic disproportionately affected certain demographic segments, including those with income below 200% of the federal poverty level (74% reported increased needs), non-white or Hispanic/Latinx backgrounds (74%), employed individuals (72%), households with children (70%), and households with disabilities (69%).

Among those who saw increased needs, 68% identified food assistance as an area of increased need. This was followed by housing (58%) and mental health support (45%).

Most of the forum participants (56%) were not surprised by this data about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically cost-of-living concerns. Participants supplemented survey data by highlighting the pandemic's negative impact on small businesses and expressing concerns about the post-pandemic decrease in governmental support funding.

"COVID-19 has exacerbated existing needs and challenges."

"[I'm] not surprised by the cost-of-living concerns and how they were exacerbated by COVID-19."

↪⁶ The COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped the landscape of poverty in the United States, presenting a complex and evolving picture of economic hardship. Recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau reveals a story of resilience, challenges, and disparities that highlight the need for targeted interventions and support.

↪⁷ Despite the overall number of people living in poverty in 2022 remaining relatively stable compared to previous years, a deeper dive into the data reveals significant shifts. One survey showed a concerning trend: America's child poverty rate doubled between

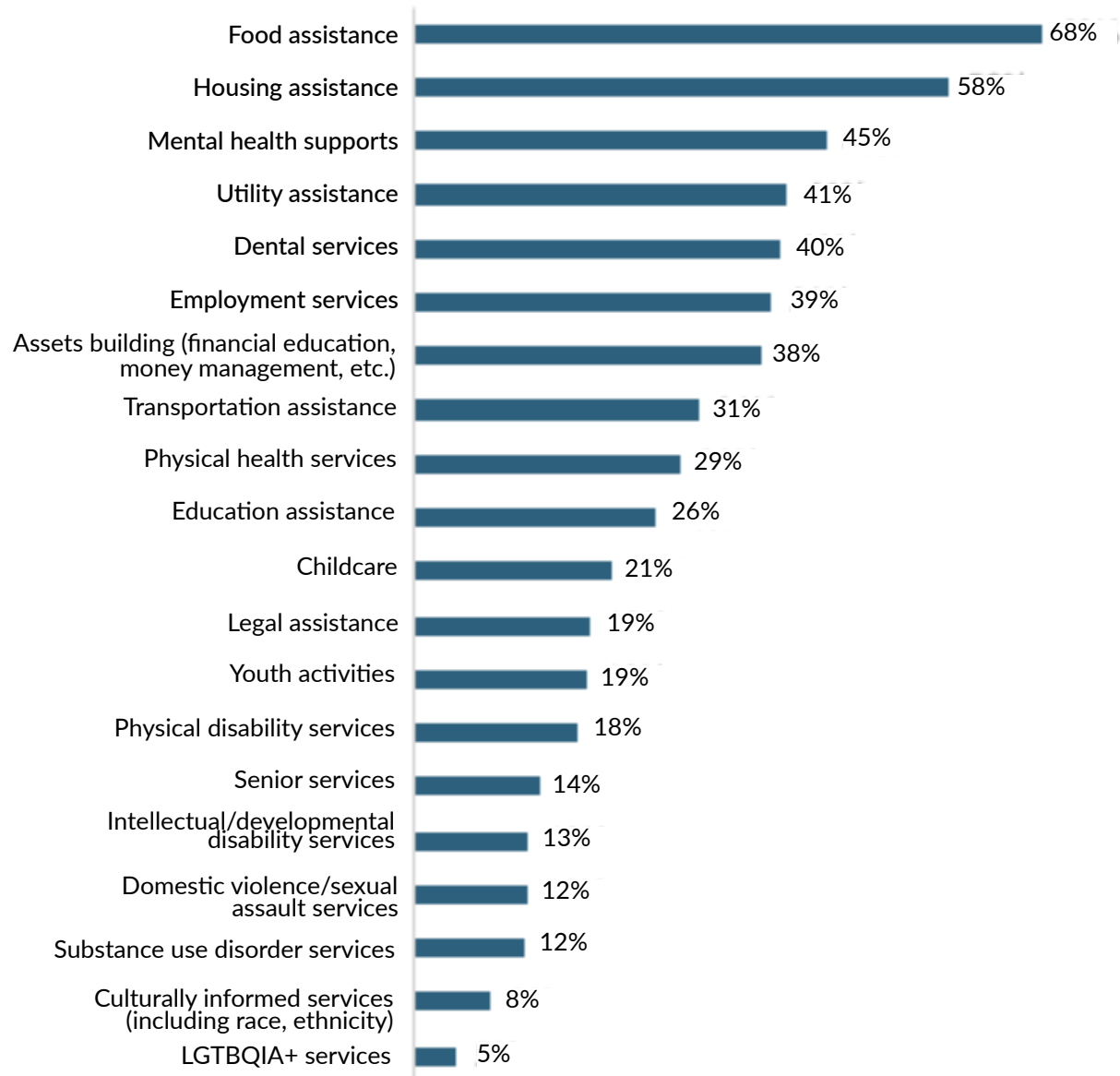


DID YOU KNOW? *Age is the strongest risk factor for severe COVID-19 outcomes, with higher risk increasing by age. Other medical conditions that increase risk include chronic kidney disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart disease, diagnosed diabetes, and obesity.*

2021 and 2022, largely due to the expiration of an expanded child tax credit. This underscores the vulnerability of families, especially those with children, and the impact of policy decisions on poverty rates. A notable trend is the emergence of suburbs as new centers of poverty growth. More than 60% of the 1.5 million-person increase in poverty between 2019 and 2022 occurred in suburban areas. This challenges the traditional perception of suburbs as affluent enclaves and highlights the need to address poverty beyond urban centers.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also had a profound impact on poverty in Clark County, reshaping economic realities and highlighting disparities within the community. ↪ As outlined in the Clark County 2021 Recovery Plan, the pandemic's effects have been far-reaching, affecting various aspects of life and livelihoods. The plan highlights that the pandemic has exacerbated existing inequities, particularly for vulnerable populations such as low-income individuals, communities

Figure 21. Areas of need that were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic



n=461 respondents who said that the COVID-19 pandemic increased their needs

of color, and those with limited access to resources. It notes that poverty rates in Clark County were higher than the state average before the pandemic, indicating a pressing need for targeted interventions and support systems.

Data from the Recovery Plan indicates that the pandemic has led to significant job losses and economic hardships for many residents. Unemployment rates rose sharply, reaching levels not seen since the Great Recession. This loss of income has directly contributed to an increase in poverty levels, with many households struggling to make ends meet. Furthermore, the plan highlights the negative impact of the pandemic on housing stability. To combat this sharp increase in housing instability, there was a large influx of COVID-19-related federal rental assistance funding between August 2020 and June 2023. This funding helped 8,116 unduplicated households in Clark County maintain their housing by directing \$75.5 million dollars towards 77,748 months of rental and utility assistance. There was also a moratorium on evictions which provided temporary relief for many families. However, the expiration of COVID-19-specific funding and moratoriums has created a looming crisis for those who still need housing support.

The Recovery Plan emphasizes the need for sustainable solutions to address housing insecurity and prevent a surge in homelessness.

DID YOU KNOW? *Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander hospitalization rates among COVID-19 cases are approximately five times higher than white populations. Hospitalization rates among COVID-19 cases for Black populations, American Indian and Alaska Native populations, and Hispanic populations are approximately two times higher compared to white populations.*

In terms of health impacts, the plan outlines the disproportionate effects of the pandemic on communities of color and low-income individuals. These groups experienced higher rates of COVID-19 infection and mortality, highlighting systemic disparities in access to healthcare and resources. As Clark County looks towards recovery, addressing the underlying causes of poverty and inequity will be crucial. The Recovery Plan emphasizes the need for targeted investments in affordable housing, workforce development, and healthcare access to support vulnerable populations and ensure a more equitable recovery for all residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Expand food assistance programs to address increased food insecurity.
- 2 Increase access to mental health services to address COVID-related stress and trauma.
- 3 Support small businesses affected by the pandemic through grants and technical assistance.



EDUCATION

Nearly half of survey respondents with an educational need expressed a desire for financial assistance to attend college (45%). Other needs included education assistance (43%) and youth activities (36%). Barriers to accessing education services included not knowing where to go for services (61%), difficulty in accessing services (33%), and challenges in qualifying for services (22%).

The majority of forum participants (95%) were unsurprised by the survey data on education needs and barriers. Participants emphasized the primary education barriers by stating that there are challenges in finding and accessing vocational, technical, and skills-based training opportunities in Clark County. Forum participants also stated that transportation and childcare barriers prevent many low-income residents from accessing educational services. Some participants highlighted the specific barriers that communities of color and immigrant populations face in accessing education due to language barriers, lack of cultural competency, and historic trauma related to educational systems.

“We need access to higher education and trade/hands-on vocational programs to get people into better paying jobs.”

“Lack of education (not just formal) is a cause of poverty.”

“Education costs are rising but livable wages require a degree or technical skill.”

Education is often hailed as the great equalizer, a key pathway to achieving the American Dream. ↪⁵ However, the reality in Clark County, as in many parts of the United States, is that disparities in education contribute to persistent gaps in economic mobility. Children from low-income families may face barriers to accessing quality education, which can limit their future opportunities for higher education and stable, well-paying jobs. ↪⁹ Wages



DID YOU KNOW? *Since 1980, the average costs of college has increased by 169% while the pay for young workers has only increased by 19%.*

are closely linked with educational attainment, with those with Bachelor's Degrees or higher earning, on average, 63% more than those who did not complete high school. The links between education, race, gender, and educational attainment have been a topic of much inquiry and in Clark County there are clear disparities in wages based on race, gender, age, and educational attainment.

There remains a complex interplay between labor force participation, education, occupation, and family structure in determining the likelihood of living in poverty. Access to education remains a significant concern in Clark County, with survey respondents expressing a need for financial assistance to attend college and

Figure 22. Education Service Needs

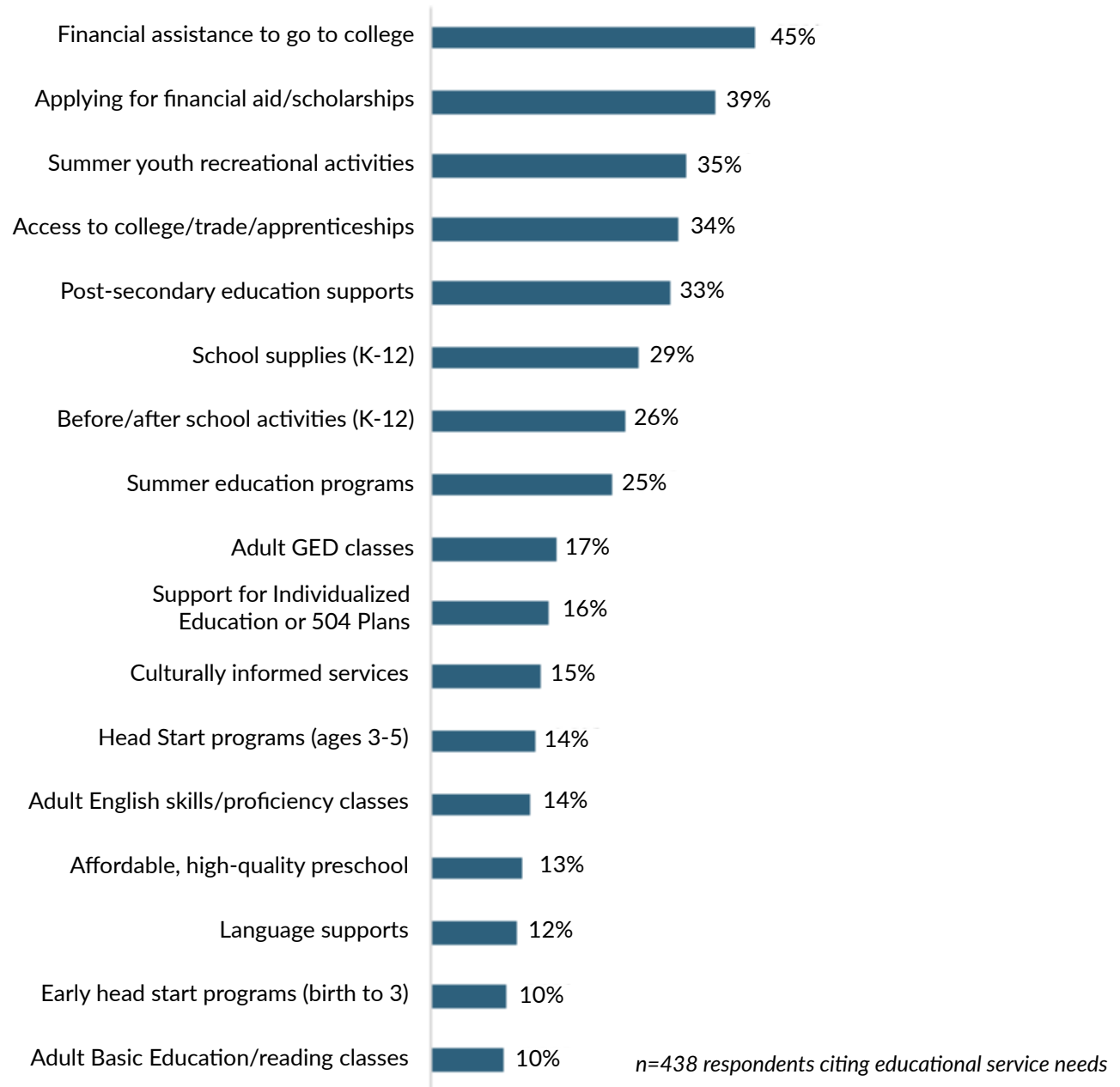
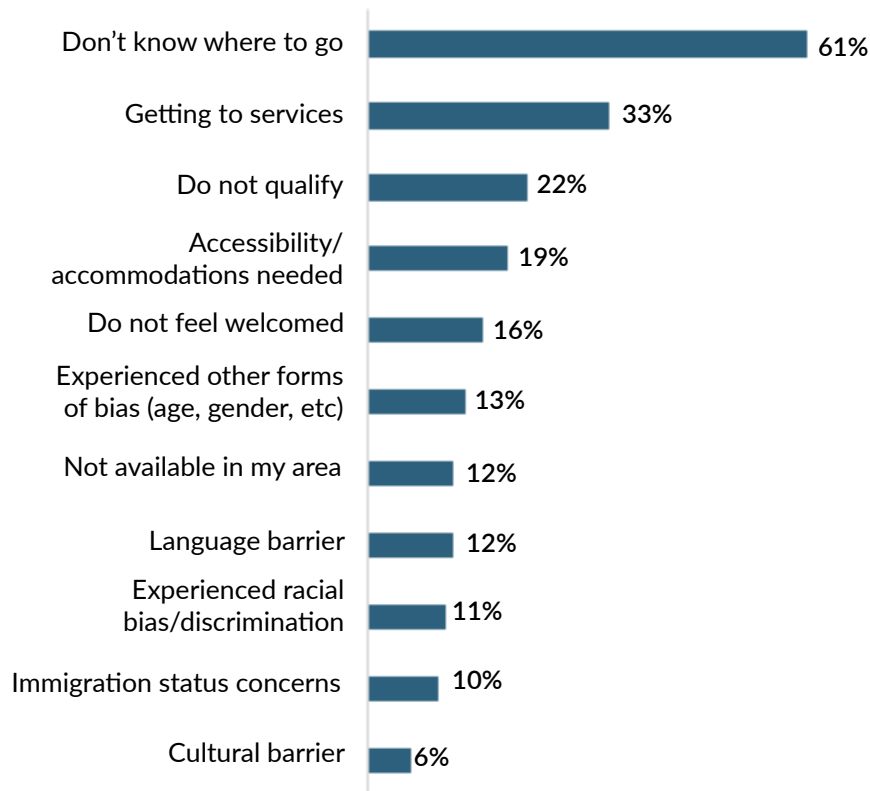


Figure 23. What is in the way of getting education needs met?



training programs. Barriers to accessing these services include lack of awareness and difficulty in qualifying, highlighting the need for improved outreach and support mechanisms. Education opportunities are critical for economic stability and overall wellbeing, with individuals with higher levels of education more likely to have better health outcomes and higher incomes, reducing their risk of poverty.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Increase awareness of available education and training programs by providing clear and accessible information to the community.
- 2 Advocate for policies that support affordable higher education, including increased funding for scholarships and grants.
- 3 Expand access to vocational training programs that provide practical skills for in-demand industries.
- 4 Improve access to education services by addressing barriers such as transportation, childcare, and qualification requirements.

DID YOU KNOW? *Of adults living at or below the Federal Poverty Level in Clark County, 15% have less than a high school degree, 35% have a high school degree, 33% have some college or associates degree, and 17% have a bachelor's degree or higher.*

n=409 respondents citing educational service barriers

DID YOU KNOW? *In Clark County, the highest median wage workers are software developers at \$76.22 per hour while the lowest median wage workers earn \$17.33 at fast food establishments, a difference of \$59 per hour.*

EMPLOYMENT

Finding a job was the primary concern among survey respondents needing employment services (45%). Other needs included job training (39%) and getting a better job (39%). Barriers to employment services included not knowing where to go for services (53%), difficulty in accessing services (38%), and challenges in qualifying for services (26%).

Most forum participants (55%) were unsurprised by the survey data on employment needs and barriers. Participants supplemented survey data by discussing wage stagnation issues and challenges in acquiring employment opportunities that pay a living wage. They emphasized the need for more workforce development programs, small business development services, job placement services, and skill-based education programs. Forum participants also explained that a lack of child-care and transportation services compound barriers to employment.

“There’s not enough employment opportunities.”

“If you work, then you need childcare; if you need childcare, you need to have a good paying job.”

Clark County’s unemployment rate has fluctuated over the years. ↪⁹ Prior to the pandemic, Clark County had an unemployment rate of 4.7% which was higher than the metropolitan area (4.0%), state (4.3%), and nation (3.7%). In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic pushed the county’s rate up to 14.6% due to a loss of 19,000 jobs. However, the county recovered more quickly than comparable areas and had a 4.5% unemployment rate in June 2022 with 10,600

jobs (6.2%) more than pre-COVID-19 levels. ↪¹⁰ The civilian labor force participation rate stands at about 60%, ↪¹¹ with a median household income of \$114,400 for a family of 4 as of May 2023.

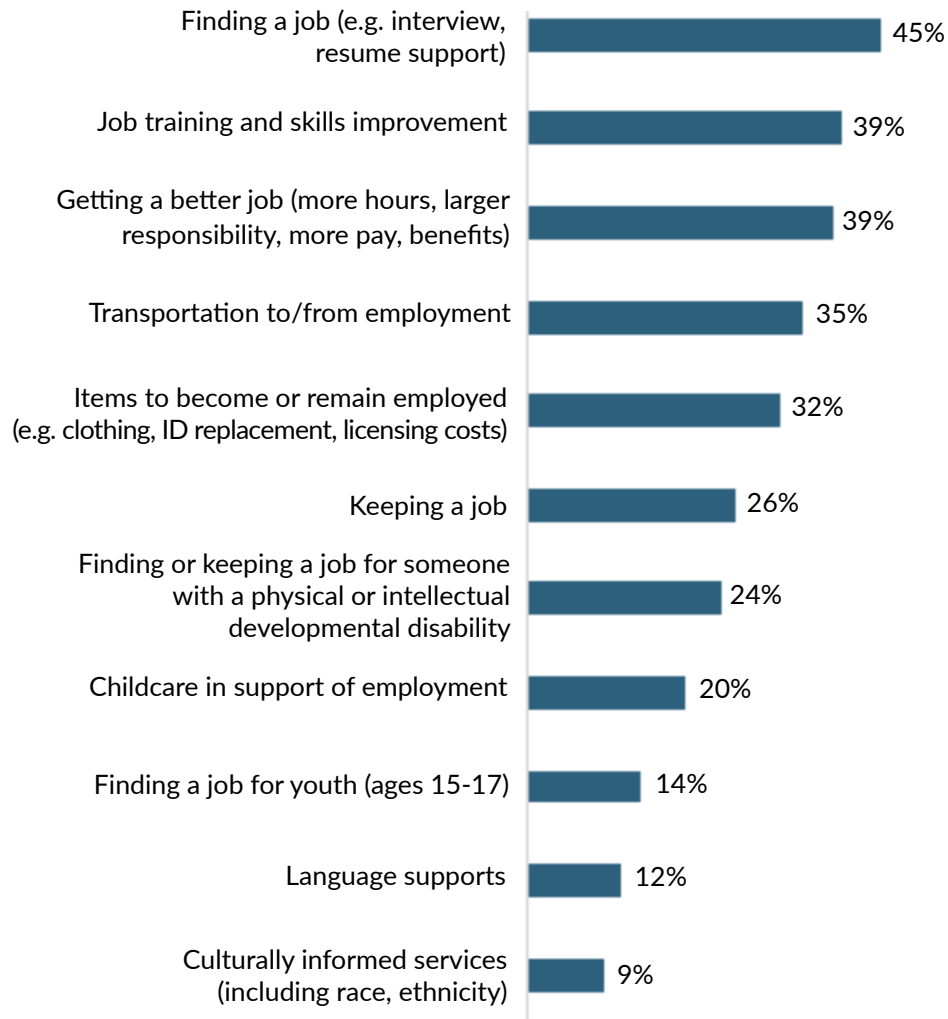
Income inequality is a growing concern in Clark County. The gap between high-wage earners, often employed in sectors like technology and healthcare, and low-wage workers in service industries, has widened. ↪¹² In Clark County, the highest median wage workers are software developers at \$76.22 per hour while the lowest median wage workers earn \$17.33 at fast food establishments, a difference of \$59 per hour. Furthermore, there are significant income disparities based on race and gender. ↪⁹ Notably, wages for Black, Indigenous, Pacific Islander, and Latinx workers averages around 80% or less than the average for their White counterparts. Additionally, wages for female workers are around 83% of the average while wages for male workers are around 119% of the average.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Create more workforce development programs and support skill-building initiatives.
- 2 Enhance job training programs to meet the specific needs of the community, including skills development and job placement support.
- 3 Design employment programs that specifically address the needs of underserved populations, including people of color and female workers.

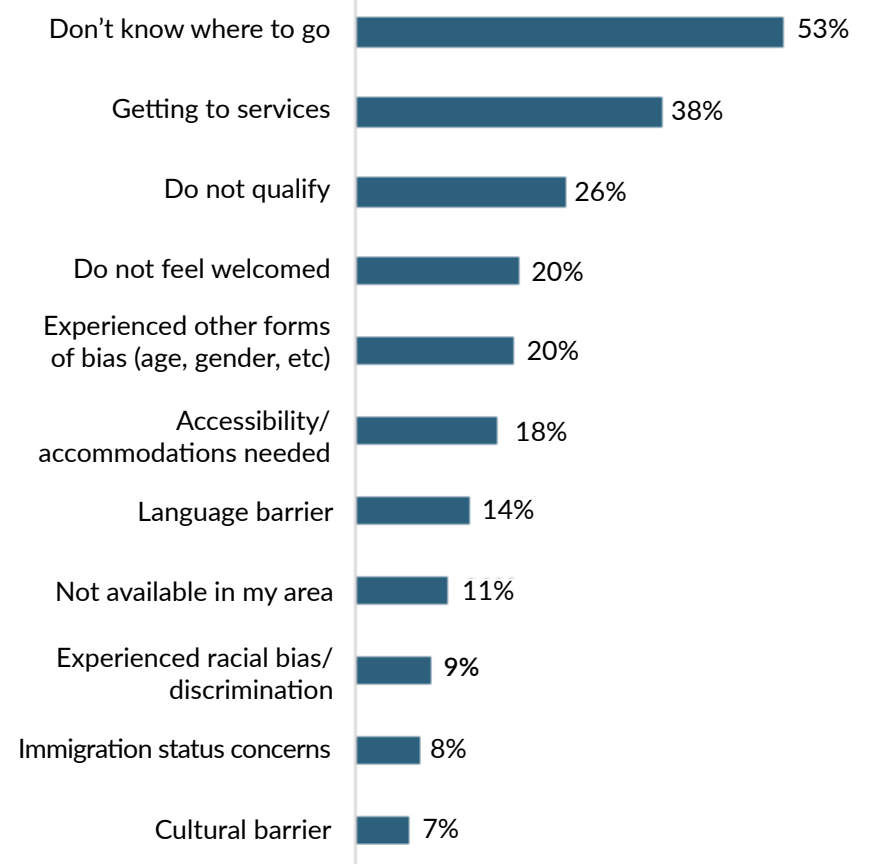
DID YOU KNOW? *Many people who are homeless have jobs, sometimes two or even three. The National Coalition for the Homeless estimates as many as 40%-60% of people experiencing homelessness nationwide are employed.*

Figure 24. Employment service needs



n=390 respondents citing employment service needs

Figure 25. What is in the way of getting employment needs met?



n=348 respondents citing employment service barriers

HOUSING

Affordable housing and rent assistance were identified as top needs among survey respondents with housing needs (63% and 56% respectively). Other needs included move-in cost assistance (41%) and utility payment assistance (41%). Barriers to accessing housing services included not knowing where to go for help (59%), qualifying for services (31%), and accessing services (29%).

Forum participants emphasized the need for more affordable housing options and support for individuals experiencing homelessness. Most were unsurprised by the survey data (81%) and affirmed that current Clark County housing costs are unsustainable for much of the population. Many participants stated that housing should be a primary area of intervention and suggested implementing rent increase limitations, developing more affordable housing units, and increasing Section 8 housing assistance.

“I wouldn’t be able to rent the apartment I am in now if I applied today, even working a full-time position.”

“The housing market is out of balance—so expensive to rent and impossible to buy.”

↳¹³ Stable housing is closely linked to improved health outcomes and economic stability, with individuals who are stably housed less likely to experience stress and mental health issues. Housing instability encompasses various challenges, including difficulty paying rent, overcrowding, frequent moves, and spending a large portion

DID YOU KNOW? *Washington State has the fifth highest housing wage in the nation. To afford an average two-bedroom apartment, a person needs to make \$36.33 per hour full time or work 92 hours per week at minimum wage.*

of income on housing. These experiences can negatively impact physical and mental health, particularly among more vulnerable populations. For example, housing instability can lead to foreclosure or eviction which can result in relocation to poorer and higher-crime neighborhoods. Evictions can be particularly traumatizing due to short notice and impact the ability to obtain rental housing in the future. People who have spent time in prison, especially, face discrimination by landlords and struggle to maintain stable housing upon release. Housing instability also affects children’s health, with frequent moves associated with chronic conditions and poor physical health. Homelessness, the most severe form of housing deprivation, is associated with chronic diseases and premature death. Pregnant women experiencing homelessness are more likely to deliver preterm and low birthweight babies. Housing instability can also prevent individuals and families from building long-lasting attachments to neighborhoods, which can influence health outcomes.





DID YOU KNOW? *About 10.9% of Washington State's eviction cases occur in Clark County, even though the county only has about 6.6% of the state's population.*

Cost of living, specifically rent and housing expenses, have risen steeply in Clark County over the past few years. ↪¹²In 2023, a minimum wage worker earning \$15.74 per hour would need to work 77 hours per week to afford a modest 1-bedroom rental home at the Fair Market Rent of \$1,577 per month. Housing affordability remains a major concern, with many residents struggling to afford the high costs of rent and homeownership. Households are considered cost burdened if they spend more than 30% of their income on housing and severely cost burdened if they spend more than 50%. Importantly, Black and Hispanic households are nearly twice as likely as White households to be cost burdened.



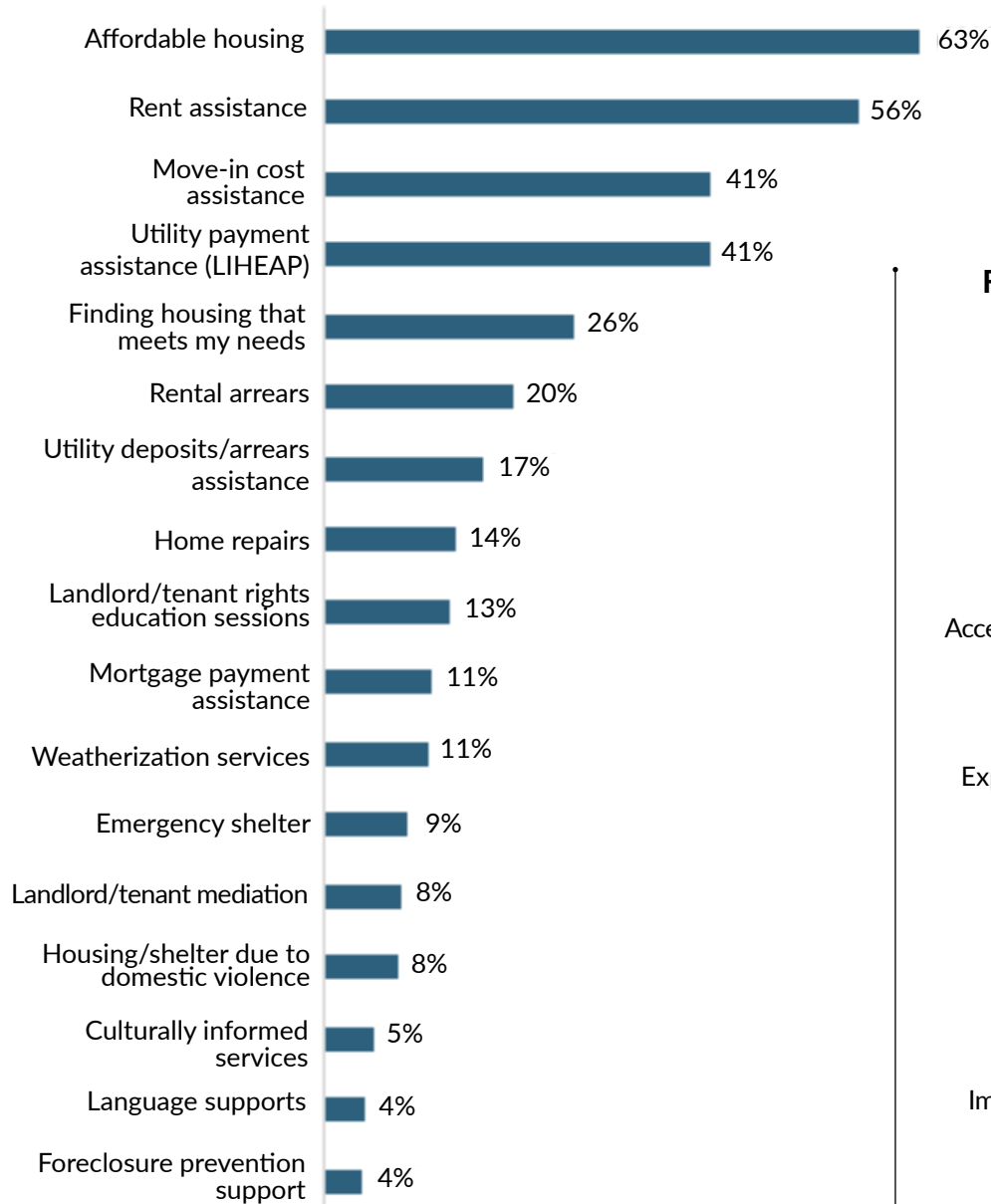
Affordable housing and rental assistance continue to be top priorities for survey respondents, reflecting the broader trend of housing insecurity in the community. Participants in the community forums emphasized the challenges faced by low-income individuals and families in finding stable housing, suggesting a need for policy interventions such as rent control and increased support for individuals experiencing homelessness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Expand affordable housing options and rental assistance programs to ensure all residents have access to stable housing.
- 2 Implement policies to protect tenants from eviction and ensure fair housing practices for all residents.
- 3 Increase support for homeless individuals, especially transitional housing and permanent supportive housing services.

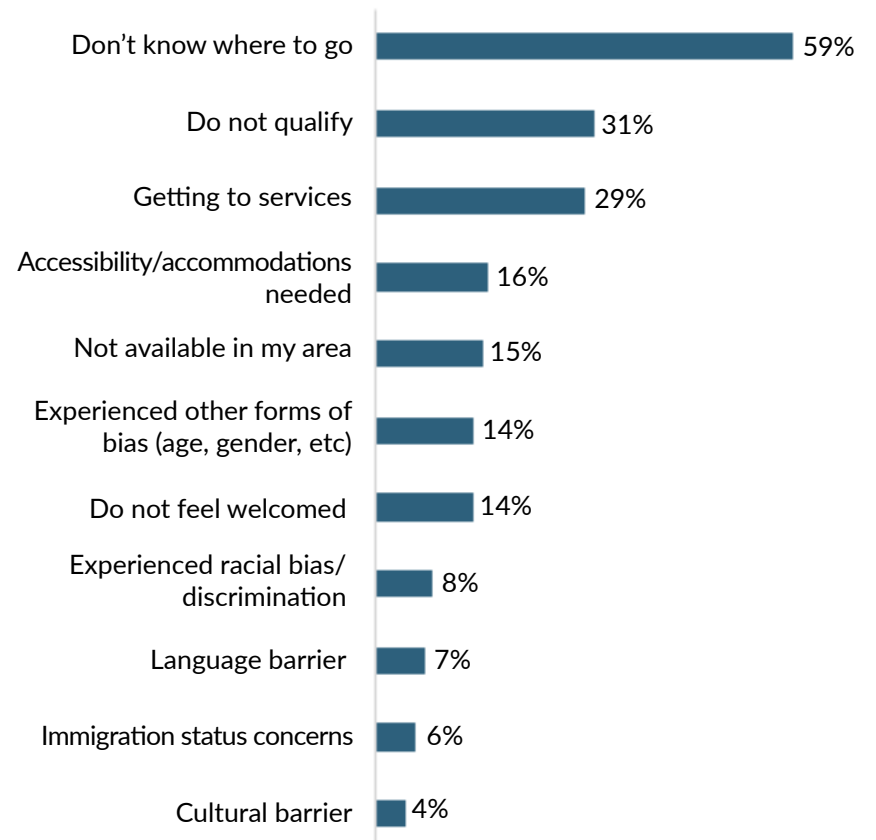
DID YOU KNOW? *According to HUD's Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data, derived from ACS 2016-2020 estimates, 43.8% of all Clark County renters, and 21.3% of all Clark County owners pay more than 30% of their income towards their housing costs.*

Figure 26. Housing service needs



n=545 respondents citing housing service needs

Figure 27. What is in the way of getting housing needs met?



n=481 respondents citing housing service barriers

FINANCIAL SECURITY, INCOME, AND ASSET BUILDING

Survey respondents expressed a need for financial security, income, and asset building services, including credit repair (47%), financial planning education (44%), and assistance to buy a home (42%). Barriers to accessing these services included not knowing where to go for services (74%), difficulty in accessing services (33%), and challenges in qualifying for services (27%).

Community forum participants were generally unsurprised by this data (76%) and expressed concerns about cost of living, wage stagnation, and financial literacy. Participants highlighted the need for financial literacy classes, investment programs, and asset building opportunities including support for small businesses.

“The biggest thing is stagnant wages. Someone needs to work 96 hours [per week] to afford a two-bedroom apt.”

“You can’t budget if you don’t have adequate funds.”

📈¹⁴ Inflation has significantly impacted the cost of living in Clark County, particularly in the housing market, where prices have risen steadily. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro area, which includes Clark County, has shown an upward trend, indicating an increase in overall prices for goods and services. As described above, minimum wage workers in Clark County are no longer able to afford rent or basic living expenses. 8.6% of the population lives below the Federal Poverty Level, and 78% of those living below the FPL and eligible to work are employed. This highlights serious ongoing challenges in economic security for low-wage workers.

Survey respondents and forum participants highlighted concerns about cost of living and stagnant wages, stressing the need for financial assistance in multiple areas including homeownership, car



DID YOU KNOW? An estimated 2.1% of Washington State households were “unbanked” in 2021, meaning that no one in the household had a checking or savings account at a bank or credit union. This is 2.4% lower than the national average, at 4.5% of U.S. households.

ownership, and business operations. Participants also emphasized the need for financial literacy programs, especially for low-income and underserved residents.

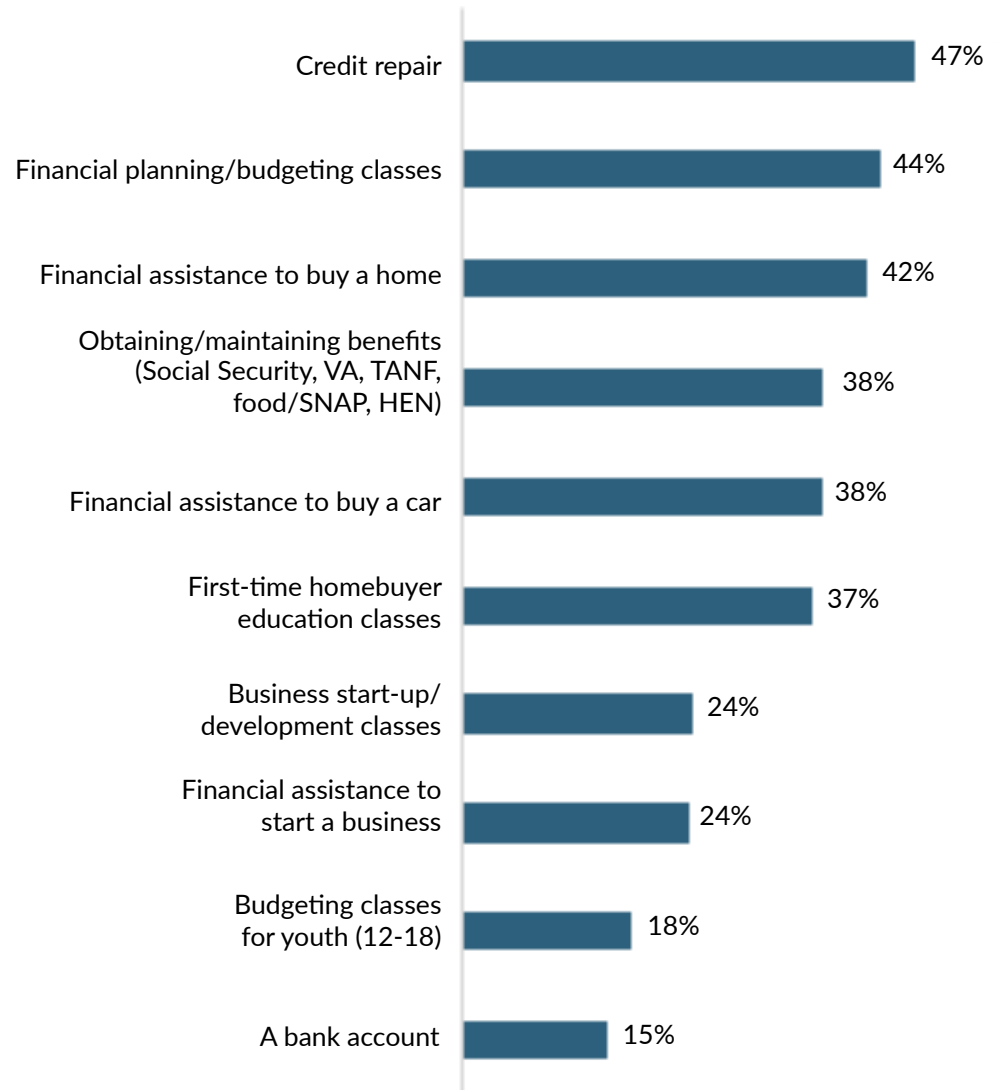
DID YOU KNOW? According to the Washington State Employment Security Department, Clark County has had a stronger economic recovery from the COVID-19 recession than Washington State, Oregon, Portland metro, Seattle metro, and the nation.

🔗¹⁵ Achieving financial literacy - the basic skills to manage an income, manage debts, spend wisely, and invest for the future - is essential to thriving in today's world. The increasing prevalence of credit cards, mortgages, and loans has made financial literacy increasingly important and increasingly difficult to achieve. Importantly, financial literacy is deeply intertwined with the systemic factors that drive racial disparities in the United States, and there are significant disparities in the rates of financial literacy across racial and ethnic groups. According to a 2021 survey by the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, financial literacy rates are declining among American adults and Black, Hispanic, and Native American populations tend to have lower rates than their White or Asian counterparts. This indicates a critical need to increase access to financial education programs, especially for communities of color populations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

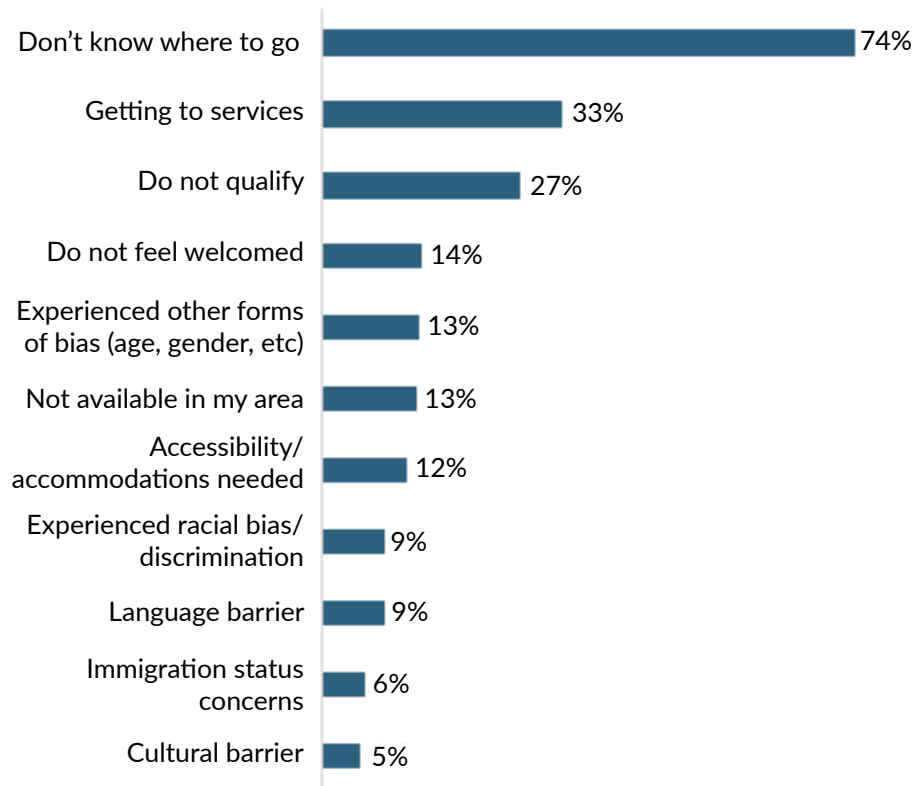
- 1 Implement programs for credit repair and financial literacy.
- 2 Provide support for small business start-ups and entrepreneurship.
- 3 Offer savings and investment education programs.

Figure 28. Financial security, income, and asset building service needs



n=447 respondents citing income and asset building service needs

Figure 27. What is in the way of getting financial security, income and asset building needs met?



n=402 respondents citing income and asset building service barriers

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Dental services emerged as a top concern among those who had a need for physical health services, including paying for dental services (53%) and seeing a dentist (51%). Other needs included food assistance (46%), access to fresh and health food (43%), and seeing a medical doctor (37%). Barriers to accessing physical health services included not knowing where to go for services (63%), difficulty in accessing services (33%), and challenges in qualifying for services (26%).

Most (67%) community forum participants were unsurprised by this data, but some expressed surprise at the high need for access to dental services, indicating a gap in healthcare coverage that needs to be addressed. Community forum participants identified access to affordable healthy food and access affordable healthcare services, including non-prescription health services for those without private insurance, as critical needs. They also discussed challenges navigating the healthcare system, especially for those without access to linguistically or culturally appropriate health services.

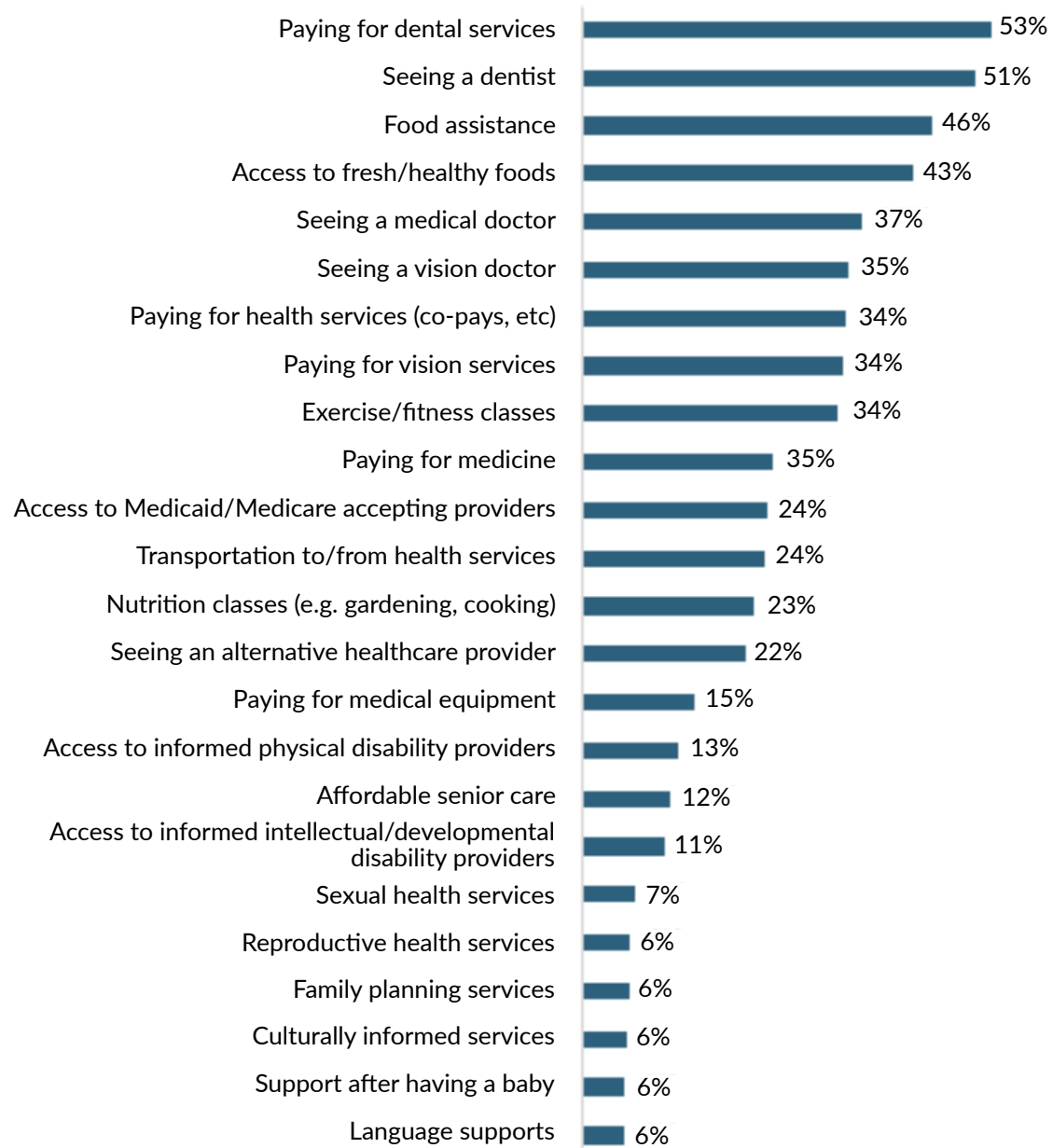
“Healthcare is expensive and hard to navigate. [We need] education on what the costs are and what they mean.”

“Food deserts are a growing problem in Clark County... There’s a difference between access to food and access to healthy food.”

Poor health outcomes are more prevalent among those living in poverty. Limited access to healthcare and healthy foods can contribute to a range of health problems, including obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. ↪¹⁶ Employer-sponsored insurance plays a significant role in providing healthcare coverage for millions of Americans. However, the cost of premiums has been rising, outpacing wage growth and inflation. In 2023, the average annual premium for single coverage was \$8,435,

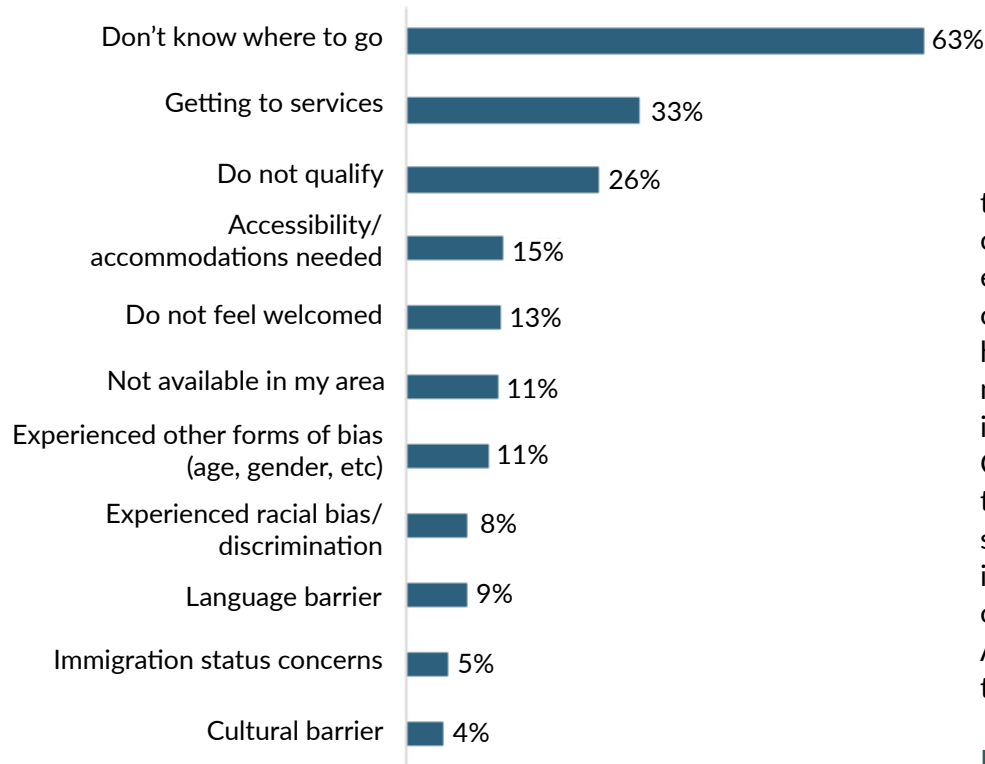


Figure 30. Physical health service needs



n=509 respondents citing physical health service needs

Figure 31. What is in the way to get physical health needs met?



n=445 respondents citing physical health service barriers

while family coverage averaged \$23,968. Medicaid enrollment has declined across states since the start of the pandemic, with nearly 10 million people losing coverage. State policies and processes for renewals have influenced these changes, with some states seeing larger declines than others. ¹⁷ For example, 412,000 participants disenrolled from Medicaid in Washington State in 2023.

Access to affordable healthcare emerged as a critical need in

DID YOU KNOW? In 2020, approximately 32,000 or 1 in 16 people in Clark County did not have health insurance.

the Clark County community. Survey respondents expressed challenges in accessing these services. The data also highlighted disparities in access to physical health services, with dental care being a top need. To address these disparities and improve health outcomes in Clark County, a multi-pronged approach is needed. Strategies that enhance the economic mobility of families, such as tax credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit, can alleviate financial burdens and improve access to healthcare. Additionally, strengthening health systems to better serve the whole population, especially those experiencing financial insecurity, can protect households from the catastrophic effects of out-of-pocket healthcare costs and improve overall health status. Access to healthcare is essential for overall wellbeing and can lead to improved health outcomes and reduced healthcare costs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Improve access to essential healthcare services, including dental care, through financial assistance and navigation resources.
- 2 Increase funding for preventive health programs and initiatives to promote healthy behaviors and reduce the burden of chronic diseases, including access to healthy food and nutritional awareness.
- 3 Advocate for policies that improve access to healthcare for all residents, regardless of insurance status.



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Most survey respondents with a behavioral health need expressed a desire for accessible mental health services (74%). Other needs included access to counseling (56%) and paying for services (40%). Barriers to accessing behavioral health services included not knowing where to go for services (62%), difficulty in accessing services (37%), and challenges in qualifying for services (26%).

Forum participants (83%) were generally unsurprised by the survey data on behavioral health needs and barriers. Participants spoke to the reality of behavioral health as something that affects people of all backgrounds and emphasized the need for stronger and more accessible behavioral health services, including mental health and substance use services. They also discussed how behavioral health challenges can have a reciprocal relationship with other issues such as financial instability and housing insecurity.

“Mental health services for the whole community, not only for English speakers... Sometimes when you don’t feel mentally healthy, you start to struggle on all aspects of life.”

“Behavioral health leads to problems with rent, which leads to housing issues, etc.”

Poverty has been consistently linked with behavioral health issues, being both a cause of behavioral health issues and a consequence. The mental health of individuals is shaped by the social, economic, and environmental conditions in which they live. ↪¹⁸ Poverty and deprivation are key determinants of social and behavioral development and adult mental health. There are many studies which show that people living in poverty experience adverse mental health outcomes at a much higher rate than those living in affluence. ↪¹⁹ According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, on a given night in 2023, 31% of the national homeless population reported having a serious mental illness and 24% reported conditions related

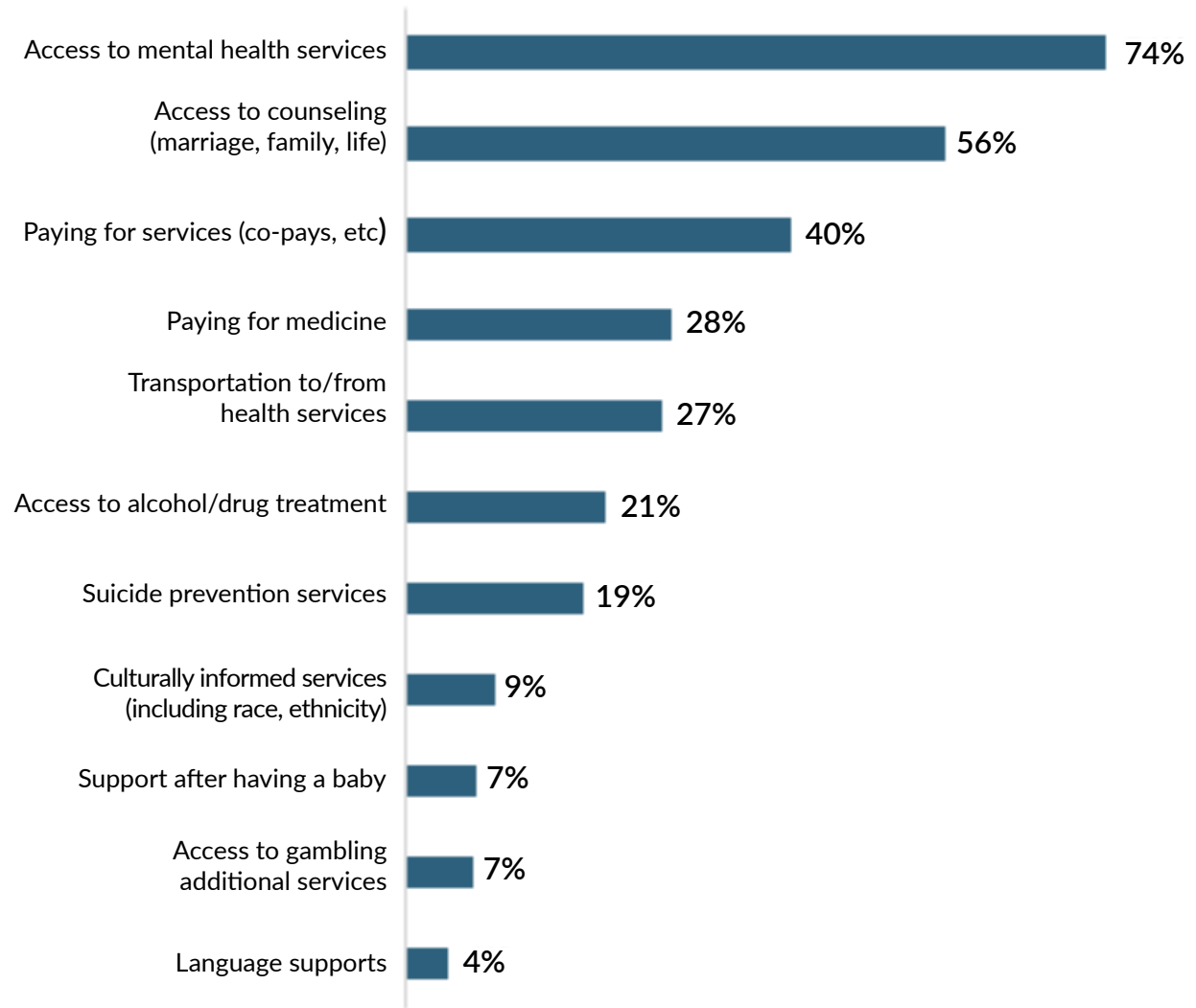
to chronic substance use. This indicates a strong need for broadly available mental health and substance use recovery services, with targeted outreach to those experiencing financial and housing insecurity.

There are indicators that the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated challenges have led to worsening mental health outcomes globally, with a particular concern among adolescents. This was emphasized by the fact that 45% of survey respondents indicated an increased need for mental health services as a result of the pandemic. ↪²⁰ The burden of depression and anxiety among adolescents has more than doubled since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, ↪²¹ leading the U.S. Surgeon General to name youth mental health a national priority in 2021. ↪²² In 2021, 40% of eighth, tenth, and twelfth

DID YOU KNOW? *Harm reduction, a strategy which includes safer drug use, managed use, and meeting people who use drugs “where they’re at”, has been proven to save lives and reduce health care spending.*

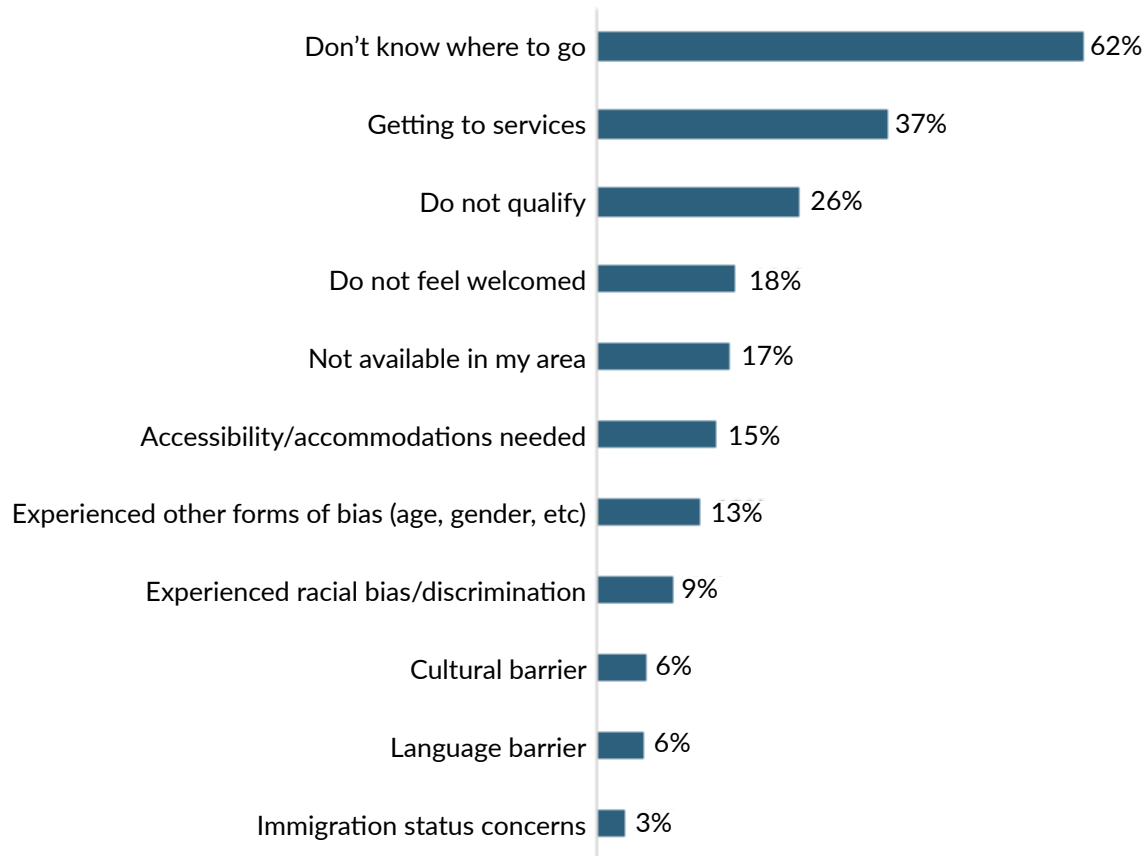


Figure 32. Behavioral health service needs



n=340 respondents citing behavioral health service needs

Figure 33. What is in the way to get behavioral health service needs met?



n=296 respondents citing behavioral health service barriers

grade 5²² students in Clark County reported feeling sad or hopeless for at least two weeks in the past year. This indicates a need for targeted mental health supports and interventions in youth populations. Survey respondents and forum participants confirmed this need by expressing a desire for accessible, affordable, and culturally appropriate behavioral health services in Clark County, especially for underserved populations and those experiencing poverty.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Increase accessibility of mental and behavioral health services, including linguistically and culturally specific services.
- 2 Address stigma associated with mental health issues by promoting understanding and acceptance in the community.
- 3 Enhance coordination between behavioral health providers and other service providers to ensure holistic care for individuals.

DID YOU KNOW? In 2020, 7% of preventable hospital stays in Clark County were due to a primary mental health diagnosis. This rate increased to 62% when more than one diagnosis was included as a reason for the stay.



SUPPORT SERVICES

Survey respondents identified paying for vehicle costs (64%) and transportation (56%) as top needs in support services. Other needs included information and referral services (37%) and legal assistance (23%). Barriers to accessing support services included not knowing where to go for help (74%), difficulty in accessing services (34%), and challenges in qualifying for services (22%).

Most forum participants (60%) were unsurprised by this data, but some expressed surprise that childcare services were not higher on this list of needs. They emphasized the need for more daycare and

DID YOU KNOW? *In Washington State, it costs \$55 to renew a driver's license or State ID and both are valid for 6 years. This equals almost 3.5 hours of work for someone earning minimum wage.*

childcare services, pointing out the extreme financial barrier and the critical role these services play in enabling parents to work or pursue education. Forum participants also stressed the importance of financial assistance for essential services such as gas, laundry, and bus passes. The difficulty in accessing support services through existing

channels, such as the 211 helpline, was also mentioned, suggesting a need for improved communication and outreach to ensure residents are aware of and can easily access the support they need.

“Mostly when people are seeking services, they want to know that someone isn’t going to give up on them.”

“[People need] help accessing programs and filling out applications for services.”

Access to basic necessities — housing, food, clothing, medical and behavioral health care services, legal representation, transportation, and early care and education — is fundamental to the wellbeing and economic success of every family. ↪²³ Providing these types of tangible resources can strengthen both families and



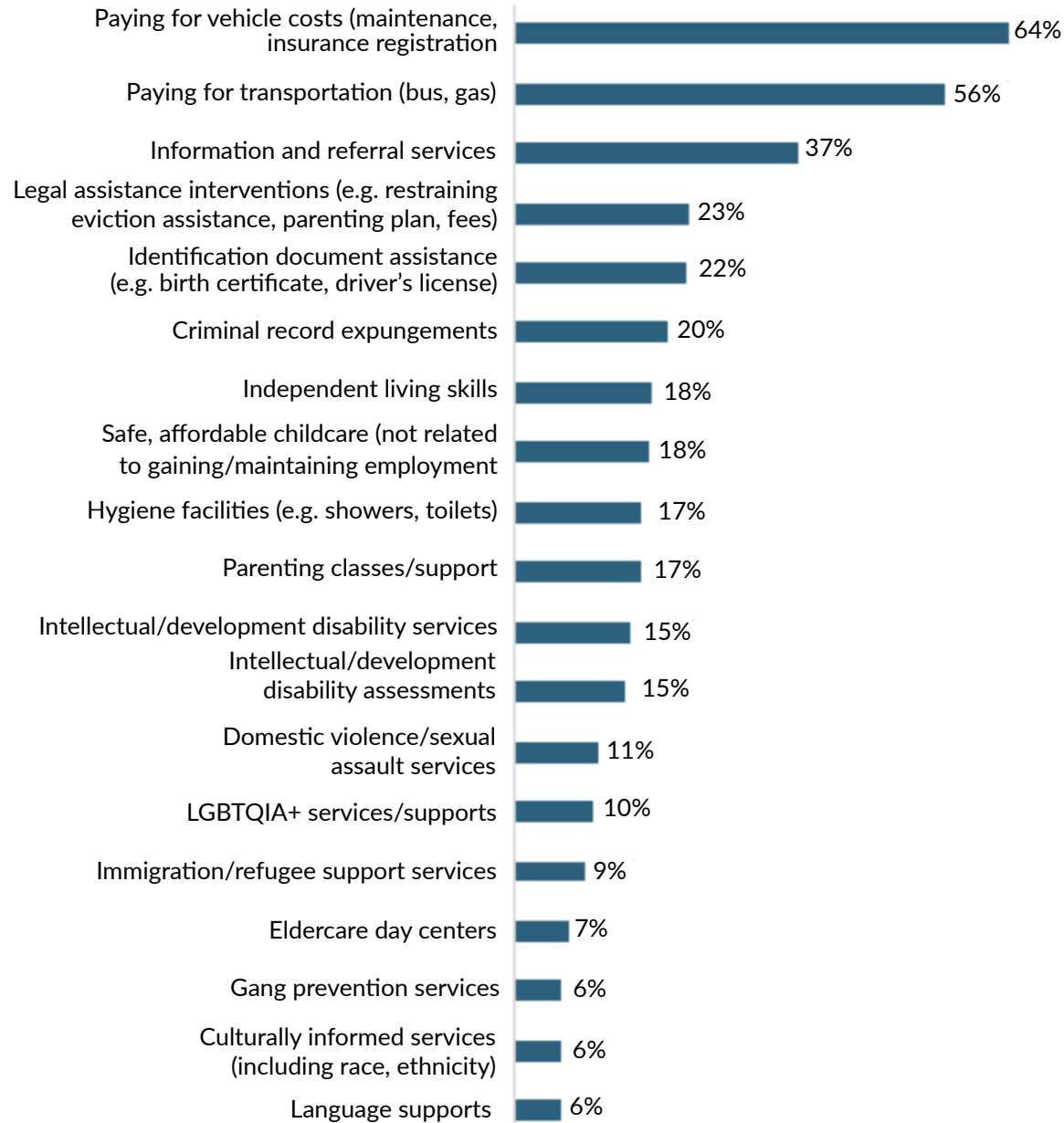
communities by avoiding and de-escalating crises, reducing parental stress, increasing access to safe housing and reliable childcare, and ensuring families have the material items they need to thrive.

Paying for vehicle costs and transportation were identified as top needs in support services, indicating the importance of affordable transportation options for low-income individuals. Transportation infrastructure plays a crucial role in Clark County’s economy. ↪¹ The mean travel time to work for workers aged 16 and over is 25.8 minutes, indicating the importance of transportation infrastructure in the daily lives of residents. Recent projects, such as highway expansions and public transit improvements, have enhanced connectivity and accessibility, supporting both local businesses and the workforce. However, there are still clear barriers in accessing affordable transportation services and a growing need for accessible transportation.

Both survey and forum participants emphasized the need for information and referral services, with “not knowing where to go” emerging as the primary barrier to accessing services in every survey category. This highlights the need for agencies to coordinate and promote existing referral services, such as 211info, and to improve community communication and outreach. Participants also affirmed the need for legal assistance, highlighting the challenges faced by families in accessing these essential services. Legal issues related to housing, employment, and other matters can significantly impact the lives of low-income individuals and families. Providing legal assistance and support can help individuals navigate these

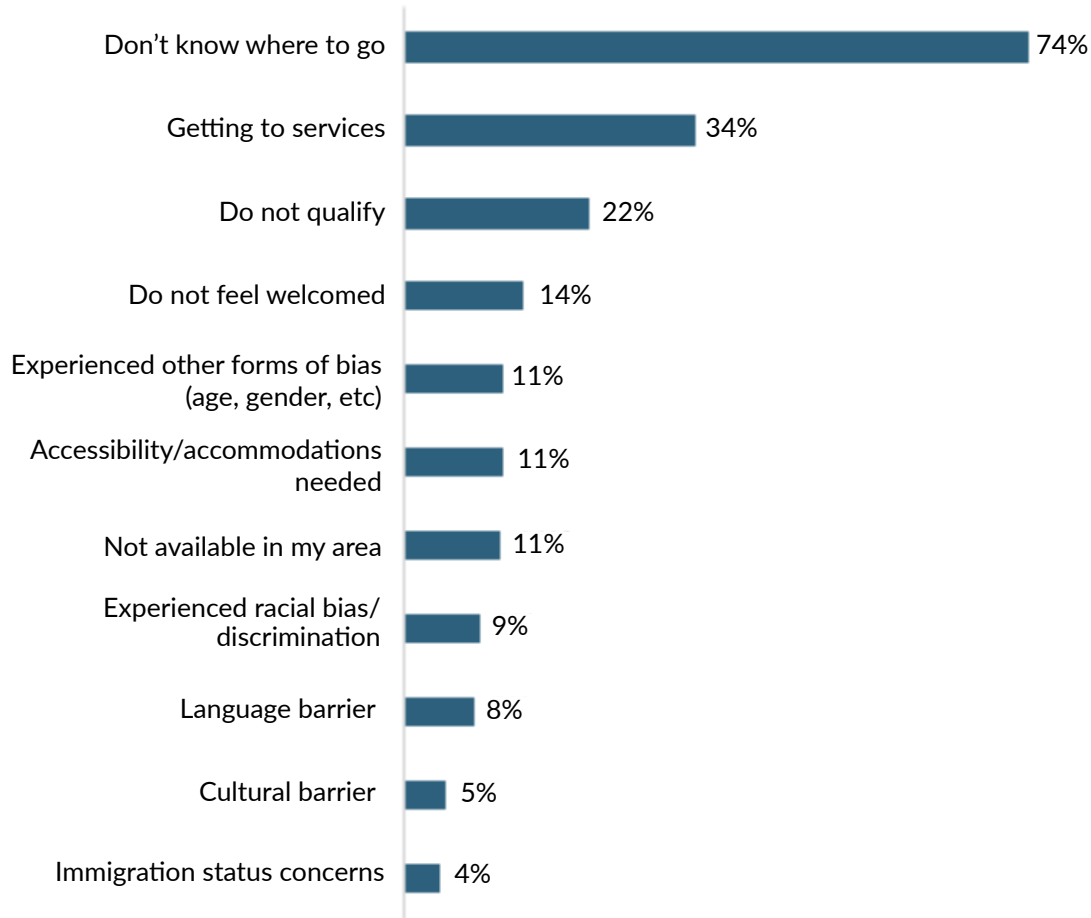
DID YOU KNOW? 211info is a local referral service for Oregon and SW Washington which provides free, confidential information about health, community and social services near you. This service can be reached by dialing 211 or texting your zip code to 898211 (TXT211).

Figure 34. Support service needs



n=445 respondents citing support service needs

Figure 35. What is in the way to get support services needs met?



n=401 respondents citing support service barriers

challenges and protect their rights.²⁴ Access to quality childcare and early care and education (ECE) is also crucial for the development of children and the ability of parents to work or pursue education. However, many families face challenges in accessing affordable and quality childcare. The health and wellbeing of ECE workers also play a significant role in the quality of care provided.

Access to support services such as transportation, childcare, and legal assistance is critical for economic stability and overall wellbeing, with individuals who have access to these services better able to meet their basic needs and participate fully in society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Increase access to transportation services and assistance for vehicle costs to improve mobility for low-income individuals.
- 2 Improve outreach and communication efforts to promote existing community resources.
- 3 Expand childcare options and financial assistance for families to ensure access to affordable and quality childcare.
- 4 Provide legal assistance and support for individuals facing legal challenges related to housing, employment, or other issues.

BARRIERS TO SERVICE

Survey respondents were asked about what barriers were in the way of getting their needs met in each of category of the survey. Based on their responses, there were trends that emerged across service categories. To better understand these trends, the table below shows the seven different service categories and the percent of respondents who indicated barriers in each category. In all cases, regardless of the type of service, respondents said their biggest barrier to service was that they did not know where to go. Typically, the second ranked barrier was getting to services, followed by qualifying for services. The following observations were noted:

- Not knowing where to go was particularly prevalent among respondents facing barriers to income/asset building and support services (both 74%).
- Housing was the area where respondents were most likely to have concerns about not qualifying.
- Accessibility and accommodation were most likely to be seen as a barrier when considering education services, followed by employment.
- Concerns about services “not available in my area” was most likely noted for behavioral health services.
- Concerns about racial bias and immigration status were both highest for education, though concerns about racial bias was fairly consistent across the different service areas.

Table 7. Barriers to service across service areas.

	Average (across service areas)	Education	Employment	Housing	Income/ Asset Building	Physical Health	Behavioral Health	Support Services
Don't know where to go	63%	61%	53%	59%	74%	62%	62%	74%
Getting to services	34%	33%	38%	29%	33%	33%	37%	34%
Do not qualify	26%	22%	26%	31%	27%	29%	26%	22%
Accessibility/ accommodation needed	15%	19%	18%	16%	12%	15%	15%	11%
Do not feel welcomed	15%	16%	20%	14%	14%	13%	18%	14%
Experienced other forms of bias (age, gender, etc)	14%	13%	20%	14%	13%	11%	13%	11%
Not available in my area	13%	12%	11%	15%	13%	11%	17%	11%
Language barrier	9%	12%	14%	7%	9%	9%	6%	8%
Experienced racial bias/discrimination	9%	11%	9%	8%	9%	8%	9%	9%
Immigration status concerns	6%	10%	8%	6%	6%	5%	3%	4%
Cultural barrier	5%	6%	7%	4%	5%	4%	6%	5%



Statement of Rights

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DISCUSSION

CAUSES AND CONDITIONS OF POVERTY

Poverty in America is influenced by various factors beyond just income. ↪²⁵ While the federal government uses a measure based on income to define poverty, other elements such as the cost of living, stagnant wages, and systemic issues like racism and discrimination also play significant roles. These factors can make it challenging for individuals and families to access basic necessities, regardless of their efforts to work or improve their situation. For instance, a family of four earning less than \$30,000 a year is considered low-income according to government standards. However, even those above this threshold may struggle, as seen by the fact that two-thirds of those facing food insecurity in America have incomes above the poverty line. People of color, women, and individuals with disabilities are disproportionately affected by poverty due to various forms of discrimination that limit access to essential resources.

As discussed in the sections above, racism and other forms of bias can limit access to quality education, stable employment, and fair wages, making it harder to break the cycle of poverty. ↪⁹ Furthermore, Clark County has experienced significant and ongoing change in the predominant industries driving employment and economic activity. Historically an agricultural community, the

first half of the 20th century saw rapid growth in the timber industry. During and after World War II, the manufacturing sector increasingly gained importance. Starting in the 1970s, information and technology industries began supplanting manufacturing. The health care sector became a major employer in the 1990s, and it has played an important role alongside retail services and information technology since the 2000s. These industry changes have required constant shifting in workforce skills, creating additional challenges for workers with barriers to accessing quality education or technical training.

Further challenges to obtaining and maintaining employment include the cost and inaccessibility of transportation and childcare. ↪²⁶ As of 2023, the monthly cost of a local Clark County bus pass was \$62 ↪²⁷ while the average monthly cost of owning a vehicle was \$1,015. Despite recent public transit improvements, many residential and rural areas of Clark County do not have access to bus routes, creating a significant financial barrier to maintaining employment. ↪²⁸ According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the median annual cost of center-based childcare in 2023 was \$15,184 for an infant, \$12,995 for a toddler, \$11,469 for a preschool-aged child, and \$7,924 for a school-aged child. The 2023 Federal Poverty Level for a family of two was set at \$19,720, meaning that someone making just above the poverty

level would need to spend 50-75% of their income on childcare, leaving very little for housing, food, and other living expenses.

As described above, housing and living costs in Clark County continue to rise more quickly than low- and medium-wages, creating huge barriers to stability for people who are struggling financially. There is a complex interplay between housing stability, financial security, educational attainment, employment stability, physical health, and behavioral health. The complicated reciprocal relationships between each of the above sections are all deeply tied to institutional systems of racism and discrimination. These intertwined causes of poverty have profound effects on individuals and communities, impacting their ability to meet basic needs and achieve their full potential.

CONCLUSION

The data collected in this process provided insights on the complex challenges faced by individuals and families living in poverty in Clark County. The findings highlight the critical need for targeted interventions and culturally-responsive support systems to address these challenges and promote economic stability and wellbeing. One key takeaway that must be reemphasized is the multifaceted nature of poverty, influenced by factors such as income, education, housing, and access to healthcare. Poverty

is not just about lack of income but also about systemic issues such as racism, culture, discrimination, and limited access to resources. These factors can create barriers to accessing basic necessities and opportunities for economic advancement.

There were also insights about how to best address these challenges. Education

and employment opportunities are seen as crucial for breaking the cycle of poverty, something reinforced by research. However, access to quality education and stable, well-paying jobs remains a challenge for many low-income individuals and families. Addressing these barriers requires a multifaceted and collective approach, including financial assistance for education and

training programs, improved outreach and support mechanisms, and policies that promote economic stability and opportunity.

Housing instability remains a challenge facing the entire community. Affordable housing and rental assistance are top priorities for those in need, reflecting the broader trend of housing insecurity in the community. Policy interventions such as rent control and increased support for individuals experiencing houselessness are needed to address these challenges and ensure that all residents have access to safe and stable housing. Access to healthcare, including mental health services, is essential for overall wellbeing and can lead to improved health outcomes and reduced healthcare costs. However, many low-income individuals face barriers to accessing these services, highlighting the need for policies and programs that expand access and reduce disparities in healthcare access.

In conclusion, addressing poverty requires a comprehensive and coordinated effort that addresses the root causes of poverty, not just the symptoms, and promotes economic stability and opportunity for all residents. By focusing on education, employment, housing, asset building, healthcare, behavioral health support, and support services, we can create a more equitable and prosperous community for everyone.



CALL TO ACTION

The 2024 Clark County Community Needs Assessment sheds light on the pressing needs and challenges facing our community. It should be seen as a call to action for all stakeholders—government agencies, non-profit organizations, businesses, and community members—to come together and work collaboratively towards building a more equitable, resilient, and thriving Clark County. We encourage you to get involved in the following ways:

- 1 Advocate for Change:** Use the findings of this assessment to advocate for policies and programs that address the identified needs. Engage with local officials, leaders, community organizers and representatives to push for meaningful action.
- 2 Volunteer Your Time:** Consider volunteering with local organizations that are working to address the issues highlighted in this assessment. Your time and skills can make a significant difference in the lives of those in need.
- 3 Support Local Initiatives:** Support local initiatives and programs that align with the recommendations of this assessment. This can include donating resources, participating in community events, or spreading awareness about the efforts being made to improve the community.
- 4 Stay Informed and Engaged:** Stay informed about the ongoing efforts to address the community's needs and find ways to stay engaged. Attend community meetings, follow updates from local organizations, and participate in discussions about the future of Clark County.
- 5 Share Your Ideas:** If you have ideas or suggestions for addressing the needs identified in this assessment, share them with local organizations and community leaders. Your insights and perspectives are valuable in shaping the solutions.

PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

Community-Based Organizations

Area Agency on Aging and Disability
Battle Ground Healthcare (free clinic)
People of color Legislative Workgroup
Bridgeview Housing
Cascade AIDS Project
Children's Home Society
Children's Home Society - East County
Family Resource Center
Children's Home Society - Triple Point
Clark County Community Services
Youth House
Clark County Food Bank and 35 pantries
Clark County Veterans Assistance Center
Clark County Volunteer Lawyers Program
Columbia River Mental Health Services
Community Foundation for SW
Washington
Community in Motion
Consumer Voices are Born
Council for the Homeless
Crisis Collaborative Meeting
Educational Opportunities for Children
and Families
Evergreen Habitat for Humanity
Family Promise of Clark County
Fourth Plain Forward
Free Clinic of SW Washington
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Impact NW

Innovative Services NW
Janus Youth Programs
Latino Community Resource Group (LCRG)
Lifeline Connections
Lighthouse Community Resource Center
Meals on Wheels
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association for the Advancement
of Colored People (NAACP) Vancouver
Chapter
Native American Youth and Family Center
NorthWest Justice Project
Odyssey World International Education
Services
Outsiders Inn
Oxford Houses
Partners in Careers

PEACE NW
Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette
Public Health Fourth Plain Coalition
REACH Community Development
Recovery Café Clark County
Rent Well
Scholar Fund
Sea Mar-Community Services NW
Second Step Housing
Severe Weather Shelters Network
Share Vancouver
Smith Tower Senior Housing
SW Accountable Community of Health
SW WA Equity Coalition
Trillium Employment
YWCA Clark County



Educational Institutions

Clark College

Family-Community Resource Centers through:

Battle Ground Public Schools

Evergreen Public Schools

Vancouver Public Schools

Homeless School Liaison at:

Battle Ground Public Schools

Camas Public Schools

Evergreen Public Schools

Hockinson Public Schools

La Center Public Schools

Mt Pleasant Public Schools

Ridgefield Public Schools

School for the Blind

School for the Deaf

Vancouver Public Schools

Washougal Public Schools

Faith-Based Organizations

Catholic Community Services

(Bertha's Shelters)

Friends of the Carpenter

Interfaith Coalition

Islamic Society of SW Washington

Lord's Gym

Lutheran Community Services NW

Open House Ministries

The Salvation Army

Winter Hospitality Overflow

Xchange Recovery Church

Private Sector Organizations

Carelon Behavioral Health



Molina Healthcare

Opioid Taskforce Meeting

PeaceHealth NW

WorkSource

WorkSource NEXT Center

Public Sector Organizations

Clark County Public Health

Clark Public Utility

Cowlitz Tribe

Department of Social and Health Services

Educational Service District 112

Family Youth System Partner Round Table

Fort Vancouver Community Libraries

Jail Re-entry Program

Jail Workforce Center

Neighborhood Associations of

Clark County

Neighborhood Associations of Vancouver

Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Vancouver Housing Authority

Washington State Community Action

Partnership

CURRENT RESOURCES

Clark County Community Services oversees the distribution of local, state, and federal funding designated to provide services to people with low incomes. All funds are allocated to local nonprofit organizations through request for application processes. Clark County staff partner with the nonprofit organizations to ensure programs use best practices, provide culturally responsive services, and meet the rules and regulations tied to the funding.

The Homeless Crisis Response System includes a continuum of services for people who are at risk of homelessness or literally homeless including:

- Outreach for households living in places not meant for human habitation, such as outside, in vehicles or abandoned buildings.
- Emergency shelter programs for households who have fallen into homelessness when a rental assistance program is not available.
- Rapid rehousing rent and case management programs to rapidly rehouse households who have fallen into homelessness.
- Permanent Supportive Housing for households with significant barriers to housing stability that are not likely able to ever support themselves, with a focus on people who are chronically homeless.
- Diversion programs for households who need one-time support to regain or maintain their housing.

- Prevention rent assistance programs for households who are risk of losing their housing and are most likely to fall into homelessness without assistance.

Funding through the Homeless Crisis Response System also supports planning, system coordination and data collection.

Community Action Programs include services to meet a household's basic needs and help move them out of poverty. These programs are determined by the responses to the Survey of Needs as part of the Community Needs Assessment Process. Programs currently being funded include:

- 211info for information and referral services.
- Battle Ground Healthcare for dental services.
- Lord's Gym and Share for a variety of food related programs.
- Clark County Volunteer Lawyers Program providing civil legal aid services.

There are many other programs funded by other agencies in our community. If you are a household in need of housing assistance, please call the Housing Solutions Center at 360-695-9677. If your household needs assistance for any other services, please contact 211info to learn about programs available throughout Clark County. You can contact them by dialing 2-1-1, texting your zip code to 898211 or visiting their website at 211info.org.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Area Median Income: The median income for a specific geographic area, often used to determine eligibility for affordable housing and other programs.

Civilian Labor Force Participation Rate: The percentage of the population that is either working or actively looking for work.

Community Needs Assessment (CNA): A comprehensive process of identifying and prioritizing the needs and assets of a community, often involving data collection, analysis, and community engagement.

Consumer Price Index: A measure that examines the average change in prices paid by consumers for goods and services over time.

Demographic: Relating to the characteristics of a population, such as age, gender, ethnicity, income, etc.

Disproportionate: Too small or too large in comparison to something else.

Duplicated/Unduplicated: Terms used in data collection and analysis. A duplicated count means that a participant may be counted more than once, if they are being counted in multiple categories. An unduplicated count means that each participant is only counted once, regardless of the number of categories.

Equitable: Fair and impartial; ensuring everyone has access to the same opportunities.

Equity: Fairness and impartiality in providing resources, opportunities, and treatment to all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances, to ensure everyone has access to the same opportunities. Whereas equality means providing the same to all, equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to account for imbalances.

Federal Poverty Level (FPL): The income level determined by the federal government as the minimum amount required to meet basic needs.

Hispanic/ Latinx: Hispanic refers to a person with ancestry from a country whose primary language is Spanish. Latinx refers to a person with ancestry from anywhere in Latin America (Mexico, South America, and Central America) and the Caribbean.

Literature Review: A scholarly review of existing literature and

research on a particular topic to provide context, identify gaps, and inform new research.

Median Household Income: A measure of household income in a specific demographic area that divides a household income distribution into two equal parts, with half the households earning less and half earning more.

Methodology: The systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study.

Mixed-Method: A research approach that combines qualitative



and quantitative methods to gather and analyze data.

Participatory: Involving or characterized by the participation of people, especially citizens, in a collaborative effort to solve problems or make decisions.

Permanent Supportive Housing: Permanent housing in which housing assistance (e.g., long-term leasing or rental assistance) and supportive services are provided concurrently to assist households in achieving housing stability.

Racial Equity: The condition where one's racial identity no longer predicts outcomes, and outcomes for all groups are improved.

Resilient: The ability to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.

Respondents: Individuals who respond to a survey or questionnaire.

Skewed: Not evenly distributed; disproportionately affecting one group or aspect.

Stakeholder: An individual, group, or organization that has an interest or concern in a particular process, project, or outcome.

Survey of Needs: A systematic process of gathering information from a population to assess their needs, preferences, and priorities to inform decision-making and resource allocation.

Systematic: Conducted or arranged according to a system or plan; methodical.

Upstream: Addressing issues at their root causes rather than just treating the symptoms.



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APPENDICES

Survey of Needs

Survey of Needs News Release

Survey Results – Raw Data

Community Forum Flier

Community Forum News Release

Community Forum – Raw Data

- Group Discussion Notes
- Did this information surprise you?
- Feedback Cards
- Poll Results



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