



2018 Albany Community Action Partnership's Assessment of Albany County



Introduction

In December 2018, the Albany Community Action Partnership's Board of Directors approved for release our Tri-annual Community Needs Assessment. The 2018 Albany County Needs Assessment (CNA) was conducted on behalf of the Albany Community Action Partnership (ACAP) by the Siena College Research Institute (SCRI) from April through June 2018. The overall assessment, a replication of the 2012 assessment, consisted of a multi-methodological approach, similar to the 2012 assessment. This multi-methodological approach included two surveys and one focus group, which are outlined in detail in the methods section of this report. The report also looks at Albany County demographics, with regard to overall statistics for the county as well as statistics for those living in poverty. Additionally, the public opinion survey data is weighted to match the United States Census demographics of Albany County.

This summary points to efforts to enlist service providers from all areas, in-particular the public, private, faith-based, and educational sectors, to collaborate and cooperate, to efficiently and productively address the needs of Albany County. While logistical challenges may stand in the way, the needs are clear, and the commitment is evident. Collaborative problem solving coupled with efficient allocation of resources may result in not only alleviating some portion of unmet legitimate needs but also to enhance the collective quality of life in Albany County.

Methods, Data Collection and Sample Descriptions

SCRI conducted one public opinion poll in Albany County, one survey of county service providers, and one focus group in order to measure perception of local quality of life, needs, the adequacy of existing programmatic interventions, personal responsibility, and the state of local social services.

In the first of the two surveys, SCRI conducted a Community Needs Assessment (CNA) Survey among residents of Albany County. A total of 602 residents of Albany County completed the survey by telephone between April 17, 2018 and April 29, 2018 (see Appendix I). This includes an oversampling of 100 residents from zip codes with a higher percentage of lower income residents was completed. These zip codes include: 12202, 12204, 12206, 12207 and 12210. The CNA Survey was designed to assess the public perception of the issues faced by residents of Albany County, a ranking of local services and institutions, current levels of social needs in general and of low-income residents specifically, the adequacy of programs, and attitudes towards addressing social problems in the county. As displayed in Figure 1 below, the demographic breakdown of the survey participants is weighted to be representative of the entire population based on United States Census Demographics.

Figure 1: Public Opinion Needs Assessment/Census Demographic Comparison

Albany County Community Needs Assessment	Gender		Age				Employed		Income		
	Male	Female	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65 and older	Yes	No	Less than \$50,000	\$50,000 to \$100,000	\$100,000 or more
2018 Poll	48%	52%	31%	24%	24%	17%	60%	40%	36%	27%	24%
2011 Poll	48%	52%	32%	24%	25%	17%	57%	43%	41%	25%	22%
2010 Census	48%	52%	33%	25%	25%	17%	61%	39%	46%	29%	25%

The second survey mirrored the original community needs assessment survey in content, but provides data drawn from the vantage point of persons and agencies providing the assistance. The time period of this survey was between May 14, 2018 and June 18, 2018 and was completed by 117 service providers within Albany County. Invitations were sent to 702 unique individuals working in various service institutions across the county. All members of the sample received an email invitation that included the survey and the ability to have completed the survey using the web. After the initial request, non-responders were again invited to participate via phone.

The service providers are representative of all sectors in the community with the majority of responding agencies falling into the following sectors within the community: Education (15 percent), Private (47 percent), Faith-based (17 percent), and Public (21 percent) (see figure 2 below). When asked to identify their primary service area focus, most of these Service Providers identified Human Services (20 percent), followed by Education (16 percent) and Religious practice (15 percent), however when looking at figure 3 it is clear that many agencies work in multiple service areas.

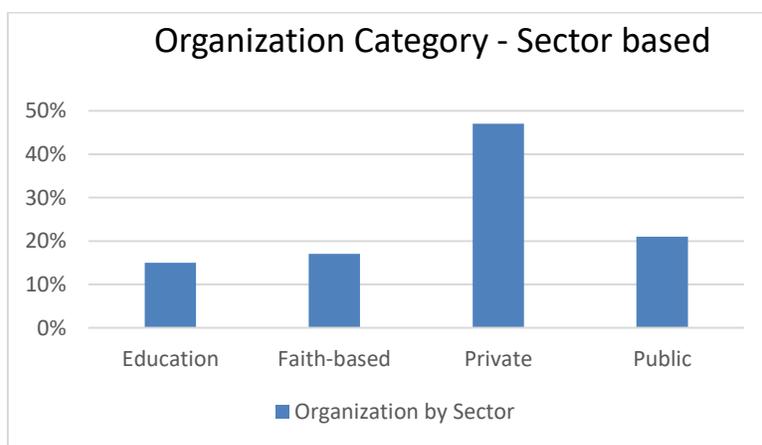


Figure 2: Service Providers Organization Sectors

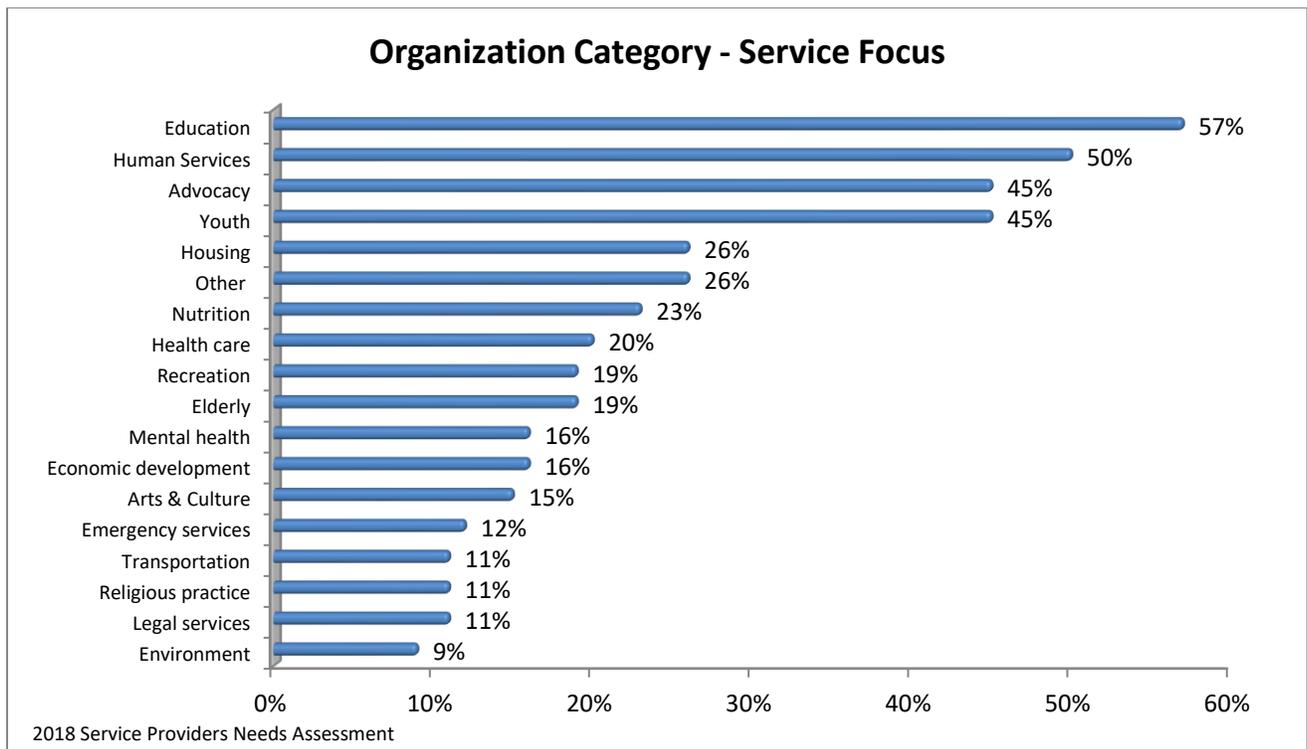


Figure 3: Service Providers Organization Categories

Similar to 2011, the majority of these organizations appear small: over 50 percent indicating they have 0 - 9 full-time employees; 24 percent have 10 to 50 full-time employees; and 32 percent have over 50 full-time employees. Thirty-five percent of service providers serve between 501 and 5,000 clients per year, 26 percent serve over 5,000 clients per year, 21 percent serve between 100 and 500 clients per year, and 14 percent service under 100 per year. Five percent of these groups were unable to identify the number of clients they serve each year. Forty-six percent saw the number of clients or participants increase in the last fiscal year and 50 percent remained the same. Only four percent saw their numbers decrease.

The responding agencies receive funding through a variety of avenues: government grants or allocations (74 percent), and contributions (60 percent), fundraising events (56 percent), foundation grants (49 percent), fee for service (29 percent), and membership dues (12 percent). More than one third of these organizations also identified themselves as community-based (35 percent) followed by 32 percent regional and 17 percent county based. Larger organizations, reaching throughout the state, nation or even world comprised 17 percent of the sample.

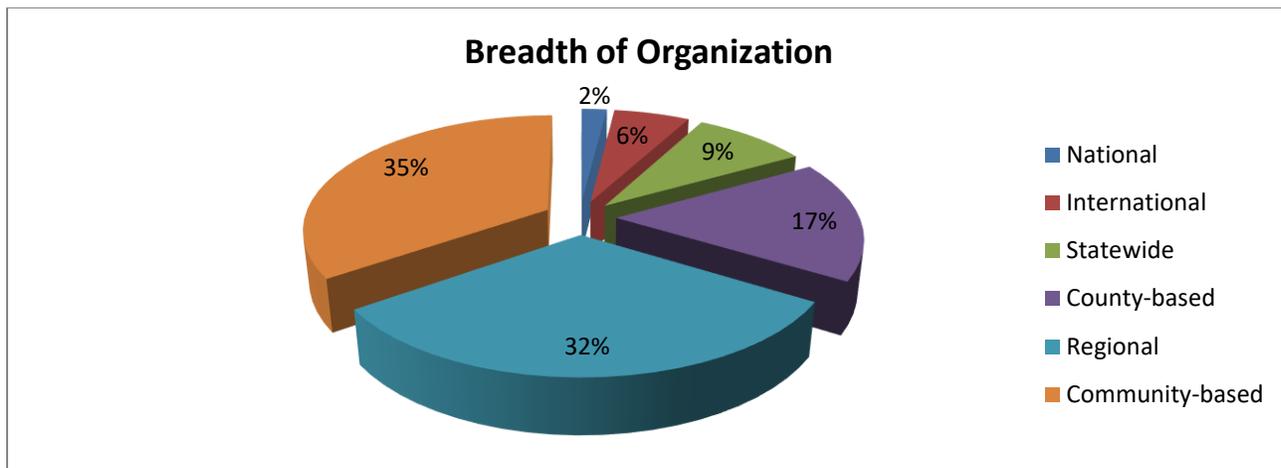


Figure 4: Service Providers Breadth of Organization

SCRI also conducted a 90-minute focus group, whereby we asked questions of six individuals who are ACAP clients. These individuals are a part of ACAP’s Workforce Development Class and utilize ACAP’s services. During the focus group, SCRI probed the participants with questions about the conditions of the area where they live, specific needs as they relate to housing, kids, food, medical care, healthcare costs, job opportunities, wages and compensation, and more. The focus group participants ranged from having lived in the area for many years, to having just moved to Albany County within the past year. Each member brought a unique aspect to the group.

Additionally, on-going customer satisfaction surveying is conducted by ACAP as a means for customers to give input on how the agency is doing and whether or not customers feel their needs are being met. Customers are asked randomly throughout the year to complete a survey, plus copies of the survey are available at all site locations, with web links available on the agency website so the survey can be completed electronically.

Statistical data for this Community Needs Assessment was obtained from the United States Census Bureau, New York State Community Action Association (NYSCAA), New York State Education Department, Albany Business Review, and ACAP.

Albany County: Background and Demographics



Figure 5: Map of Albany County

Albany County is made up of ten towns (Berne, Bethlehem, Coeymans, Colonie, Green Island, Guilderland, Knox, New Scotland, Rensselaerville, and Westerlo), six villages (Altamont, Colonie, Green Island, Menands,

Ravena, and Voorheesville), and three cities (Albany, Cohoes, Watervliet) spread over its 533 square miles. Within its geographic confines runs the Mohawk and Hudson River and includes such parks as the Pine Hills Preservation, Thompson’s Lake State Park, Thatcher State Park, and Washington Park.

The total reported population of Albany County in 2016 was 307,891, an increase of nearly 3,700 persons (1.2%) from the 2010 census count of 304,204; nearly 18 thousand of whom are age 5 or under and 9 thousand under the age of 3. Of that number, 37,749 (12.9%) of individuals are living in poverty: over 9,030 (15.8%) of that number being children under the age of 18 (2,964 under the age of 5); 14,571 (19.8%) between the ages of 18 to 34; and 7,916 (nearly 15%) of persons over age 60. In terms of gender and poverty, there are approximately 16,940 males (11.9% total population) experiencing poverty, while for females the number is higher at 20,809 (13.8% total population), this equates to 45% of those in poverty being male while 55% are female, with over 33% of female lead households with children present living in poverty. These percentages increase significantly within the city of Albany where of persons living in poverty over 33% each are under the age of 18 (5,310) or between 18 and 34 (10,125), and nearly 25% are over the age of 60 (3,345).¹

Overall the county reports as predominantly White (76%), but this figure drops dramatically to 57% for the city of Albany itself, while the reported population of African Americans in the county is only 13% and is more than 2-1/2 times that at 31% within the city of Albany, as illustrated in Figure 5 below taken from the 2010 Census survey.² This figure has not varied significantly over the past several years and is virtually the same in the 2016 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates.³ The number of persons of color living in poverty within the county has increased however with the percentage of African Americans rising 1.2 percent to 27.9 percent (10,124 individuals), and the Hispanic/Latino population rising nearly 3 percent to 29 percent (4,489 individuals).⁴

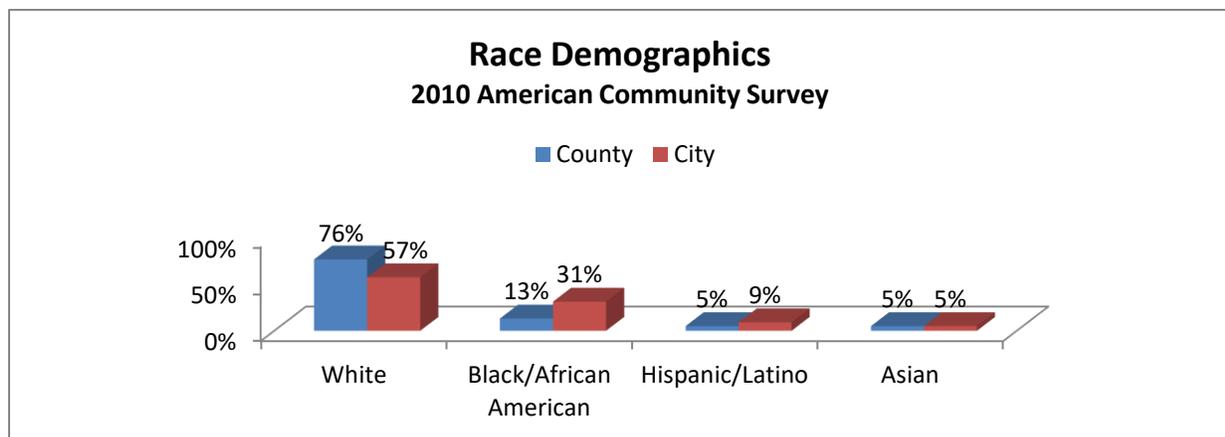


Figure 6: Albany County/City Race Demographics

¹ Statistical data in this paragraph comes from New York State Community Action Association poverty reports -- <https://nyscommunityaction.org/poverty-in-new-york/povertydata/> and US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_16_5YR_B02001&prodType=table

² US Census Bureau, population estimated July 1, 2017. Retrieved on July 24, 2018.

³ US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_16_5YR_B02001&prodType=table

⁴ New York State Community Action Association poverty reports -- <https://nyscommunityaction.org/poverty-in-new-york/povertydata/>

In 2016, *The Albany Business Review* ranked Albany County School districts in which Niskayuna Central and Bethlehem Central held the top two rankings and Albany City School District held the 84th slot out of eighty-four.⁵ *The Business Review* ranks schools based on data released from the New York State Education Department and takes into account the school's individual report card and the test score in language/reading, social studies, science, math, and graduation rate.

The graduation rate of the Albany City School District is 53 percent with 21 percent of students dropping out. Of those that graduate, 58 percent are female and only 42 percent are male. Forty-six percent of the cohort is economically disadvantaged and have a graduation rate of 55 percent. Ten percent of the cohort has a disability and they have a 35 percent graduation rate. The total spending per pupil for the school year of 2015 to 2016 was \$22,366.⁶

Albany County is also the center of numerous colleges from the State University of New York at Albany to the private colleges of The College of Saint Rose and Siena College. Other colleges include Albany College of Pharmacy, Albany Law School, Albany Medical College, Bryant & Stratton College, Empire State College, Excelsior College, Maria College, Mildred Elley, Sage College of Albany, and Sage Graduate School.

Of the adult population over the age of 25, only 7.8 percent of the residents of Albany County have less than a high school diploma. A quarter of the population has a high school diploma and the remaining percentage have attended at least some college.⁷ Twenty-seven percent have received an Associate Degree, and 40 percent have a Bachelor's degree or higher. Yet of these percentages, nearly 12.5 percent of the population who have attained some college level degree currently live in poverty, that rises to 14.4 percent when only a high school diploma is attained, and over 28 percent when there is no degree.

Nearly three percent of the Albany County population receives cash public assistance, 4 percent Supplemental Security Income, and 11 percent receive food stamps/SNAP benefits.⁸ Albany City has 5 percent of the population receiving Cash Public Assistance and nearly 20 percent have received food stamps/SNAP benefits in the past twelve months.⁹ Over twelve thousand individuals in Albany County receive food stamps with more than half of those being residents of Albany City (7,662).¹⁰ The percentage of households receiving food stamps that are below the poverty line in Albany County is 62 percent and in Albany City it is 65 percent. In Albany City the median income for those receiving food stamps is \$12,443 and in Albany County it is \$13,285.¹¹ Of this group, 17 percent are families with children under the age of eighteen and from this category 20 percent have children under the age of five; an additional 22 percent of the households in Albany County are households that have one or more people over the age of 60. In comparison, Albany City has 22 percent of families receiving food stamps and of that percentage 35 percent have children under the age of eighteen, 28 percent of those have children under the age of 5; 26 percent of households have at least 1 member over the age of 60. Within the past twelve months, 13 percent of families

⁵ Albany Business Review. [://www.bizjournals.com/albany/news/2016/06/24/top-area-school-districts-in-albany-for-2016.html](http://www.bizjournals.com/albany/news/2016/06/24/top-area-school-districts-in-albany-for-2016.html)

⁶ NYSED.gov Data. School year 2015-2016. Retrieved on September 19, 2018.

⁷ US Census, Selected Social Characteristics in the United States, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

⁸ US Census, Selected Economic Characteristics, 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

⁹ US Census, Selected Economic Characteristics, 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

¹⁰ US Census, Selected Economic Characteristics, 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

¹¹ US Census, Food Stamps/SNAP 2010 American Community Survey

have had no one in the workforce in the past 12 months in Albany County and of that group 26 percent receive food stamps.¹² In Albany City 17 percent of families have had no one in the workforce in the past 12 months and 26 percent receive food stamps. In contrast, nearly sixty percent of households in Albany County have two or more workers in the household and 27 percent of them receive food stamps. In Albany City about half of the households have two or more workers and of that group one-third (32%) receive food stamps.¹³ In both Albany City and Albany County there are more families with two or more workers in the household receiving food stamps than households with no workers in the past twelve months receiving food stamps.

A 2016 report entitled *The State of Homelessness in the Capital Region*, indicates that the point-in-time count on January 28, 2016 identified 280 persons (sheltered and unsheltered) experiencing homelessness in Albany County. Of the overall number, 175 were children and 192 were African-American.¹⁴ The number of Foster Care admissions for 2017, per the Office of Children and Family Services, is 194 with 216 listed as being in care, according to their 2017 monitoring and analysis profile; 95 of whom are under the age of 5.¹⁵

Compared to other counties, Albany County has the lowest unemployment rate in New York State. Additionally, Albany County appears to fall in the middle in terms of families, people, and different age groups that are in poverty. Albany also has the lowest percentage of people receiving Supplemental Security Income and the second lowest percentage groups for those receiving Cash Public Assistance and Food Stamps. And when compared to the state as a whole, Albany has a slightly lower percentage of persons with a disability (11.2% statewide, 11% for the county) with lower percentages for the under 5 age group with only .5% of children identified as having a disability in the county compared to .7% in the state and the senior population 30% county compared to 34% statewide.¹⁶

Summary

Albany County is simultaneously a vibrant political and economic center, home to state government, award winning hospitals, new technologies and seen positively by most of its citizens who overall perceive quality of life in Albany County has risen dramatically since 2011. Eighty percent of citizens in Albany County say the quality of life has stayed about the same (61 percent) or improved (19 percent) over the past year, up 26 percentage points from 2011 (46 percent and 8 percent, respectively). And while one out of five persons indicate the quality of life in Albany has gotten worse over this past year, this is a marked improvement compared to the nearly half of respondents just seven years ago saying the same (19 percent in 2018, 44 percent in 2011). This percentage does increase however when income is taken into consideration as 25 percent of all residents earning less than \$50,000 a year say the quality of life has gotten worse.

Seven aspects of addressing social needs are singled out by more than 60 percent of residents as needing additional programs— childcare needs, parenting programs, programs for young people, counseling programs for mental health issues (including family violence), programs that promote and provide affordable housing, alcohol and substance abuse recovery programs, and elder assistance/caregiver support programs; with more than 60 percent of service providers also indicating the need for additional programs in the areas of

¹² US Census, Selected Economic Characteristics, 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

¹³ US Census, Selected Economic Characteristics, 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

¹⁴ Capital Region Coalition to End Homelessness 2016 State of Homelessness report

¹⁵ New York State Office of Children and Family Services – 2017 Monitoring and Analysis Profiles With Selected Trend Data: 2013-2017

¹⁶ US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates

emergency needs and career services. (See Figure 6 below) In each case, residents earning less than \$50,000 indicate a higher need for programs than residents earning above \$50,000, with 80 percent of those earning less than \$50,000 per year indicating a need for additional programs addressing elder assistance and caregiver support.

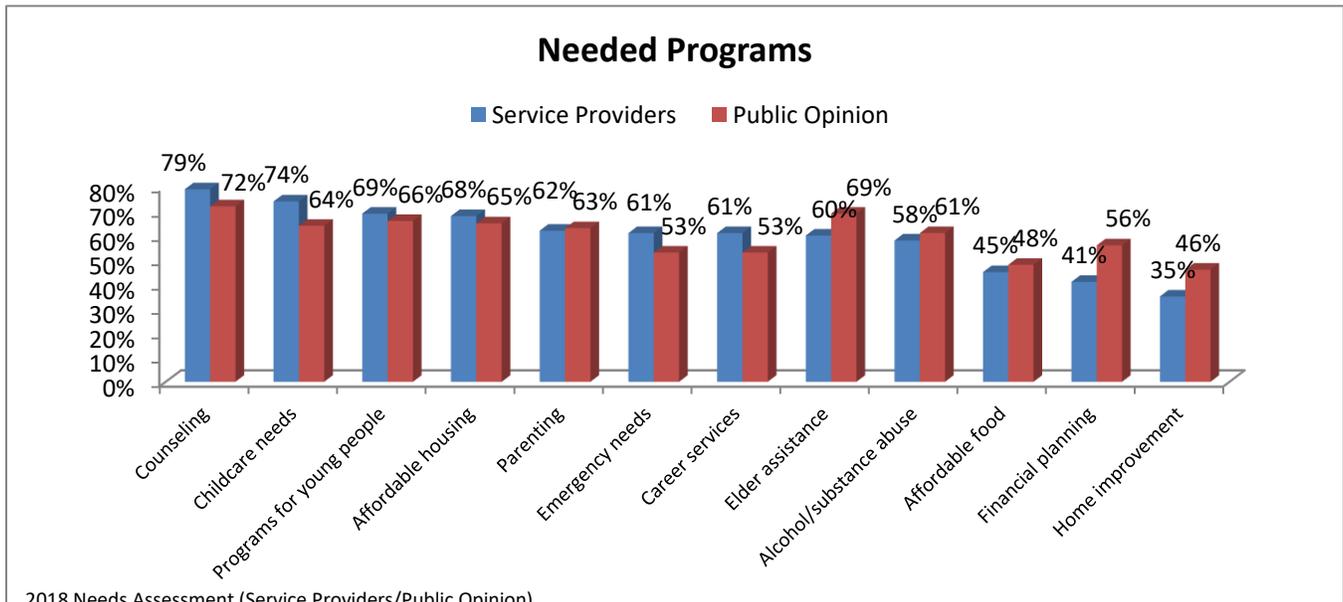


Figure 7: Ranking of Needed Programs - Service Providers & Public Opinion

According to one Albany County resident, an 800 square foot apartment for thirteen-hundred dollars per month is “ridiculous, especially for families with multiple children.” This forces larger families to try to fit their family into smaller spaces and makes it very difficult for parents to make the amount of money they need to support their family. Although there is a call for additional programs, nearly half of all citizens express encountering issues obtaining support for social needs. Moreover, 54 percent of residents making less than \$50,000 per year have personally experienced or know someone who has experienced a problem obtaining services. In order to effectively offer the programs people need, underlying systematic issues must be addressed to provide access, education, and support (particularly for low-income residents).

Consistent with 2011, both service providers and citizens agree that most people today experience hardship when it comes to the cost of food and energy and with obtaining affordable housing. At least a third of citizens and a fifth of service providers do believe people face problems with affording childcare, having quality education for young people, accessing health care, having adequate public safety or having affordable housing options.

In 2011, the economy was beginning to recover from the recession, however people were not yet feeling that change and nearly 90 percent of all residents and service providers agreed with the statement, “In this economy, more and more people than ever before now require help in meeting their basic survival needs.” Today, the majority still agree, however, 15 percentage points less of residents and 18 percentage points less of all service providers now agree with that statement (74 percent and 72 percent respectively).

Looking specifically at the needs low-income residents face, both citizens and service providers agree the top need is jobs that residents can obtain and use to build a life of self-sufficiency, as noted in Figure 7. In

addition to obtaining suitable employment there are glaring agreed upon areas of need for low-income residents including affordable housing, health care, elder support, assistance with caring for and educating young people, and affordable food and nutrition.

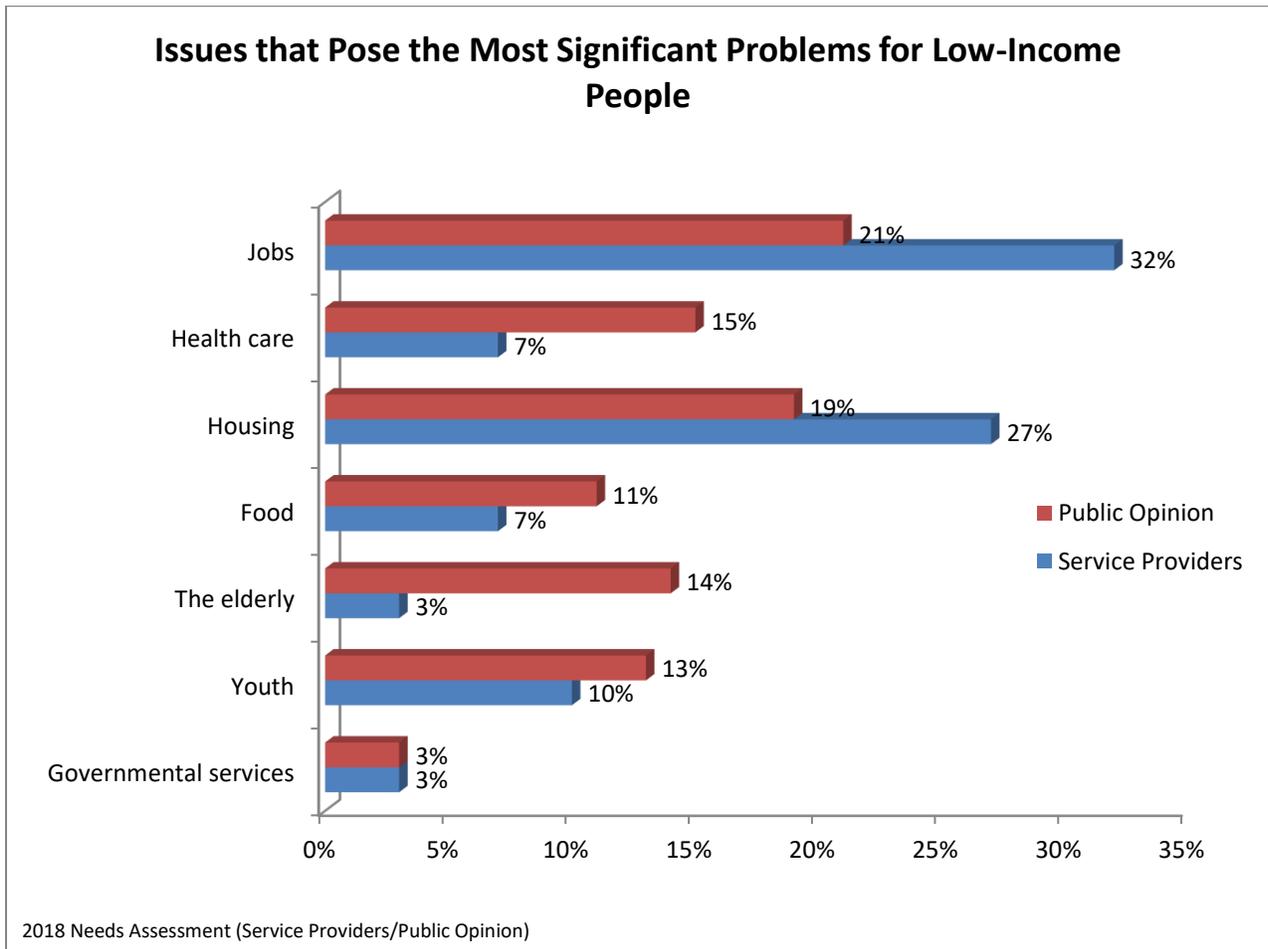


Figure 8: Areas of Greatest Need - Service Providers & Public Opinion

While more than three-quarters of all citizens and service providers agree that “it seems as though many social needs are getting greater and greater,” and that “everyone must do as much as they can or our community will deteriorate,” half of citizens and nearly one third of service providers say “a lot of the needs that people have are actually caused by their own choices.”

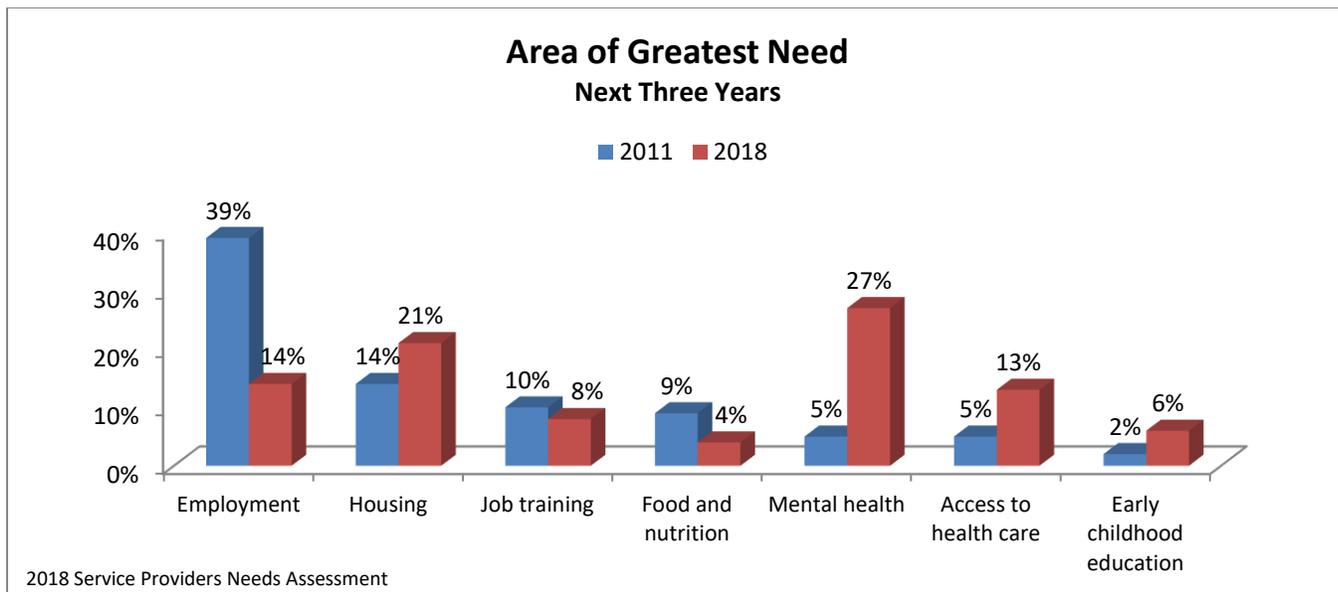


Figure 9: Area of Greatest Need - Next Three Years (Service Providers)

There has continued to be an ongoing conversation about responsibility and who or what organizations might be able to contribute to creating opportunities for bettering the lives of Albany County residents. Similar to 2011, small non-profit organizations and religious organizations receive higher scores from the public for their contributions. Citizens and local town and city officials get passing grades while respondents criticize the contribution of county, state and federal governments.

Agencies say it is true that they do a good job of responding to emergency needs but could do far more if they had sufficient funding. Forty-three percent of service providers believe that agencies are inefficiently managed and do not realize the outcomes equal to their spending, and that the safety net would be stronger if there was better communication and cooperation among service providers. More than half of the public believes large umbrella social service agencies are doing a fair or poor job addressing the needs of low-income people and 75 percent of service providers agree that the public does not have the same understanding of the scope of need that people who work in social services address.

Nearly two-thirds of service providers believe not enough is done to move low-income people away from dependency towards self-sufficiency. Public sentiment supports increasing efforts to equip citizens to move towards being able to address their own needs. Albany County residents crave the opportunity to be “trained in finances, such as stocks and bonds, in order to be better equipped to address [their] own needs” (Focus group, June 15, 2018). Forty-one percent of all citizens say they or someone they know has had a problem obtaining services designed to meet social needs. Of the 41 percent, 69 percent say the process was too complicated, 64 percent say they didn’t know what was available and 63 percent didn’t want to ask for help. While some might blame the individual or theorize that individuals should be responsible for seeking answers to their questions, these results indicate that as a society, Albany County needs to do a better job assisting people in moving towards self-sufficiency.

When it comes to childcare needs, there is no doubt that citizens and service providers alike agree that Albany County needs additional childcare programs that are also affordable. Specifically, more than half of citizens making less than \$50,000 have experienced both affordability and difficulty obtaining support for behavior or learning difficulties as barriers to accessing childcare. The Capital District Child Care Council (CDCCC) has indicated that of families earning less than \$50K per year, 86% of families receiving a childcare

subsidy and 87% of those not receiving one have difficulty paying for childcare which could top over \$15,000 annually.¹⁷ Anecdotal response from the ACAP Customer Satisfaction survey and the CDCCC also indicates a great need for before and after school care programs for school age children.¹⁸ According to one member of the focus group, there are many programs offered, but “my concern is not that the programs aren’t out there, but that other parents who put their kids in those programs don’t have control of their kids.” Again, this person points to a need for the service providers to be equipped with the tools to address these difficult behaviors and also a need for more parenting programs to ensure parents have the tools they need to raise their children. Another member of the focus group suggested making more affordable programs for children in response to a third pointing out that crime is “becoming more present in schools because of their needs.” Citizens believe quality childcare programs offer each of the following components: security, convenient location, affordability, care for proper hygiene, clean facilities, daily home communication, socialization, recreational opportunities, connection to the schools, food, an educational focus, healthy food options, and flexible hours.

As mentioned in the 2011-2012 Albany County Community Needs Assessment, there continues to be a distinct difference in the responses between income categories among citizens. Previously referred to as the ‘Two Albanys,’ individuals making less than \$50,000 per year live a different reality than those who make more than \$50,000 per year. This separation between income categories is demonstrated through response categories where lower income families encounter similar difficulties, but at a higher rate than higher income earning families or where the challenges faced by the two groups are different from one another. Albany County residents talk about this difference while comparing the curbside appeal of their neighborhood to that of the neighborhoods just on the other side of town:

“I was walking down Lark Street, off of Central Avenue... and um... the grass is overgrown, there’s garbage... everywhere. The thing if you go a block over by Lark Street, where people with money are over there, everything is mowed down, there’s no garbage. But like I said, you just cross a street over and the poor neighborhoods, people don’t want to buy property there because of the way the city is maintaining it.”

¹⁷ CDCCC Community Reports - 2017 Picture of Child Care in the Capital Region

¹⁸ CDCCC Community Reports - 2017 Picture of Child Care in the Capital Region & ACAP Customer Satisfaction Survey response.

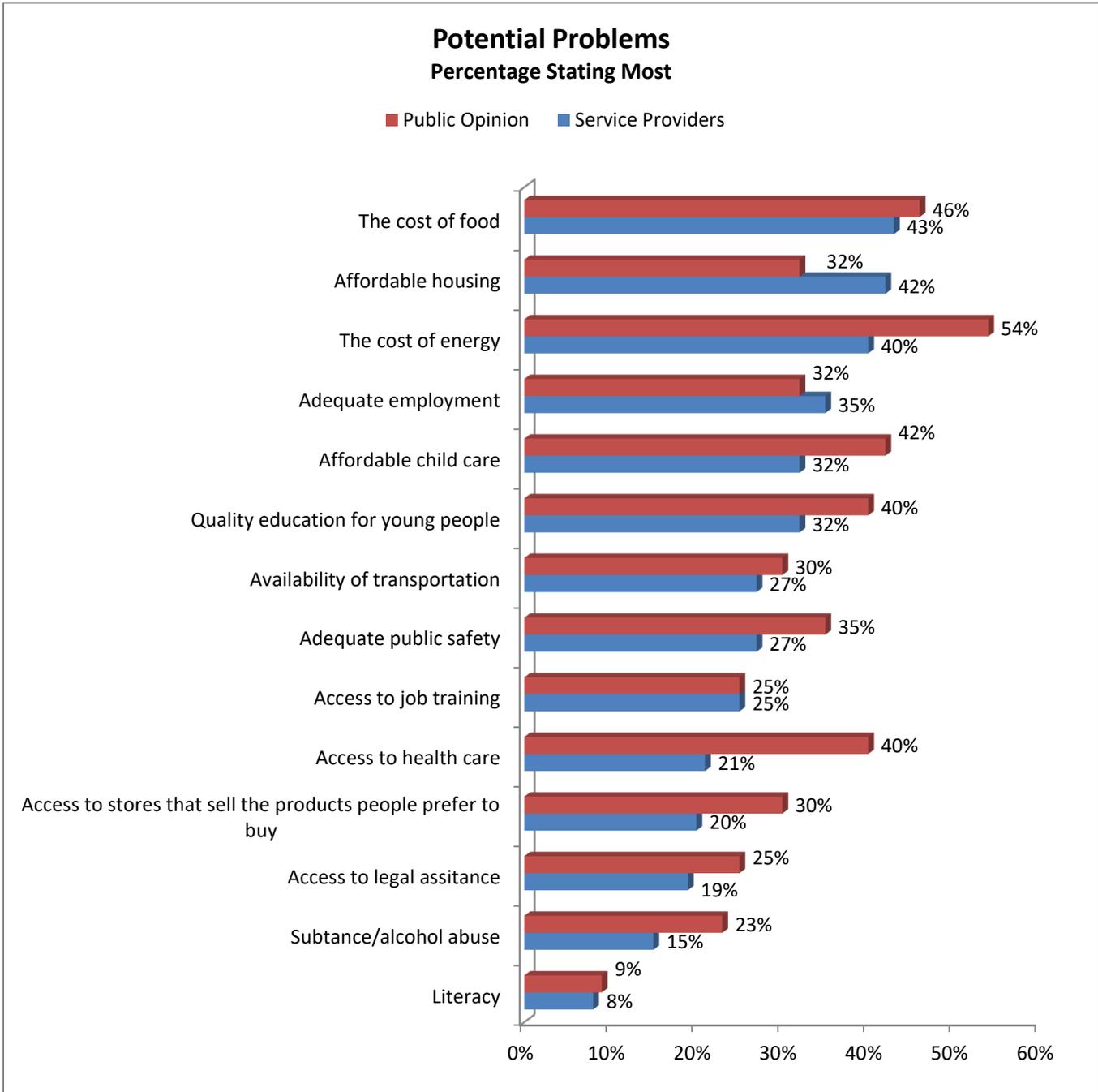


Figure 10: Ranking of Potential Problems - Public Opinion/Service Provider Comparison

Key Findings

Of particular interest to note from this assessment is that while the percentages are significantly different between the groups, both service providers and public opinion perceive that jobs (32% service providers and 21% public opinion) and housing (27% service providers and 19% public opinion) are the issues that pose the most significant problems for low-income people; with living-wage jobs being the top need to aid in building a life of self-sufficiency. Job training (as both credentialing and employability skill sets) in growth industry fields such as those identified healthcare and support industries is necessary for individuals to obtain the skills necessary to fill the positions that are in high demand in today's job market.

Across the board, respondents have indicated the very significant need for quality, affordable housing and child care. Over-priced and/or substandard housing/child care can be a drain on much needed and limited resources which could be more aptly put toward fulfilling other basic necessities such as food and energy: identified by public opinion as areas in which the residents of Albany County experience hardship (46% and 54% respectively). Additionally, according to public opinion in the area of child care, there is a need for programs which have the tools and ability to address difficult behaviors demonstrated by the child and parent programs to provide parents with the tools as well. With further research indicating a continued shortage of available childcare slots for children under the age of 3 in Albany County.¹⁹

Also of note is the recognition that the lack of opportunities for services in non-traditional or 'after hours' is potentially a key factor in hindering persons living in poverty from obtaining and/or retaining living wage opportunities as current job responsibilities may make it impossible to attend a program designed to provide the skill set to build a career, or may be holding someone back from accepting higher paying employment due to lack of child care options with the non-traditional schedules of some employment. This could also be an issue with obtaining other services designed to offer assistance to the low-income populous to aid in working toward self-sufficiency—if work or other obligations conflicts with the work/office hours of an agency providing assistance then the individual/family will not be able to obtain the needed service or assistance. This is supported by anecdotal response in ACAP's Customer Satisfaction survey with multiple customers indicating that the hours of some programs interfere with their current job or the ability to accept certain positions: not all Head Start sites have an extended day component, non-traditional daycare hours are rare, and credentialing programs don't offer night options.²⁰

Similar to the findings of 2015, the need for service providers to work in collaboration to provide services and share information in an effort to assist families on their path toward self-sufficiency is of paramount importance and an absolute necessity.

¹⁹ CDCCC Community Reports - 2017 Picture of Child Care in the Capital Region

²⁰ ACAP Customer Satisfaction Survey response data 2016 – 2018.

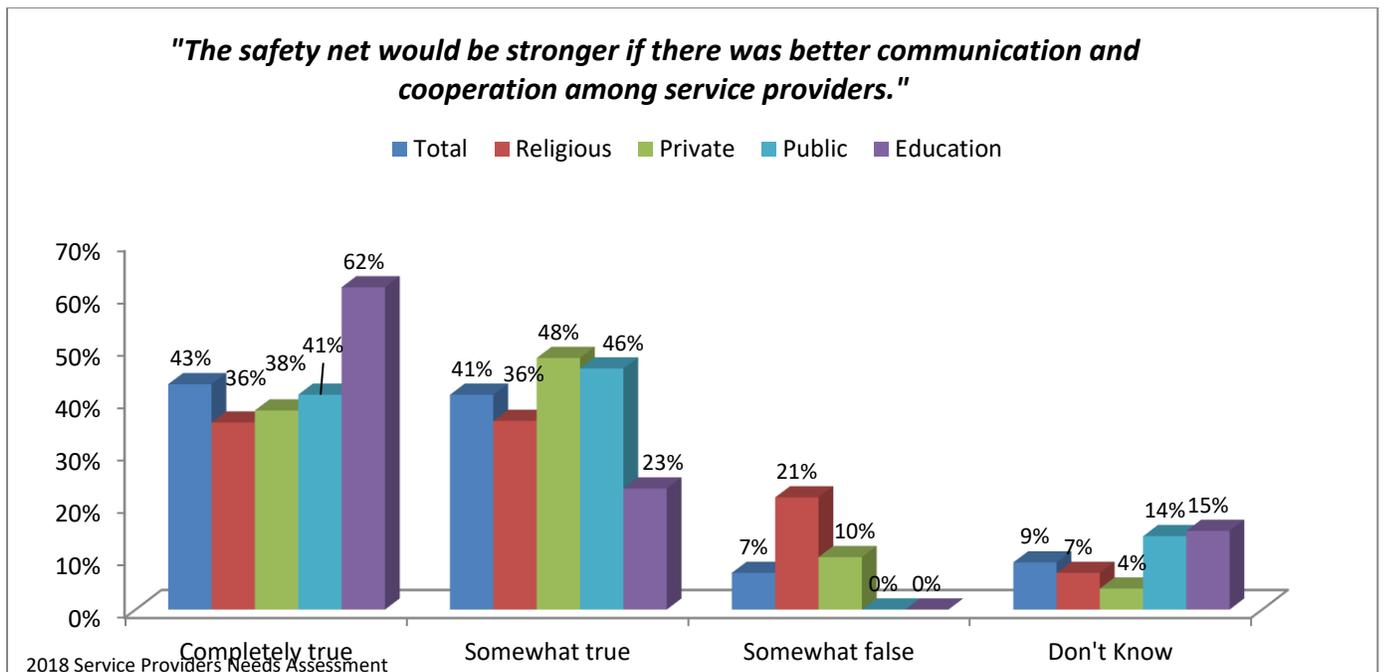


Figure 11: Agency Communication/Cooperation Statement

Moving Forward

It is clear that although there is some difference between the public and service providers sentiment regarding the factors that cause need, the majority of people agree that the community as a whole should address these needs. The challenge continues to be closing the gap between the service providers and the community. Albany County should bring together those that believe they should contribute to meeting these needs and those that are dissatisfied with the services provided to encourage all input and ideas being offered. Additionally, given the general agreement on perception of need as well as untapped capacity not only in citizen contribution, but also from service provider efficiency, collaboration and cooperation are imperative. It is a clear challenge in deciphering how to foster collaboration amongst not only the types of agencies included in this research but also the for-profit businesses in Albany County. The community is also eager for additional investigation to further focus resources rather than making sweeping changes that may not be necessary in all areas.

Given the large portion of citizens who have accessed and experienced barriers while accessing services, community organizations and members should come together to research and implement existing models and best practices for information sharing platforms. The situation is not always that Albany County needs additional programs, but rather that citizens, and possibly service providers, are not aware of existing programs, may not know who operates needed programs, or have experienced barriers accessing those programs. ACAP Customer Satisfaction response data, while not definitive, does lend support to the notion that other agencies do not know who may be of assistance as only 20% of persons coming to ACAP indicate they were referred by another agency compared to nearly 55% learning about ACAP through a friend or family member.²¹ A platform similar to any well-known social platforms designed for accessing social services may prove to be beneficial to both citizens and service providers. When looking at the services specifically offered by ACAP and contrasting them against the areas of greatest need that have been identified by both the public and service providers, two-thirds of their current programs focus on those areas recognized as

²¹ ACAP Customer Satisfaction Survey response data 2016 – 2018

greatest needs. With the expectation that needs in these areas will remain and even grow, it seems necessary to continue growing and expanding offerings in these areas.

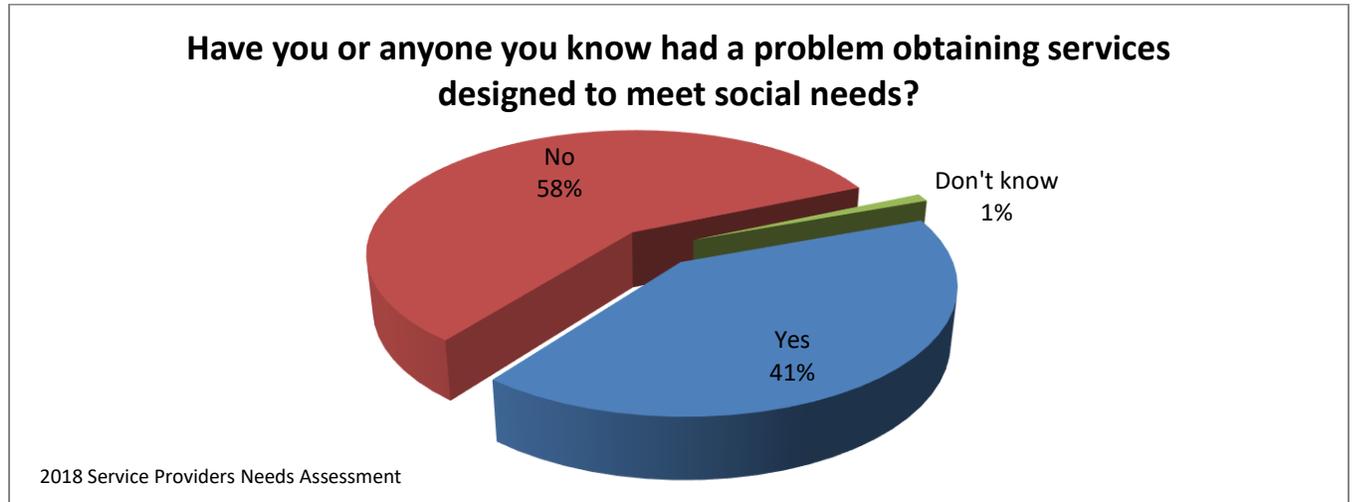


Figure 12: Obtaining Social Services (Public Opinion)

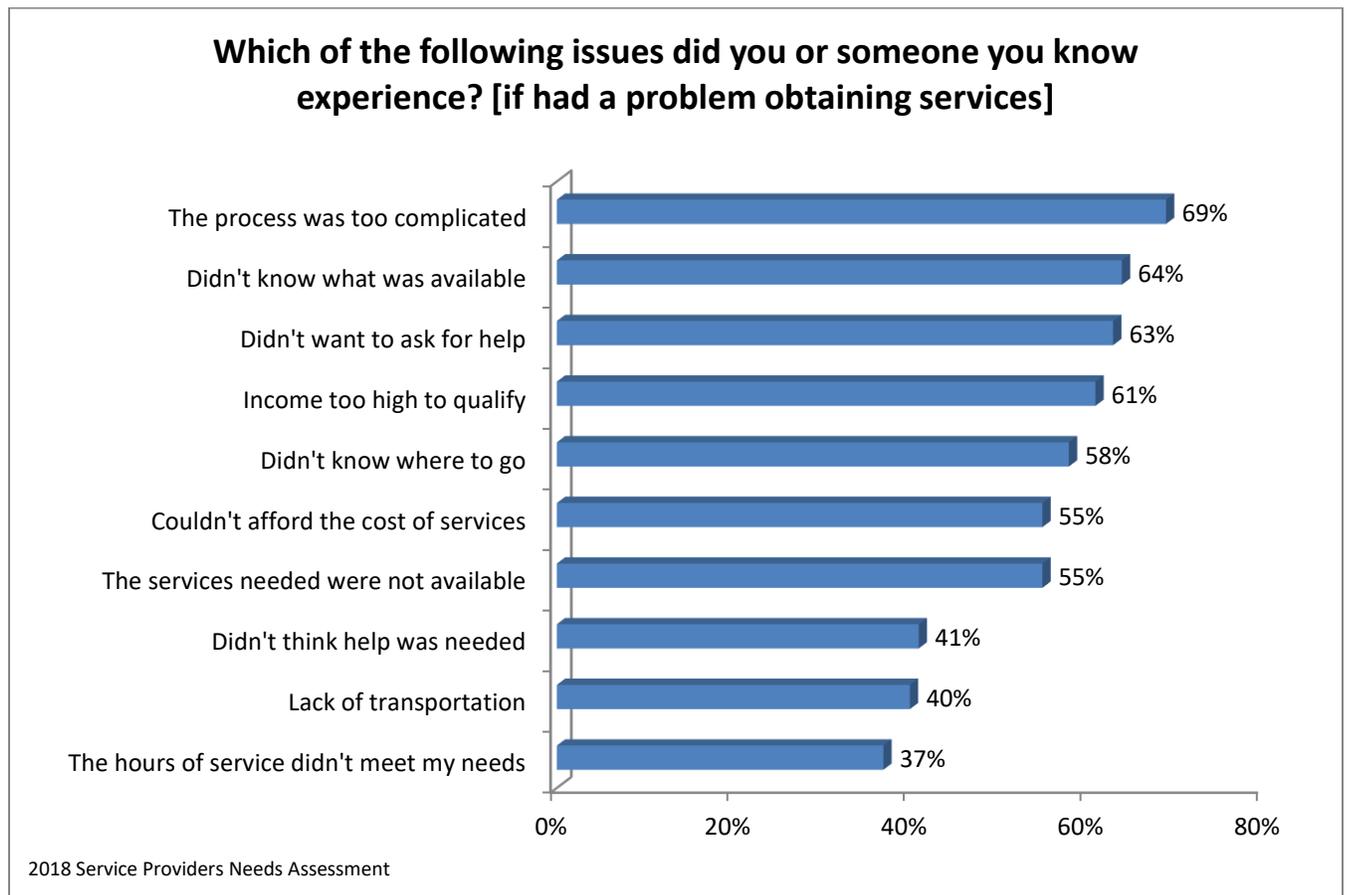


Figure 13: Obtaining Social Services (Public Opinion)

Since 2011, ACAP has expanded services to meet the needs of children and their parents by offering early childcare options as well as job and workforce development. Moving forward, ACAP should continue to develop these programs, but might consider expanding to promote services that address the needs of

families facing mental health and family violence issues as well as families that are managing elder or other caregiver support.

Area of Need	ACAP Program	Recommendations
Counseling for mental health and family violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Navigation • Family Court Children’s Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide resources to families • Develop partnerships with local agencies to meet these needs • Offer regular counseling sessions through existing programs as a part of curriculum
Elder assistance and caregiver support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Navigation • Community Services • Career Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide resources to families • Develop partnerships with local agencies to make referrals • Incorporate long-term care workshops into professional development curriculum • Develop partnerships with local credit unions and healthcare providers to provide educational materials for clients • Incorporate / expand career track offering for jobs in the assistance and care fields
Programs for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Navigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible, connect young people and their families to other programs and community organizations that provide programs for young people • Orchestrate a specific research project/inventory to determine needs of young people, existing programs, and identify the gap between the two
Affordable Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weatherization Assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mortgage assistance (similar to HEAP) • Home repair assistance (using trainees from Career Pathways)
Child Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Head Start • Head Start • Family Court Children’s Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand child care services to include school aged children • Parenting programs • Develop partnerships and programs for training staff on working with children who have behavioral issues
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial management workshops

Figure 14: ACAP Program Recommendations

Appendix I: 2018 Albany County Public Opinion Needs Assessment Survey

Are you at least 18 years of age?

Yes

No [ask for alternative respondent or terminate]

1. In general do you think the overall quality of life for most people in Albany County has improved, stayed about the same or gotten worse over the last year?
 - a. Improved
 - b. Same
 - c. Worse
 - d. Don't Know/refused
2. Thinking about people in Albany County, I'm going to read you a list of potential problems that may impact people in our county. For each, tell me whether you believe most people experience this problem, some people, only a few people or that almost no people are affected by it?
 - a. The cost of energy including gasoline, electricity and home heating
 - b. The cost of food
 - c. Availability of transportation
 - d. Adequate employment
 - e. Access to health care
 - f. Affordable housing
 - g. Adequate public safety
 - h. Access to legal assistance
 - i. Substance or alcohol abuse
 - j. Quality education for young people
 - k. Affordable child care
 - l. Not being able to read and comprehend well enough
 - m. Access to job training
 - n. Access to stores that sell the products people prefer to buy
3. For each of the following major areas of need, as you consider low income people here in Albany County, how significant a problem do you think low income people currently have in meeting their legitimate needs in this area. Would you say in your opinion that they have a very significant problem in meeting their needs, a somewhat significant problem, not a very significant problem or not at all a significant problem? [accept don't know][rotate]
 - a. Food and nutrition, that is, access to and affordability of nutritious food as well as not suffering from hunger.
 - b. Housing, that is, having quality housing in which the basic needs of shelter are taken care of and satisfied affordably.
 - c. Health, that is, access to and affordability of health care as well as having information about promoting wellness including vaccinations.
 - d. Governmental services, that is, access to and representation by elected officials as well as the quality of services the government provides including public transportation, safety and access to the legal system.
 - e. Young people, that is, the ability to educate, take care of, and respond to the needs and problems of young people and in some cases caused by young people.
 - f. The elderly, that is, caring for and making sure older residents have their needs met and safety maintained.
 - g. The economy and jobs, that is, the ability to get and maintain employment that provides workers with a living wage.
4. Of those areas – [rotate] Food, Housing, Health care, Government services, youth, the elderly and jobs – which single area do you think poses the most significant problem for low income people in Albany County?

5. Although it is difficult and you may not have all the information to completely say, for each of the following types of programs that seek to address aspects of the social needs we have been discussing, tell if you think we already have enough programs in place to address those needs, or if we have too many programs to address it or if we need additional programs to address that need. [rotate]
 - a. Emergency needs, like obtaining emergency shelter, food or clothing
 - b. Programs that assist in ongoing access to affordable food including food stamps and free or reduced school lunches
 - c. Childcare needs
 - d. Home improvement or weatherization needs
 - e. Career services
 - f. Parenting programs
 - g. Programs for young people
 - h. Counseling programs for mental health issues including family violence
 - i. Programs that promote and provide affordable housing
 - j. Financial planning programs including tax preparation and budgeting
 - k. Alcohol/substance abuse recovery programs
 - l. Elder assistance and Caregiver support
6. Have you or anyone you know had a problem obtaining services designed to meet social needs?
 - a. Yes [if yes, continue]
 - b. No [if no, skip to Q9]
 - c. Refused
7. Which of the following issues did you or someone you know experience?
 - a. Didn't know what's available
 - b. Didn't know where to go
 - c. Lack of transportation
 - d. Income too high to qualify
 - e. Didn't think help was needed
 - f. Didn't want to ask for help
 - g. The process was too complicated
 - h. The services needed were not available
 - i. Couldn't afford the cost of services
 - j. The hours of service didn't meet my needs
8. Thinking about various people and institutions that address the needs of low income people, for each tell me if you think they are doing an excellent, good, fair or poor job of addressing those needs. [rotate]
 - a. The federal government
 - b. The state government
 - c. The county government
 - d. Local town and city officials
 - e. Large umbrella social service agencies
 - f. Small local non-profit organizations
 - g. Local religious organizations
 - h. The citizens of Albany county
9. For each of the following statements, tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.
 - a. It seems as though many social needs are getting greater and greater.
 - b. Everyone must do as much as they can or our community will deteriorate.
 - c. A lot of the needs that people have are actually caused by their own choices.
 - d. In most cases it is up to the individual or their family not to the community to solve personal problems.
 - e. I believe you judge a community by how well the people that have resources do in helping those that do not have resources.

- f. In this economy, more and more people than ever before now require help in meeting their basic survival needs.
10. Do you have children under the age of 18 in your household?
- Yes [if yes, continue]
 - No [if no, skip to demos]
 - Refused
11. How many children are:
- Newborn to less than three years old
 - Three years to five years
 - Older than five but less than 18
12. Are you the primary caregiver for the children?
- Yes
 - No
 - Refused
13. Is your household a:
- Single parent home
 - Dual parent home
 - Multi-family home
14. Now I would like to ask you some questions about services for children. How important are the following components of a childcare program? [Very important, Somewhat important, Not very important, Not at all important, Not applicable]
- Flexible hours
 - Healthy food options
 - Educational focus
 - Food is provided
 - Connected with public schools
 - Recreational opportunities
 - Socialization
 - Daily home communication
 - Clean facilities
 - Care for proper hygiene
 - Affordability
 - Convenient Location
 - Security
15. Have you experienced any of the following issues with childcare for the children in your household? [Yes, No, Not applicable]
- Programs are at capacity
 - It's too expensive
 - Transportation
 - Obtaining support for behavior or learning difficulties
 - Flexibility of hours
16. Has your child been or is your child currently enrolled in a Head Start program?
- Yes
 - No
 - Refused

Demographics

Appendix 2: 2018 Albany County Service Provider Needs Assessment Survey

1. First, a little about you and your organization. Please check ALL the categories that describe your organization's mission or services.
 - a. Education
 - b. Health care
 - c. Arts and Culture
 - d. Human Services
 - e. Housing
 - f. Environment
 - g. Advocacy
 - h. Youth
 - i. Economic development
 - j. Religious practice
 - k. Mental health
 - l. Nutrition
 - m. Transportation
 - n. Recreation
 - o. Emergency services
 - p. Elderly
 - q. Legal services
 - r. Other [specify] _____
2. Of those you selected, which single category best describes your organization's primary function?
 - a. _____
3. How many full-time equivalent employees does your organization employ?
 - a. None
 - b. 1-4
 - c. 5-9
 - d. 10-25
 - e. 26-50
 - f. Over 50
4. What best describes the breadth of your organization?
 - a. Community based
 - b. County based
 - c. Regional
 - d. Statewide
 - e. National
 - f. International
5. About how many clients or participants did your organization serve in Albany County during its most recently completed fiscal year?
 - a. Under 100
 - b. 100 to 500
 - c. 501 to 1000
 - d. 1001 to 2500
 - e. 2501 to 5000
 - f. Over 5000
 - g. Not Applicable
6. During your last fiscal year, did the number of clients you serve remain about the same, increase or decrease? (skip if 5 is NA)
 - a. Increase
 - b. Remain the same
 - c. Decrease
7. Which of the following are sources of funding for your organization? [check all that apply]
 - a. Government grants or allocations
 - b. Contributions
 - c. Fundraising events
 - d. Foundation grants
 - e. Fee for service
 - f. Membership dues
 - g. Other [specify] _____
8. Now thinking about the overall quality of life for most people in Albany County, has the overall quality of life improved, stayed the same or gotten worse over the last year for most people in Albany County?
 - a. Improved
 - b. Same
 - c. Worse
 - d. Don't Know/refused
9. And what about the people that your organization serves, would you say that for your clients or participants, has their overall quality of life improved, stayed the same or gotten worse over the last year?
 - a. Improved
 - b. Same
 - c. Worse
 - d. Don't Know/refused

10. Thinking specifically about the people that your organization serves or works with, for each of the following potential problems, indicate whether you believe most people your organization serves or works with experience this problem, some people, only a few people or that almost none of the people your organization serves or works with are affected by it?

	Most	Some	Only a few	Almost None
a. The cost of energy including gasoline, electricity and home heating				
b. The cost of food				
c. Availability of transportation				
d. Adequate employment				
e. Access to health care				
f. Affordable housing				
g. Adequate public safety				
h. Access to legal assistance				
i. Substance or alcohol abuse				
j. Quality education for young people				
k. Affordable child care				
l. Not being able to read and comprehend well enough				
m. Access to job training				
n. Access to stores that sell the products people prefer to buy				

11. Now consider low income people in Albany County whether your organization does or does not serve or work with low income clients. For each of the following major areas of need, as you consider low income people here in Albany County, how significant a problem do you think low income people currently have in meeting their legitimate needs in this area? Would you say in your opinion that they have a very significant problem in meeting their needs, a somewhat significant problem, not a very significant problem or not at all a significant problem?

	Very	Somewhat	Not very	Not at all	Don't know
a. Food and nutrition, that is, access to and affordability of nutritious food as well as not suffering from hunger.					
b. Housing, that is, having quality housing in which the basic needs of shelter are taken care of and satisfied affordably.					
c. Health, that is, access to and affordability of health care as well as having information about promoting wellness including vaccinations.					
d. Governmental services, that is, access to and representation by elected officials as well as the quality of services the government provides					

including public transportation, safety and access to the legal system.					
e. Young people, that is, the ability to educate, take care of, and respond to the needs and problems of young people and in some cases caused by young people.					
f. The elderly, that is, caring for and making sure older residents have their needs met and safety maintained.					
g. The economy and jobs, that is, the ability to get and maintain employment that provides workers with a living wage.					

12. Of those areas, which single area do you think poses the most significant problem for low income people in Albany County?

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| a. Food and nutrition | e. Young people |
| b. Housing | f. The elderly |
| c. Health | g. The economy and job |
| d. Governmental services | |

13. Although it is difficult and you may not have all the information to completely say, for each of the following types of programs that seek to address aspects of the social needs we have been discussing, please indicate if you think we already have enough programs in place to address those needs, or if we have too many programs to address it or if we need additional programs to address that need.

	Enough programs	Too many programs	Need additional programs
a. Emergency needs, like obtaining emergency shelter, food or clothing			
b. Programs that assist in ongoing access to affordable food including food stamps and free or reduced school lunches			
c. Childcare needs			
d. Home improvement or weatherization needs			
e. Career services			
f. Parenting programs			
g. Programs for young people			
h. Counseling programs for mental health issues including family violence			
i. Programs that promote and provide affordable housing			
j. Financial planning programs including tax preparation and budgeting			
k. Alcohol/substance abuse recovery programs			
l. Elder assistance and Caregiver support			
m. Human rights advocacy programs			

14. Thinking about various people and institutions that address the needs of low income people, for each please indicate if you think they are doing an excellent, good, fair or poor job of addressing those needs.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
The federal government				
The state government				
The County government				
Local town and city officials				
Large umbrella social service agencies				
Small local non-profit organizations				
Local religious organizations				
The citizens of Albany county				

15. For each of the following statements, please indicate if you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat or strongly disagree.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
a. It seems as though many social needs are getting greater and greater and greater.					
b. Everyone must do as much as they can or our community will deteriorate.					
c. A lot of the needs that people have are actually caused by their own choices.					
d. In most cases it is up to the individual or their family not to the community to solve personal problems.					
e. I believe you judge a community by how well the people that have resources do in helping those that do not have resources.					
f. In this economy, more and more people than ever before now require help in meeting their basic survival needs.					

16. Thinking about the social safety net that is comprised of governmental, non-governmental and religious organizations that seek to address the needs of low income citizens, which of the following statements would you say are completely true, somewhat true, somewhat false or completely false.

	Completely true	Somewhat true	Somewhat false	Completely false
a. Agencies do a good job of responding to emergency needs.				
b. Not enough is done to move low income people away from dependency towards self-sufficiency.				
c. Agencies could do far more but simply do not have sufficient funding.				
d. Unfortunately, many agencies are inefficiently managed and do not realize the outcomes equal to their spending.				

e. The safety net would be stronger if there was better communication and cooperation among service providers.				
f. The public just doesn't have the same understanding of the scope of need that people do that work in social services.				

17. If you could change one or two things about the manner in which agencies - governmental, non-governmental and religious – seek to address the needs of low income people in Albany, what would those be:

1.	
2.	

18. As you consider the future here in Albany County, that is, the next three years, consider the following areas and indicate whether you think the needs of low income people will increase significantly, somewhat increase, remain the same, or decrease in this area:

	Increase significantly	Somewhat increase	Remain the same	Decrease
a. Food and nutrition				
b. Housing				
c. Transportation				
d. Employment				
e. Job training				
f. Mental health				
g. Legal assistance				
h. Early childhood education				
i. Elementary education				
j. Secondary education				
k. Child care				
l. Literacy				
m. Access to health care				
n. Public safety				

19. Of those areas, as you look forward, what single area do you think will be the area of greatest need over the next three years?

20. Do you have any additional comments?
